

Edited by Joseph N. Cooper

ANTI-RACISM IN SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Center for Sport Management Research & Education

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Joseph N. Cooper*



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Center for Sport Management
Research & Education

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Chapter 1

Anti-Racism as a New Paradigm for 21st Century Sport Organizations

Joseph N. Cooper

Abstract

Sport reflects the values, beliefs, and power structures embedded within the societies where they are practiced. Within the United States (U.S.), White racism is foundational to the establishment of the nation and its corresponding social institutions (e.g., politics, law, religion, education, business, healthcare, etc.). As a social institution and cultural practice, sport has served as a contested site for the reproduction and resistance of racist beliefs, norms, systems, and outcomes. Throughout the history of sport in the U.S., numerous athletes, coaches, administrators, media, spectators, and community members have challenged racism on multiple levels. These intergenerational efforts embody the legacy of anti-racism, or intentional efforts to dismantle the systemic and everyday existence of racism in and through sport. This chapter presents anti-racism as a philosophy and framework for addressing racism in professional, intercollegiate, interscholastic, and youth sport in the 21st century.

Keywords: anti-racism, sport, deep level diversity, inclusion

Over the past several years, the United States (U.S.) has been unsettled by widespread protests due to the publicity of recorded killings of Black people at the hands of White law enforcement officers and, in select instances, White civilian vigilantes. More specifically, in the summer of 2020, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement reached a zenith with calls for racial justice in the cases of George Floyd of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Breonna Taylor of Louisville, Kentucky, and Ahmaud Arbery of Brunswick, Georgia. Social institutions, from corporate businesses to schools to sport organizations, felt compelled to create and enhance their racial equity efforts. Several major sport organizations, including the National Basketball Association (NBA), Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), Major League Soccer (MLS), National Hockey League (NHL), National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and National Association of Stock Car Racing (NASCAR) to name a few engaged in various symbolic gestures to reflect their espoused commitment to combating racism in sport and society. Despite the veneer of sincerity, many questioned the timing, intentions, and long-term sustainability of these initiatives. Surface level efforts ranged from moments of silence before matches/games to the imprint of racial justice messages on fields and courts (e.g., Black Lives Matters, End Racism, etc.) to recorded statements and social media posts about the need for unity. More substantive efforts included financial contributions for social justice causes (i.e., NFL's \$89 million support for The Players Coalition and pledges \$250 million over 10 years¹) to voter registration campaigns to the establishment of player led coalitions and committees on racial justice to the

¹ The NFL's annual revenue for 2019-2020 season was \$12.2 billion (Gough, 2021). Thus, the \$250 million over a 10-year span for social justice causes is notable, but this amount is almost half of the 10-year contract signed by a single player in a league of nearly 1,700 players (Patrick Mahomes' 10-year contract is \$450 million). In other words, based on the revenues generated by a predominantly Black league, I argue the investment in racial justice causes could and should be increased significantly if the message the league is trying to send is Black lives truly matter beyond being entertainment laborers.

adoption of diversity positions and policies (i.e., the NCAA's establishment of the Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designee (ADAD) position) (Cooper et al., 2020). The recent proliferation of these efforts underscores the reality that these organizations, like the broader society in which they exist, are deeply rooted in racist ways of thinking (ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and values), doing (missions, visions, policies, rewards, penalties, etc.), and being (behavioral norms, practices, etc.). In other words, it took an international racial justice movement during a global pandemic and paramount economic pressures for sport organizations to be more explicit, invested, and committed to using their resources to challenge racial injustice. As such, it is timely to offer a paradigm shift from the colorblind racist status quo of sport organizations to an anti-racist transformational reality.

Time Overdue for a Racial Reckoning: Anti-Racism as a Philosophy for 21st Century Sport Organizations

In 2019, renowned historian Ibram X. Kendi published a best-selling book titled, *How to be an Anti-Racist*. Within this text, Kendi (2019) asserted that racism is not a static state of being but rather fluid in nature. Stated another way, people and institutions have the ability to be racist, non-racist, and/or anti-racist at different points in time. Depending on the extent to which anti-racism is embedded in leadership, policies and practices will determine whether, how, and when racial equity can be achieved in a given context. Anti-racist approaches are distinct from racist and non-racist actions because the former focuses on addressing racial inequities through policy changes (e.g., transforming systems and structures) rather than primarily via intra- and inter-personal dynamics (e.g., changing beliefs, preferences, and attitudes). According to Kendi (2019), racist and non-racist actions are synonymous because both reiterate the status quo of racial inequities by not directly challenging and changing them.

Consequently, the outcomes of racist and non-racist actions are persisting racial inequities. The only difference between a racist and non-racist action is the explicit intent to maintain the status quo – the former (racist action) involves explicit, intentional harm to another racial group (i.e., racially exclusive practices such as the gentleman's agreement in MLB from the late 1800s through mid-1940s). Whereas the latter (non-racist action) refers to non-intentional behaviors that nonetheless contribute to the harm of another racial group (i.e., the NCAA's academic progress rate (APR) penalty structure).

In 2014, Donald Sterling, then owner of the Los Angeles Clippers of the NBA, was recorded saying he did not want Black fans at home games; he was communicating a racist belief. In his mind, Blacks were only valuable to him as laborers who could generate revenue for him (at the time, a majority of the team was Black [the star player was Chris Paul], and the head coach was Black [Doc Rivers]). Yet, the spectacle of the sport could only be enjoyed by those Sterling deemed as civil consumers (i.e., White fans). Sterling's view of Black people within a sporting context illustrates Hawkins' (2010) metaphor of big-time sports serving as a new plantation where elite Whites economically control and benefit from a predominantly Black athletic labor group, which has been the case with the NBA since the late 1970s. Unfortunately, Sterling's sentiments are not atypical of White professional sport franchise owners. Additional examples of prominent sport team owners communicating racist beliefs include a) former Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott referring to Black players as "million-dollar niggers" and "trained monkey" and players of Jewish backgrounds as "Jewish bastards" and "money-grubbing Jews" in the early 1990s (Shropshire, 1996, p. 24); b) former Houston Texans NFL team owner Bob McNair's reference to players who participated in the peaceful protests in 2016 as inmates who should not be able to run the prison (Darby, 2017), and c) former Washington NFL team owner Dan Snyder's longstanding opposition to changing the racist mascot until major sponsor FedEx threatened to end their partnership unless the mascot was retired (Dale, 2021) – thus reflecting the perpetuation of settler colonialism in U.S. sports (Chen & Mason, 2019).

The racist stereotype of Black people being inferior to Whites is also reflected in the perceptions of requisite leadership and cognitive traits possessed by those granted access to powerful positions within

sport organizations. For example, Al Campanis, former MLB executive director, stated in a nationally aired Nightline interview in 1987 that Blacks lacked the necessary skills and abilities to serve in leadership roles in baseball (Sailes, 2010; Shropshire, 1996). In 2021, a more recent controversy involving Rachel Nichols, former anchor of the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) television show “NBA: The Jump,” revealed a prevailing belief among many White sport industry professionals that Blacks are less qualified for top level positions. In an off-air recorded conversation, Nichols stated she felt the only reason her Black woman counterpart, Maria Taylor, was selected to serve as the lead anchor for the 2021 NBA Finals instead of her was due to ESPN’s “crappy” record on diversity (Goldman, 2021). In other words, in Nichols’ opinion, ESPN only granted Taylor the opportunity because of the public relations benefits that would come from having a Black woman on the air rather than affording Taylor the opportunity because of her merit and outstanding qualifications as a sports reporter. Nichols, who worked at ESPN in various roles between 2004-2013 and 2016-2021, was considered one of the women faces of NBA basketball reporting (along with Doris Burke – another White woman). Thus, Nicholas held a powerful and influential position as a White woman with the worldwide leader in sport network.

The fact that Nichols expressed these views in private, similar to former Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott in the early 1990s and former Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling in 2014, exposes how seemingly non-racist people and sport organizations harbor racist beliefs and these ideas influence organizational cultures and climates (see the post-ESPN recollections of Black sport journalists and reporters such as Jemelle Hill, Michael Smith, Chris Broussard, and Mike Hill to name a few). Shortly after Nichols’ comments were publicized, she was relieved of her NBA reporting duties with ESPN. Beyond implicit bias training or reactive firings, after racist beliefs are publicized (one can only wonder if Nichols’ views were not recorded yet known by ESPN producers if any reprimand would have been issued), anti-racist sport organizations must not only be committed to challenging racist beliefs through their hiring, retention, and promotion practices but also through their denunciation of the expression of racist beliefs in any context (private or public²). Furthermore, the fact that these examples of powerful White people in high-profile sport organizations expressed similar ideas across a 50-year time span underscores the deeply embedded nature and the pervasive acceptance of racist/non-racist beliefs within these milieus.

Moreover, the prevalence of racist beliefs held by several sport industry professionals also unveils how the ideology of White superiority among the leadership ranks of an organization can influence every aspect of its culture from employment policies and practices, marketing and branding, partnerships (private, public, and non-profit), sense of welcomeness and belonging, philanthropic efforts, and labor compensation to name a few (the concepts of racialized organizations, in general (Ray, 2019), and racialized sport organizations, more specifically (Keaton & Cooper, 2022) are discussed later. Although the concept of homologous reproduction has primarily been used in sport literature to examine systematic sexism in leadership positions (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008), I surmise this bias practice applies to race and racial ideologies. The fact that all major professional, intercollegiate, interscholastic, and youth sport leagues did not desegregate³ on a national level until the early 1970s illustrates how racist beliefs are entrenched (and dare I say synonymous with) the structures and processes of mainstream (read: White) sport organizations dating back to the mid-1800s (Sailes, 2010). Since many sport organizations and the sport industry more broadly were founded under racially exclusionary/discriminatory premises, ideological and structural transformation are essential for achieving true diversity, equity, and inclusion (Cooper et al., 2020).

Beyond team owners, the proliferation of racist actions by individuals and organizations within sport is undeniable. For example, in 2021, then head coach and general manager of the Las Vegas Raiders,

² Notable exceptions for the expression of racist beliefs should be during structured dialogue where personal and professional growth is centralized (i.e., diversity trainings).

³ The term integration is intentionally omitted here since my colleagues and I assert this action has not fully be enacted or pursued sincerely— see Cooper, Cavin, and Cheeks (2014) for additional discussion on this topic.

Jon Gruden, was forced to resign after a series of racist (and homophobic and sexist) emails were discovered by a non-NFL official (Damien, 2021). One of the emails referred to NFL Players Association (NFLPA) Executive Director DeMaurice Smith as “dumb” and described his facial features in terms of a 19th-century minstrel show caricature (“lips as big as Michelin tires”). Both these racial stereotypes (Blacks being innately less intelligent and possessing sub-human and animal-like features) have been ubiquitous in mainstream sports in the U.S. for over a century (Sailes, 2010). Hawkins (2010) noted how Black males are perpetually subjected to caricatures such as the sambo (immature and incompetent) and brute (animalistic) stereotypes, which have been used to justify their exploitation as athletes in sports while simultaneously denying them equal access to leadership positions. Not ironically, a head coach and general manager who just three years prior was awarded a 10-year \$100 million contract knowingly (to those within the high ranks of the NFL) expressed these views and was not forced to resign until a journalist exposed him in a very telling of the embedded racist culture in one of the highest profile professional sport leagues in the U.S. In other words, the timing and reasons for Jon Gruden’s resignation suggest his comments were not antithetical to the sentiments of other NFL coaches, general managers, and team owners.

Even more troubling, the ubiquitous nature of such racist beliefs led to the creation and sustainment of the insidious practice of race norming. Race norming was a testing procedure enacted by NFL medical staff to assess the declining cognitive functioning of players (Paras, 2021). The underlying racist assumption that informed the baseline and subsequent test results was that Black players possessed innate cognitive functioning levels that were lower than non-Blacks, which meant the likelihood of Black players receiving compensation for concussion claims post-retirement was significantly lower than non-Black players. This irreprehensible practice directly resulted in significant economic deprivation from scores of Black players. Concomitantly, White players who were evaluated more equitably were provided access to economic remuneration for their concussion claims. As a result, the NFL’s systematic discrimination through race norming for nearly half a century exacerbated Black players’ health issues (e.g., suicide, dementia, abuse, family dissolutions, etc.), which caused irreparable harm to their families and communities.

Bear in mind that the practice of race norming was still being practiced when NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell issued a recorded statement saying the league condemns racism and the systematic oppression of Black people and believes in Black Lives Matter (Associated Press, 2020). These statements signified a preference for non-discrimination and the need for racial equality in the U.S. On the surface, this statement is non-racist. However, these sentiments were expressed during the Summer of 2020, over a year before the NFL officially ended its race norming practices. The tangible harms caused by covert racist policies and practices of sport organizations such as the NFL stands in stark contrast to their overt performative non-racist claims. The hypocrisy between the rhetoric (statements, gestures, and short-term actions) versus reality (policies, practices, and outcomes) of these sport organizations reveal what Kendi (2019) surmised as the inextricable connection between racist and non-racist actions in terms of material outcomes for groups subjected to racial oppression. Hence, this analysis of the NFL as a case study underscores the importance of understanding the connection between ideologies (i.e., White superiority), schemas (i.e., racist beliefs and attitudes), and structures (i.e., policies and practices that render racial inequities) for transforming systems from being racist or non-racist to anti-racist (Cooper et al., 2020; Kendi, 2019; Ray, 2019).

Anti-racist organizations assess racial equity based on policy outcomes rather than solely or primarily on intentions. In my work, I have recommended sport organizations adopt the A.R.C. of Justice framework as a tool for enacting anti-racism. Within the A.R.C. of Justice framework, sport organizations are called to enhance the following areas through policy and practice: a) five As: agency, advocacy, allyship, activism, and alliances; b) five Rs: respectful relationships, representation, resources, redress, and results; c) five Cs: consciousness, care-to-conviction, cross-cultural collaborations, courage, and commitment (Cooper, forthcoming). Racist and non-racist organizations position the perspectives, needs, and

outcomes of privileged Whites at the core and those of Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans at the periphery. In contrast, anti-racist organizations center the perspectives of stakeholder groups who have been historically marginalized at the core and measure organizational effectiveness based on the progress of these groups (i.e., reduced racial inequities). More specifically, an anti-racist approach would prioritize the insights of specific stakeholder groups from within (i.e., Black women across all levels of employment – entry level to senior leadership) and beyond (i.e., Black communities who experience intergenerational economic deprivation) their sport organization to signify an authentic commitment to inclusive excellence (Carter-Francique, 2018; Cooper, Newton, Klein, & Jolly, 2020).

Moving Beyond Surface-Level Diversity to Deep-Level Diversity

A cursory analysis of the racial demographics of ownership, management, coaches, administrative staff, media, and players across various sports signifies the prevailing racialized structure of these spaces. The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) has published Racial and Gender Hiring Report Cards for select professional and intercollegiate sport organizations since the late 1980s (TIDES, 2021). These reports assess the extent to which management and leadership levels of sport organizations reflect the racial diversity in the broader U.S. society. A consistent theme across the past four decades of TIDES reports is racial progress in sport organizations is gradual at best and stagnant at worst. White males continue to dominate a vast majority of the leadership positions in sport. Even though demographic shifts in the U.S. have changed drastically over this period, and currently, White males only constitute roughly 30% of the U.S. population (Villareal, 2021), they persistently represent over 50% of those in sport leadership positions (TIDES, 2021). In some cases, such as ownership of the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB, MLS, NASCAR, and senior level leadership in the NCAA, White males constitute over 90% of key decision makers.⁴ Stated differently, TIDES reports indicate sport leadership continues to lag behind the broader society in terms of diversity and inclusion at its highest ranks, reinforcing the prevailing racial hierarchy in the U.S. that disadvantages Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans.

Notwithstanding, a noteworthy limitation of the TIDES reports is the grade assessment based on aggregating multiple racial groups with the term “people of color,” which does not allow for a more nuanced analysis of which racial groups are represented at higher rates. For example, in a recent TIDES report, the following description is provided for how grades are calculated:

The Institute issues the grades in relation to overall patterns in society. Federal affirmative action policies state the workplace should reflect the percentage of people in the racial group in the population. When we first published the Racial and Gender Report Card in the late 1980s, approximately 24 percent of the population was comprised of people of color. Thus, an A was achieved if 24 percent of the positions were held by people of color...The change in the nation’s demographics has been dramatic with the most recent census making all people of color and minorities closer to 40 percent. To be fair in transition to the organizations and sports, we examine in the Racial and Gender Report Cards, we decided to increase the standards in two ways...To get an A for race, the category now needs to have 30 percent people of color. (Lapchick, 2021, p. 24)

The aggregation of multiple racial groups with the term “people of color” is intended to challenge hegemonic Whiteness. Still, the conflation of different racial groups and concurrent signification of collective racial progress can be problematic. Therefore, building on the benefits of the current TIDES reports, I posit an expanded anti-racist approach would assess grades based on the disaggregation of these racial

⁴ The WNBA had 66.7% White ownership (male and female) and 33.3% people of color (TIDES, 2021). Although, these numbers are more racially diverse than other professional sport organizations in the U.S., these numbers are still starkly different than the 80.1% of WNBA players who are people of color. This racial disparity between players and owners reinforces the prevailing racial ideology of White superiority in terms ownership and leadership.

groups whereby if racial progress was noticeable with one group (i.e., Asian Americans) and not with others (i.e., African Americans) then multiple grades would be assessed to indicate which groups are progressing and which groups are either remaining stagnant or regressing. Elsewhere, I explained how the use of the term “of color” simplifies racism and racialized experiences and ignores the nuances of distinct types of oppression and discrimination, such as anti-Black racism (Cooper, 2016a). Bonilla-Silva (2018) described cultural racism as one of the four frames of colorblind racism practiced in the U.S. Similarly, I argue anti-racist actions must involve a level of attentiveness to how racism manifests itself in intersecting and distinctive ways for different groups. For example, a recent TIDES report revealed the NFL received a B grade for racial hiring (Laphick, 2021). This grade was issued based on the increased hiring of people of color for leadership positions. However, when one contrasts this B racial hiring grade with the fact that 0% of NFL owners are Black (zero out of 32), 15.6% of general managers (five out of 32) are Black, and .06% (two out of 32) of head coaches are Black in a league that is comprised of 58% Black players (Laphick, 2021), then it is clear to see how persistent access discrimination for Blacks seeking leadership roles in the NFL is not fully captured in the methodology and reporting that calculates racial progress based on “people of color” (Cunningham et & Sagas, 2005; Cunningham, 2010).

By the end of the 2021-2022 regular season, there was only one Black head coach out of 32 NFL teams (Pittsburgh Steelers Head Coach Mike Tomlin). The irony of this reality is that Coach Tomlin is the only head coach in NFL history to begin his coaching career with 15 consecutive non-losing seasons (DeArdo, 2022). Coach Tomlin’s feat surpasses the accomplishments of several White head coaches in the Hall of Fame. On the one hand, Coach Tomlin’s success illustrates the promise of Black head coaches when and if granted the opportunity to demonstrate their prowess without racial barriers. On the other hand, the fact that Coach Tomlin is the only Black head coach in the NFL at the end of the 2021 regular season reflects the prevailing presence of Whiteness in professional sports whereby Blacks must be extraordinary to have comparable leadership opportunities while their White counterparts are held to a much lower standard (i.e., several White head coaches with losing records routinely are awarded subsequent head coaching opportunities including Adam Gase, Chip Kelly, Pat Shurmur, and Mike Mularkey to name a few) (Gallagher et al., 2021). Hence, advances in scholarship and industry practices that account for distinct forms of racism (i.e., anti-Black racism) reflect anti-racist approaches.

Although TIDES reports primarily provide information on surface-level diversity (i.e., biological or observable differences between groups) trends within sport organizations, this data should not be minimized or understated. Representation in leadership matters insofar as organizations of diversity are more likely to have improved decision-making capabilities, awareness of ever-changing marketplace trends in an increasingly global economy, and more favorable corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts than organizations of similarity (Cunningham & Melton, 2011; Cunningham, 2019). When racial diversity is present at the highest levels of leadership, it challenges the White superiority ideology on a symbolic level by showing how Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans possess strong leadership skills and the trust of key sport stakeholders to elevate these organizations. It is important to note that representation, even in the highest levels of sport leadership, does not mean anything if not accompanied by authoritative power to enact transformative change. In other words, non-racist organizations typically use “diversity hires” to offset criticisms about their lack of commitment to diversity and inclusion. However, a major problem with representation without authoritative power is the perpetuation of the status quo, including racial inequities in organizational outcomes. Thus, anti-racist actions involve not only the hiring of high-level leaders who have influential power within an organization but also the infusion of a critical mass of diverse staff across all levels (particularly those above the entry level); hence, surface-level diversity does not inherently translate to true inclusion whereas deep-diversity increases in racial equity (Cooper, Newton, Klein, & Jolly, 2020).

Additionally, racial diversity in leadership can contribute to more racial equity and cultural inclusion by creating new policies and programming. For example, when the NCAA hired a former president of two historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs; Virginia Union University and Livingstone College),

Dr. Bernard Franklin, as their Executive Vice President of Education and Community Engagement and Chief Inclusion Officer in 2003. He subsequently established several progressive initiatives, such as the Accelerating Academic Success Program (AASP) for limited resource institutions (LRIs), and organized the annual NCAA Inclusion Forum (NCAA, 2021). Prior to his appointment, HBCU athletic programs (now beneficiaries of the AASP) were not prioritized for financial support despite experiencing systemic economic deprivation since their inception (Cooper et al., 2014), and topics such as implicit bias workshops, ethnic heritage months, racial justice programming, and anti-racism were scarce to non-existent (NCAA, 2021). Dr. Franklin's impact on the NCAA's inclusion efforts typifies the benefit of pursuing anti-racist aims in sport leadership.

Notwithstanding, Smith and Hattery (2011) explained the need to examine the deeper ideologies and systems that produce racial disparities in sport leadership positions:

...little research exists on how social distance and symbolic racism processes may contribute to the continued racial segregation and lack of presence and power in leadership positions in sport management. While 'general' descriptive research may allow for an accurate depiction of the racial gap in the management of sport; research through the lens of race relations theories allows for a better understanding of what shaped and contributed to the racial gap. (p. 115)

Reflecting on this race-conscious approach, Singer, Harrison, and Bukstein (2010) utilized critical race theory (CRT) to analyze the data from the Black Coaches Association (BCA) Hiring Report Card (HRC) from 2004-2009. The authors concluded that process racism (Asante, 1988) adversely impacted Black coaching prospects, whereby they were not granted equitable opportunities for hiring in the recruitment (i.e., no consultation with the BCA to identify qualified Black candidates) or evaluation stages (e.g., underrepresentation of Black hiring search committee members, the unconscious and subconscious internalization of racist stereotypes about Black former athletes' coaching potential and abilities, short time frame between vacancy announcements and the hiring of the next coach begets a reliance of pre-established (read: White male) networks and general neglect of adherence to affirmative action policies) compared to their White counterparts (Singer et al., 2011). Along the same lines, Cunningham (2010) explained how the interplay of macro- (institutionalized practices, political climate, and stakeholder expectations), meso- (prejudice, discrimination, leadership stereotypes, and organizational culture of similarity), and micro-level (head coaching expectations and intentions, and turnover intentions) factors created a myriad of barriers for African American coaching prospects.

Both Singer et al.'s (2010) and Cunningham's (2010) research provide nuanced insight into the subtle ways institutionalized racism manifests in policies and practices, which precede observable outcomes such as coaching hires. When processes and norms are created by homologous in-groups, those deemed as out-group members are inherently disadvantaged. Furthermore, when sport organizations rely on tokenistic gestures to assuage critics of their de facto racist policies and practices, they deflect attention away from structural changes (deep-level diversity) that could lead to long-term racial equity towards cosmetic adaptations (surface-level diversity) that, at best, contribute to short-term gains and at worst exacerbate racial inequities (i.e., the long-term ineffectiveness of the NFL Rooney Rule). Singer et al. (2010) proposed two recommendations for redressing these pervasive issues. One recommendation involves using Title VII legislation or what Cooper, Mallery, and Macaulay (2020) refer to as legal activism to force sport organizations to engage in ethical and equitable practices. Another recommendation involves the strategic use of research grounded in CRT to inform improvements in procedural justice among these sport organizations (Singer et al., 2010). Relatedly, Cunningham (2010) surmised that sustained collection action across the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels, including various forms of activism (see Cooper (2021) for a detailed discussion on hybrid resistance and strategic responsiveness to interest convergence), would be necessary to transform sporting systems from their racist status quo to spaces where diversity and inclusion are truly embodied.

Multi-Facet Sport Organizational Challenges and Opportunities

The prevalence of racism within and around sport organizations extends beyond top-level leadership in professional or intercollegiate sport to include multiple stakeholders (e.g., parents, league organizers, media, communities, etc.). In a study of youth soccer culture, Manning (2020) found that despite the presence of surface-level diversity among league participants, explicit racist interactions and more covert racist actions still occurred. Assertions about biological differences between racial groups were routine in conversations about players' abilities even though volumes of scientific research have found that racial categories are a byproduct of social construction rather than biological facts (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). The uncritical acceptance of biological determinism and its connection to the myth of White European manifest destiny has been used to justify various human atrocities ranging from Native American genocide to Asian internment camps to transnational African enslavement to the criminalization of Latinos to international settler colonialism (Chen & Mason, 2019; Cooper, 2021; Sage & Eitzen 2009). Another problem with this reality is that these same fallacious biological deterministic views inform decisions related to youth sport funding opportunities, recruitment practices, medical resources, and positional assignments along racial lines (Coakley, 2017; Sage & Eitzen, 2009). These outcomes reflect the material consequences of structures grounded in racist ideologies. The fact that racial stereotypes are prevalent as early as the youth sport level indicates the need for anti-racism efforts as soon as children can comprehend social messages.

In another study, Glover (2007) interviewed African American parents in Champaign, Illinois, who organized a separate youth baseball league due to policies of a White-controlled league that privileged White middle-class cultural norms and ignored implications for children from diverse racial and socio-economic backgrounds. For example, one salient finding from the study highlighted how the financial costs of participating in the White-controlled youth baseball league reduced access for Black families who did not possess the same economic resources (Glover, 2007). Coakley (2017) has noted how over the past three decades, the increased privatization of youth sports (i.e., pay to play model) as an extension of neoliberalism and concurrent divestment in public recreation and interscholastic programs has resulted in reduced racial diversity in participation rates. Hence, without equitable representation and deep-level diversity considerations (e.g., differences in attitudes, values, cultures, beliefs, and practices), surface-level diversity and colorblind racism will continue to produce racial inequities, and true inclusion will remain elusive (Cooper et al., 2020).

Participants in Glover's (2007) study also explained how the de facto race neutral draft rules of the White-controlled league often resulted in Black children being one of the few of their race on a team, which contributed to feelings of isolation and experiences with stigmatization (i.e., the only Black player on the team must be faster than White players or less capable of playing pitcher because it is a "thinking" position – racist stereotypes grounded in biological determinism; Sailes, 2010). The lack of awareness of and responsiveness to the experiences of Black youth baseball players who were the numerical minority in the White-controlled league resulted in policies and practices being established that adversely impacted them irrespective of intent (read: non-racist actions and colorblind racism). When Whites control and set the norms of a sport organization (which is the case for nearly all mainstream sports in the U.S. from youth to professional), forced assimilation, as opposed to true integration, is required for out-groups such as Blacks (Cooper et al., 2014). Glover (2007) poignantly explained the shortcomings of abstract liberal integrationist approaches:

The real remedy for racial domination is not interracial contact to dispel stereotypes, but rather the transformation of power relations between Black and White people. Such a transformation necessarily requires the re-distribution of resources to address existing power imbalances between Blacks and Whites. (p. 205)

A historical example of the detrimental impact of assimilation (as opposed to true integration) on an

entire racial group is the dissolution of the Negro Leagues after MLB selectively recruited talented African Americans who were willing to embody White cultural norms (Lomax, 2014). This assimilationist approach reinforced the existing racial power imbalances. Rather an anti-racist transformational approach would have involved establishing a symbiotic partnership with Black baseball teams, businesses, and communities (Lomax, 2014). Another example of the ills of assimilation for Black people is the reduced economic viability and popularity of HBCU athletic programs after the 1970s when scores of historically White institutions (HWIs) began recruiting Black athletes (Cooper et al., 2014). Prior to assimilation, HBCU athletic programs were highly popular regionally and generated economic stimulation for local Black municipalities. However, post assimilation, many HBCUs have been forced to either disband their athletic programs or operate as LRIs, significantly reducing the quality of their sport offerings, recruitment, and overall competitiveness (Johnson, 2013). Racist and non-racist approaches champion colorblindness, assimilation, and abstract liberalism, whereas anti-racist organizations reflect true inclusion and enact policies that foster racial equity (Cooper, Newton, Klein, & Jolly, 2020).

Colorblind racist policies and practices are normalized at every level of mainstream sport in the U.S. Several researchers have noted racialized sport participation patterns where Whites are more likely to perceive feelings of welcomeness in a wider range of sports (e.g., basketball, football, baseball, soccer, lacrosse, golf, volleyball, swimming, etc.) than Blacks (basketball, football, and track and field) and Hispanics or Latinos (baseball and soccer) (Bopp et al., 2017; Harrison et al., 2002; Ogden, 2004; Ogden & Hilt, 2003). Harrison (2001) argued stereotypes, as social schemas, are largely responsible for racialized sport participation patterns in the U.S. In addition to stereotypes, structural factors such as socioeconomic status and access to resources have also been identified as key influences for racial differences in sport participation at the youth and interscholastic levels (Coakley, 2017; Eitle & Eitle, 2002; Sage & Eitzen, 2009). Therefore, youth and interscholastic sport organizations seeking to reflect anti-racist processes must be attuned to how current structures privilege certain racial groups and disadvantage others. In addition, anti-racist organizations must also be mindful of intersectionality, whereby the interplay of racism, sexism, and classism greatly influence sport participation experiences and outcomes (Carter-Francique, 2018).

At the intercollegiate level, Bimper and Harrison (2017) analyzed the organizational documents (e.g., websites, policies, etc.) of 62 Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) athletic programs. They found conspicuous omissions of explicit references to race or racial equity. Bimper and Harrison (2017) cogently expressed the danger of race omission or evasiveness in policies and practices when they said:

To this point, the adoption of colorblind directives suggests race and racism are marginally germane, at best, to the strategic leadership of intercollegiate athletics departments and their organization—stakeholder relationships...Likewise, the decontextualized and deracialized discourse ingrained and recycled by athletic departmental directives can preclude the critical adeptness necessary to combat racism and racist directive policies of athletic programs (p. 687).

If athletic departments are serious about fostering anti-racist and inclusive environments, then ignoring or downplaying the impact of systemic racism is not the answer. Hence, policies must be informed by the experiences and perspectives of those most disadvantaged by the status quo.

In addition to governance and management, this book will also examine the state of marketing and branding efforts, including CSR, within sport organizations to highlight the extent to which anti-racism is present or absent. For example, nearly two decades ago, Harrison (1998) cautioned sport marketing professionals from simply increasing the racial diversity of athletes in advertisements and promotions without a level of cultural sensitivity. Harrison (1998) argued that often sport advertisements and promotions not only reify “historical stereotypes, attitudes, feelings, and emotions” of racialized groups but also condition consumers to view these athletes and their communities in monolithic terms (p. 45). Along the same lines, Armstrong (1999) expressed the need for sport marketers and their organizations

to adapt their strategies to meet the needs of increasingly diverse consumer markets when she said:

Because of the increased cultural diversity America is undergoing, sport marketers and advertisers must be cognizant of the challenges presenting advertisements to consumers who do not want to give up their racial, cultural, and ethnic uniqueness in their consumptions and purchase behaviors, but instead want their identities validated and their uniqueness acknowledged and respected (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985) (p. 284).

The balance between genuinely honoring and appealing to diverse racial and cultural groups and engaging in co-optation, pandering, and exploitative approaches is thin. Anderson and Martin (2019) posited that sport organizations tend to fall short of achieving their public relations aims through CSR when they fail to engage community stakeholders over time authentically. The “culturally appropriate manner” (Armstrong, 1999, p. 284) of deploying marketing and branding strategies is integral to fostering anti-racism in sport organizations in the 21st century.

The Need for a Paradigm Shift in Sport Organizations: From Racialized Structures to Anti-Racist Systems

Drawing from interdisciplinary research, Ray (2019) theorized that organizations are racial structures whereby meanings, positions, incentives, and penalties are emblematic ideological foundations. Within the racialized organizations model, Ray (2019) conceptualized the recursive relationship between the racial substructure (schemas), racial structure (rules and resources), and racial superstructure (racial ideology). The four tenets of racialized organizations include the diminishment of agency, legitimation of unequal resource distribution, racialization and credentialing, and racialized decoupling (Ray, 2019). Within the context of sport, Keaton and Cooper (2022) explained how racialized sport organizations function. In terms of diminished agency, Keaton and Cooper (2022) stated how Black athletic administrators, coaches, and college athletes experience a lack of self-efficacy to change the system in which they function. Formal rules and informal norms signal to them that any excessive critiques of the status quo can result in their disposability. Although Black stakeholders were the focus of her analysis this assertion can be applied to any racial group that has been subjected to historical oppression and contemporary marginalization in sport in the U.S., including Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans (Cooper et al., 2020). As such, these groups are expected to be grateful for the opportunity to participate or be employed in White-controlled spaces rather than seek to transform them (Keaton & Cooper, 2022).

Related to the legitimation of unequal resources, the principle of amateurism in big-time college sports and concurrent economic deprivation of HBCU athletic programs highlights how the NCAA justifies exploiting Black labor for White benefactors. Similar economic disparities are seen across sport participation levels (youth to professional) when economically elite Whites control them compared to racial groups facing oppressive conditions (Coakley, 2017; Sage & Eitzen, 2009). The Whiteness as a credential tenet is reflected in the perpetual over representation of Whites in leadership positions (e.g., governance, management, marketing and branding, athletic, medical support staff, etc.) compared to Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans. Lastly, the decoupling of formalized rules is reflected in the differential treatment of White administrators, coaches, and athletes for certain violations compared to their Black counterparts (Keaton & Cooper, 2022). Several White college coaches such as Les Miles, Mike Leach, Steve Sarkisian, Lane Kiffin, and Urban Meyer, to name a few, have all violated NCAA and university policies, but subsequently, they were rehired for high profile positions (in some cases at the professional level). Whereas Black college coaches such as Kevin Ollie, Ty Willingham, Turner Gill, Charlie Strong, and Kevin Sumlin, to name a few, have been fired for far less severe violations (at times no violations at all) and subsequently denied access to similar positions. The theory of racialized organizations and its tenets (Ray, 2019) are useful analytic tools for understanding how and why sport organizations reproduce racial inequities (Keaton & Cooper, 2022). This book explores the nature of racialized organizations (governance, management, and marketing and branding) using various critical

theories and frameworks.

Related to racialized organizations, in my previous work, I have used Schein's (2010) organizational culture theory to analyze the extent to which racism (read: colorblind) or anti-racism (read: race conscious) approaches have been instituted in sport organizations (Cooper, 2013). Shropshire (1996) explained the importance of addressing racism at multiple levels within sport organizations when he said: "A recognition of the persistent existence of racism at conscious and unconscious levels is essential to improving the situation in American sports" (p. 33). More specifically, examining a sport organization's basic assumptions (e.g., taken-for-granted expectations, (in)visible scripts, resource allocation, etc.), espoused beliefs and values (e.g., mission statement, core values, policies, etc.), and artifacts (e.g., symbols, rituals, climate, physical environments, etc.) will reveal its core purpose and priorities. For example, sport organizations that promote racist mascots, traditional songs, flags, statutes, colorblind mission statements and policies, ahistorical and mythical narratives of their histories, and racial inequities in resource allocation reinforce Whiteness rather than foster anti-racism and multiculturalism. More recently, there has been a noticeable shift in theoretical interventions in the examination of race, racism, anti-racism, and sport. Theories such as the internal colonization model (Hawkins, 2010), world-systems theory (Smith, 2009), critical race theory (Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Carrington, 2010; Glover, 2007; Hylton, 2007; Singer, 2005, 2020), antiblackness (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020), and race-centric ecological systems theories (Cooper, 2019) have shifted the paradigm in sport research. Prior to this shift, common theories in sport research were grounded in functionalism, conflict, and interactionist foundations (Coakley, 2017; Sage & Eitzen, 2009) with less substantive attention to the ways in which race and racism shape organizational processes and outcomes. Thus, the contribution of this book offers nuanced analyses of the racialized nature of sport organizations and promote innovative and timely recommendations for how these entities can enact anti-racism in ideology, structure, and schemas (Keaton & Cooper, 2022; Ray, 2019).

The structure of this book is organized into three sections: a) Governance (Chapters 2-3), b) Management (Chapters 4-5), and c) Marketing and Communications (Chapters 6-8). Sport organizations across the youth, interscholastic, intercollegiate, and professional levels are examined and discussed. In Chapter 2, Lori Martin explores racial issues in youth and interscholastic sports. Using data from the ASPEN Institute, Martin explains how the tenet of racial realism from critical race theory (CRT) (Bell, 1992), the excellence beyond athletics (EBA) framework (Cooper, 2016b), and the Advancement of Blacks in Sport (ABIS) organization provide valuable insights into how anti-racism can be optimized at the youth and interscholastic levels. In Chapter 3, Joy Gaston Gayles, Wayne Black, Ezinne Ofoegbu, and Dion Harry examine the intersection of race, athletic capitalism, and governance issues in intercollegiate athletics. Gaston-Gayles, Black, Ofoegbu, and Harry present recommendations for transforming intercollegiate athletic governance from a system of racism, antiblackness, and exploitation to a system grounded in common humanity, anti-racism, and equity.

In Chapter 4, Rhema Fuller examines the prevalence of racism and inequities in youth and interscholastic sports from a management perspective. Specifically, Fuller highlights how two sport organizations, The Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE) and King County Play Equity Coalition, exemplify anti-racism through their youth sport programming efforts. In Chapter 5, Eddie Comeaux, Dresden June Frazier, and Briana A. Savage discuss the importance of critical research that centralizes the interplay between intercollegiate athletics, racism, and antiblackness. The authors explain how it is important to explore the distinct ways in which racism impacts the experiences of Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American athletes and athletic staff. The authors conclude the chapter with a presentation of practical strategies and tools for combating antiblackness and racism in intercollegiate athletic spaces.

In Chapter 6, C. K. Harrison, Whitney Griffin, Amanda Schweinbenz, and Kristina Szabo present an innovative approach to athlete branding with a focus on examining their development during and after their athletic careers. With the recent changes in laws and rules regarding athletes' rights to their name,

image, and likeness (NIL), the authors' presentation of multiple exemplar former athletes who have excelled in careers after their athletic careers concluded underscore the importance of adopting frameworks that account for the influence of cultural memory, race, and sport. In Chapter 7, Drew Brown utilizes critical race theory (CRT) to examine how mainstream sport commercials undermine anti-racism efforts by reinforcing the "rags to riches," and the humble beginnings stereotype associated with Black athletes. Brown asserts anti-racist marketing efforts must include Black creators and influencers during the idea generation and activation processes to ensure racist tropes are not reproduced consciously or subconsciously. Finally, in Chapter 8, Shaun Anderson explores the role of anti-racism in sport corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. Given the shift in focus and intensity of social justice initiatives from sport organizations during the summer of 2020, Anderson explains how there is a difference between performative public relations and authentic CSR initiatives that contribute to redressing racial and social injustices within and beyond sporting spaces. Collectively, the chapters in this book advance our collective understanding of how to pursue and achieve long-term substantive change as measured by racial equity through anti-racist ideologies, theories, leadership, strategies, structures, policies, and practices.

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Chapter 2

Roadmap to Racial Equity in Youth and Interscholastic Sports: Advancement for Blacks in Sport as an Anti-Racism Framework in Sport Organizations

Lori Latrice Martin

Abstract

After the killing of George Floyd, individuals, and organizations from diverse backgrounds (re)committed to addressing racial justice issues in America. However, there is evidence the so-called racial reckoning may not have reached every area of society. For example, Black athletes are still overrepresented as players in selected sports and underrepresented among sport managers. The implications of the mismatches are far reaching and discussed in this book chapter. Derrick Bell's concept of Racial Realism helps explain why racism in sports persists and why the Excellence Beyond Athletics (EBA) approach is needed in youth and interscholastic sport organizations, especially as the approach relates to young Black athletes. It is argued that Advancement for Blacks in Sports (ABIS), Inc., an anti-racism nonprofit organization, utilizes the EAB approach and serves as a model for organizations interested in anti-racism programming. The article calls for the expansion of EBA beyond collegiate sports.

Keywords: youth sport participation, racial disparities, White backlash, radical realism, interscholastic sport

After the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, individuals, and organizations from diverse backgrounds (re)committed to addressing racial justice issues in American social institutions, including in sports ("Natasha Cloud Rightfully Calls Out Bradley Beal; WNBA Fights for Real Change," 2021). However, there is evidence the racial reckoning that some claim took place more than a year ago, may not have reached every area of society (Lapchick 2020). For example, Black athletes are often overrepresented as players in sports such as football and men's basketball, and underrepresented among sport managers, including athletic directors and coaches. The implications of the disparities are several and far reaching.

First, young Black athletes, particularly Black males, may be less likely to be treated holistically. Sports are viewed as hyper-masculine and Black males, in particular, are often negatively stereotyped based upon various physical characteristics. Second, young Black male athletes may lack the support required to combat anti-Black sentiments from multiple sources. These sources may include institutional disparities and negative stereotypes and unequal treatment by sports fans, media, and administrators. Young male athletes may lack the emotional support required to cope with challenges they face as athletes and as students. Third, young Black male athletes will likely miss out on much needed advocacy and empowerment related to the historic and contemporary exploitation of Black labor, including with respect to monumental changes in name, image, and likeness (NIL).

Derrick Bell's (1992) philosophy of Racial Realism helps us understand why racial inequities persist in sports even after perceived periods of racial progress. Advancement for Blacks in Sport (ABIS), Inc. is a

nonprofit organization working to address racial inequities in sports and provides an ideal framework for mobilizing others to tackle the tough problem that is racism in America, especially as it relates to Black youth and sport organizations (weareabis.org). What is needed is greater racial equity in youth and interscholastic sports and the Excellence Beyond Athletics (EBA) approach, while created for collegiate athletes, I argue, is appropriate for athletes in youth and interscholastic sports particularly Black male athletes in football and basketball (Cooper, 2016).

Race and Youth Sports Participation

According to a recent study conducted by The ASPEN Institute, about 40% of children between the ages of 6 and 12 played a team or individual sport in 2019. In 2018, about 35% of Black children between the ages of 6 and 12 played a team or individual sport compared to 38.9% in 2012. About 40% of White children between the ages of 6 and 12 played a team or individual sport in 2018 and 44% in 2021 (ASPEN Institute, 2021).

The pandemic halted many activities in America and around the globe in the early part of 2020. A 2021 report from The ASPEN Institute found about 44% of families reported that their local communities either merged, closed, or returned to limited capacity (ASPEN Institute, 2021). The report also found that Black parents were more worried about their child's sports leading to illness than White parents (ASPEN Institute, 2021). Almost 32.7% of Black youth reportedly less interest in the sport they played before the pandemic compared to 28.1% of White youth (ASPEN Institute 2021). Moreover, the reported showed that 42% of Black youth resumed sports at a lower level than they were playing before the coronavirus pandemic (ASPEN Institute, 2021). Finally, the report revealed more White parents (72%) said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their children's coaches than Black (53%) and Hispanic (59%) parents (ASPEN Institute, 2021). The cumulative data shows despite the pandemic, sports are remain important (albeit to varying levels across groups) and the race of parents and coaches may matter when assessing satisfaction with participation in youth sports. There are often racial differences between Black parents and children and the coaches. There is evidence that explains how this does not happen by chance, but rather by design.

Racial Disparities among Sport Managers

Longstanding racial disparities among sport managers, including athletic directors and coaches, across sports remain persistent across all levels of participation (youth, interscholastic, intercollegiate, and professional) (Lapchick, 2021). According to an article published on The Undefeated (theundefeated.com) by Jamal Murphy, former grassroots basketball legend and current head high school basketball coach Lou Richie was on a crusade to draw attention to the absence of Black coaches and the need for change (Murphy, 2021). Richie was apparently inspired to act after the killing of George Floyd. After a failed attempt to picket during a men's college basketball game, Richie exchanged his sign for a t-shirt with the message that read "Black Head Coaches Matter", and proudly wore it to a women's college basketball game. Richie commented,

Now I can walk in and people can still see it and people can still think about it. I can still tweet it and I don't have to worry about a police officer putting his hands on me or pulling his gun on me, because it's a peaceful protest, but it is a shirt and it's nonthreatening, so there's no way someone could ask me to leave with my shirt on...the hiring process needs to be more equitable and transparent. (Murphy, 2021)

Murphy's assertions are evident in a simple review of publicly available data. For example, a review of a website containing all high school Athletic Directors in the State of Louisiana, by the author, particularly in parishes with relatively large Black populations, found most Athletic Directors were both White and male (<https://www.lhsaa.org/lhsada>). The absence of Black coaches and Black athletic directors,

for example, may be due to several barriers. These barriers may include homogeneous social networks, which privilege White males. The graduation rate gaps between Blacks and their peers could also serve as a barrier for why the disparities exist given that many of the college and professional sport leagues either require or prioritize candidates with college degrees and coaching experience. Stereotypes regarding the inability of Black people to lead may also serve as a barrier to greater racial equity among coaches and athletic directors.

The underrepresentation of Black people as sport managers over time is well documented, including in youth, college, and professional sports. Dr. Richard Lapchick and his team at the University of Central Florida (UCF) have analyzed data on race and gender trends in sport leadership positions for several decades (Lapchick, 2021e). In a recent report, the researchers found ongoing racial and gender differences in both college and professional sports. For example, despite all the great athlete activism conducted by the predominately Black players in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), there remains a lack of diversity among coaches and senior administrators (Lapchick, 2021e).¹ Over 74% or 105 of WNBA players identified as Black in 2021 compared to 69% or 100 a decade earlier. Of the 12 head coaches, 7 or 58.3% identified as White in 2021 compared to 5 or 41.7%, which was largely unchanged from 2011 (Lapchick, 2021e). In 2021, over 66% or 10 of the owners were White compared to 13.3% or 2 of the owners who identified as Black (Lapchick, 2021e). A decade earlier all the owners were White (Lapchick, 2021e). Seventy-five percent or 9 of the CEO/Presidents in the WNBA identified as White compared to 3 or 25% Black CEO/Presidents in 2021 (Lapchick, 2021e). In 2011, all but one of the CEO/Presidents in the WNBA was White. Nearly 80% or 50 of Vice Presidents and Above in the WNBA identified as White in 2021 (Lapchick, 2021e). Over 90% or 34 of Vice Presidents and Above in the WNBA identified as White in 2011 (Lapchick, 2021e).

Black coaches and administrators were also underrepresented in the National Basketball Association (NBA) where during the 2019-2020 over 74% or 385 of the players identified as Black (Lapchick, 2021c). For the 2009-2010 season, almost 80% or 339 of NBA players identified as Black. Nearly 90% or 31 of the majority and controlling owners were White in the data analyzed for the 2019-2020 season (Lapchick, 2021c). Almost all the majority and controlling owners in the 2009-2010 season were White (Lapchick, 2021c). There were 0 Black majority and controlling owners in the 2009-2010 season and 1 in the 2019-2020 season (Lapchick, 2021c). Seventy percent or 21 of NBA coaches were White, according to the data analyzed for the 2019-2020 season which was relatively unchanged from the 2009-2010 season (Lapchick, 2021c). Forty-nine or 89.1% percent or 30 of NBA CEO/Presidents identified as White based upon the most recent data (Lapchick, 2021c). Eighty-eight percent or 30 of the NBA CEO/Presidents were White ten years earlier (Lapchick 2021c). Eighty-seven percent or 20 of NBA General Managers were White in 2009-2010 compared to 72% in 2019-2020 (Lapchick, 2021c). Previous literature on racial stacking, tasking, and stereotypes associated with Black intellectual and leadership abilities account for the ongoing observed disparities (Martin 2015).

Almost sixty percent or 967 of players in the National Football League (NFL) identified as Black during the 2020 season compared to 67% or 1714 in 2010 (Lapchick, 2021d). Similar to the WNBA and the NBA, Black people were underrepresented in head coach and senior administrator positions (Lapchick, 2021d). In 2010, 81% or 26 of 32 of the NFL head coaches were White compared to 87.5% or 28 of 31 in 2020 (Lapchick, 2021d). There were three Black head coaches in 2020 and six Black head coaches in 2010 (Lapchick, 2021d). One NFL CEO/President was Black in 2020 (Lapchick, 2021d). In 2010, there were no Black CEO/Presidents in the NFL (Lapchick, 2021d). Two of the thirty-one General Managers in the NFL were Black in 2020 (Lapchick 2021d). There were five Black General Managers in the NFL ten years prior (Lapchick, 2021d).

The findings were not much better for college sports where Black players constituted a substantial portion of the athletes in basketball (men's and women's) and football (Lapchick, 2021a). In 2019-2020,

1 Raw numbers and percentages are provided when included in the original source.

more than half of the male athletes in Division I basketball (53.2%) and 44.6% of football players were Black (Lapchick, 2021a). Ten years earlier, 58% of basketball players were Black and 42% of football players were Black (Lapchick, 2021a). Almost 42% of women's basketball players in Division I identified as Black in 2019-2020, whereas Black women made up 47.5% of all Division I basketball players in 2009-2010 (Lapchick, 2021a).

Contrarily, the report revealed 75.5% or 249 of Division I men's basketball head coaches were White 2019-2020 (Lapchick, 2021a). Almost 90% or 209 of Division I football head coaches were White during the same year (Lapchick, 2021a). A decade earlier, 78% or 242 of Division I men's basketball head coaches and almost 91% or 196 of Division I football head coaches were White (Lapchick, 2021a). Less than 25% or 75 of basketball head coaches were Black (Lapchick, 2021a). Only 8% or 19 of football head coaches were Black in 2019-2020 (Lapchick, 2021a). In 2009-2010, about 20% or 64 of basketball head coaches and less than 7% or 15 of football head coaches were Black (Lapchick, 2021a).

Less than 20% or 53 of Division I women's basketball head coaches were Black and only 14% or 46 of the Black head coaches were Black women (Lapchick, 2021a). In 2009-2010, 13.6% (42) of women's head coaches were Black and of that number, 11% or 34 were Black women (Lapchick, 2021a). Black women often have to deal with stereotypes that serve as barriers to become head coaches including the angry Black woman stereotype. Black women may also lack the representation required to access networks that have historically been closed to them (Black Female Coaches: A Players' Tribune Roundtable, 2021).

About 10% or 29 of the College Athletic Directors for Division I sports identified as Black in 2019-2020 (Lapchick, 2021b). Ten years prior, less than 7% or 19 of the College Athletic Directors for Division I sports were Black (Lapchick, 2021b). Almost 80% or 258 of the Senior Women's Administrators in Division I sports were White compared to 14.2% or 46 who identified as Black in 2019-2020 (Lapchick, 2021b). A decade ago, 84.5% or 262 of Senior Women Administrators for Division I sports were White and 9.7% or 30 were Black (Lapchick, 2021b).

The data clearly show that while much has changed much has remained the same. Black people are far more numerous among athletes than among those with decision-making authority. This is the case in both college and professional sports. It is also true for Black people when gender is considered. What is needed is greater equity in sports which may best be achieved by addressing the policies and private practices that perpetuate racial disparities in one of America's most beloved pastimes—sports.

After the killing of George Floyd, many athletic departments created new positions and initiatives to address ongoing racial inequities (Elfman, 2021). Some of the positions and initiatives addressed equity issues broadly, but few focused primarily on Black people and/or anti-Black sentiments. There was a clear backlash in the broader U.S. society that followed the increased attention concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion including elected officials and many ordinary White citizens. Perhaps this was best manifested in the misrepresentation of critical race theory and related efforts to ban the teaching of the history of race relations in America, especially the mistreatment of Black people through the operation of various social institutions as well as at the hands of ordinary White citizens (Ray & Gibbons, 2021).

Racial Equity and White Backlash

The backlash aimed at the increased attention to anti-Blackness was not restricted to the classroom. News reports of ongoing anti-Black sentiments were published on many platforms and included the mistreatment of young Black athletes (Dow, 2021). For example, PIX11, a news station based in New York City, reported on November 22, 2021, that a young Black male baseball player left a New Rochelle prep school after the Assistant Athletic Director reportedly commented that he 'gained that speed by running from the police' (Dow, 2021). The racist statement assumed inherent criminality merely because the young man was Black. The young man, Tony Humphrey, was already committed to play for Boston

College (Dow, 2021). Humphrey joined the track team to become an even better athlete. He transferred from the prep school to an area public school. According to the news report, Humphrey experienced numerous encounters with racist treatment from peers and teachers dating back to his freshman year at the school (Dow, 2021). He stated how he shared his experiences with school administrators and no action was taken. In spite of the lack of support from administrators, Humphrey was supported by other students at the prep school who staged a walkout. The school sent out a letter indicating they were going to conduct an internal investigation and contended that ‘Such comments go against the very mission of the school to develop moral and ethical leaders. It is behavior that Iona Preparatory does not condone for its students and will not accept from its faculty and staff’ (Dow, 2021). The assistant Athletic Director resigned and the community was notified in the letter. This type of response often follows racially charged events such that the institutions affirm their values and denounce the alleged or confirmed comments or actions (Finley et al., 2018). In another example, an announcer in Oklahoma used the “n” word to refer to members of the Norman High School girls’ basketball team while they kneeled during the playing of the national anthem to draw attention to racial injustices in America (Osborne, 2021). The school superintendent issued a statement declaring, “We condemn and will not tolerate the disgusting words and attitudes of these announcers. This type of hate speech has no place in our society and we are outraged that it would be directed at any human being, and particularly at our students” (Osborne, 2021). Too often there remains a gap between the contents of a statement and the way individuals within the institution behave (Dow, 2021).

Derrick Bell’s Racial Realism

Many people still see sports as purely a form of entertainment and fail to appreciate that sport is a social institution that shapes and is shaped by the ongoing racism in America (Coakley, 2017). One consequence is that sports, including youth and interscholastic sports, are viewed as places where effort and talent matter most. Another consequence is adherence to the widely held belief that sports are a level playing field where race is insignificant (Wiggins & Miller, 2003). However, race is significant in the operation of all American social institutions, including in sport (Martin, 2015).

Legal scholar, Derrick Bell (1992), developed a concept that helps explain enduring racial inequities in sports, including the mistreatment of young Black athletes in youth and interscholastic sports. Bell (1992) claimed Black civil rights leaders and many others made the mistake of making racial equality their goal. For Bell (1992), racial equality was not a realistic goal. Bell (1992) offered an alternative to racial equality. Bell (1992) proposed, Racial Realism. Bell (1992) defined Racial Realism as “a legal and social mechanism on which Blacks can rely to have their voice and outrage heard” (p. 364). Bell (1992) was unapologetic when he made the following statement:

Black people will never gain full equality in this country. Even those herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary “peaks of progress,” short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain White dominance. This is a hard-to-accept fact that all history verifies. We must acknowledge it and move on to adopt policies based on what I call “Racial Realism.” This mind-set or philosophy requires us to acknowledge the permanence of our subordinate status. That acknowledgment enables us to avoid despair, and frees us to imagine and implement racial strategies that can bring fulfillment and even triumph. (pp. 373-374)

Bell (1992) does not simply say that Black people will not gain full equality in America until some mythical or arbitrary point in time. Bell (1992) clearly states that it is outside the realm of possibility that Black people will gain full equality in the U.S. Bell (1992) accounts for moments that might be mistaken as evidence that full racial equality in America is possible. These moments, or what Bell (1992) calls ‘peaks of progress,’ might include the adoption of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments or the passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, or even

the elections of President Barack Obama and Vice President Kamala Harris (Martin, 2021). There are many scholarly studies that address how these so-called victories were indeed “short-lived” and largely unsuccessful in addressing racial inequalities on a host of issues (Martin, 2021).

Physical bondage was replaced by other forms of imprisonment ranging from sharecropping to mass incarceration (Du Bois, [1935] 1962). Black people struggled for many generations for their basic human and civil rights and also became the victims and survivors of various forms of lynchings (Brooks, 1988; Finley et al., 2018). Black men and women struggled to secure the right to vote and today continue to fight against formal and informal practices aimed at their disenfranchisement (Epps & Warren, 2020). Black people continue to face discrimination in housing, education, and employment. Black people continue to lag behind White people in America on virtually every social indicator despite electing the nation’s first Black president and first Black and woman vice-president (Martin, 2021).

Like many contemporary scholars studying the “new racism” or color-blind ideology, Bell (1992) argued, “Despite our successful effort to strip the law’s endorsement from the hated “Jim Crow” signs, contemporary color barriers are less visible but neither less real nor less oppressive” (p. 374). Moreover, Bell (1992) stated a truth forty years ago that rings true today. Bell (1992) commented, “Today, Blacks experiencing rejection for a job, a home, a promotion, anguish over whether race or individual failing prompted their exclusion. Either conclusion breeds frustration and eventually despair. We call ourselves African Americans, but despite centuries of struggle, none of us—no matter our prestige or position—is more than a few steps away from a racially motivated exclusion, restriction or affront” (p. 374). Far too much emphasis is placed on the belief that racial equality is possible and far less attention is devoted to the “discrimination that survived their best efforts to control or eliminate it” (Bell, 1992, p. 376).

Bell (1992) notes that there are some Black people that have already embraced what he called Racial Realism. Adherents to Racial Realism understand the “continued struggle can bring about unexpected benefits and gains that in themselves justify continued endeavor. The fight in itself has meaning” (Bell, 1992; p. 378). Bell (1992) tells the story of an older Black woman who defiantly confronted her oppressors. Ms. Biona MacDonald did not despair in her inability to dismantle or disrupt “Whites’ well-entrenched power” (Bell, 1992, p. 379). Indeed, her goal was not racial equality but “defiance and its harassing effect” that was empowering “because she placed herself in confrontation with her oppressors with full knowledge of their power and willingness to use it” (Bell, 1992, p. 379).

I argue many contemporary Black athletes from the grassroots levels and beyond embody Racial Realism. They understand there is power in the struggle, but they are not overly optimistic seismic racial change in America is possible during their lifetime or at any time. Despite this truth Black athletes continue to demand recognition of their humanity and worth and are increasingly making bold moves that include leveraging their positions as athletes to draw attention to racial inequalities affecting them personally and/or the Black community as a whole. Research shows how important it is for Black athletes to experience the world beyond their identity in a more holistic approach (Briggs et al., 2021; Jolly et al., 2020). The holistic approach to the Black athlete experience, especially in youth and interscholastic sports, is among the best ways to support them in their quest to win on- and off- their respective fields of competition.

Black Athletes and Holistic Approaches

A number of scholars have conducted research related to holistic approaches to athlete development, especially at the collegiate level. I argue much of what is included in their work is applicable to athletes in youth and interscholastic sports, particularly in the case of Black athletes (for examples see “An Examination of Culturally Responsive Programming for Black Student-Athletes’ Holistic Development at Division I Historically White Institutions (HWIs) by Shannon Jolly, Joseph Cooper, and Jepkorir Chepyator-Thomson and “They’re Just Here to Ball: Proposing a Multi-Level Analysis on the Impact of

Collegiate Athletics at Historically White Institutions on Black Male Collegiate Athlete's Holistic Identity & Transition Out of Sport," by Traujan Briggs, Allison Smith, and Joseph Cooper (2021)).

Jolly et al. (2020) engaged in a content analysis of culturally relevant programming at HWIs using critical race theory. The researchers found programs led by faculty often included more culturally responsive programming than programs led by the NCAA or its member institutions. An example of a faculty-led programs included the Herman Sweatt Center for Black Males at the University of Texas-Austin. The purpose of the program was to increase graduation rates, enrollment in graduate school and improve access to mental health and wellness services for Black male athletes. An example of an institutional program that did not incorporate culturally relevant program was the NCAA's Life Skills program, which proved broad academic support and life skill development (Jolly et al. 2020).

Relatedly, Briggs et al. (2021) examined the predictors that impact holistic identity development for Black male athletes in high revenue generating sports at predominately White institutions. The scholars begin by citing some well-known facts. College athletics is big business—it is a multi-billion-dollar business. Briggs et al. (2021) cite the lavish salaries for coaches that in some cases make them the highest paid public employees in their respective states. “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” (Briggs et al., 2021, pp. 22-23.) Among the many consequences is the finding that these “factors appear 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” (Briggs et al., 2021, p. 23). For Black male college athletes who are among the 98% of college athletes who go pro in something other than sports this makes the transition out of sports difficult, to say the least.

In response to these realities, Briggs et al. (2021) offer a multi-level and multi-dimensional framework of holistic identity development and transition out of high revenue generating sports. Briggs et al. (2021) explored how Black male college athletes may be affected by predominately White institutions at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. At the micro-level the scholars explored identity, experiences, and expectations. On the meso-level, Briggs et al. (2021) examined such things as how college cultures position and stigmatize athletes. Finally, Briggs et al. (2021) examined policies, graduation rates, and academic readiness to better understand how Black male college athletes were affected by macro-level factors at their respective institutions. The authors concluded that Black male college athletes were affected by multi-level factors that contributed to their holistic development and transition out of sport.

It could be argued, as I do here, that similar patterns exist and persist in youth and interscholastic sports. Youth and interscholastic athletes, particularly Black male athletes in sports like football and basketball, are part of a broad pipeline or as William Rhoden (2007) has described it—a conveyor belt. The conveyor belt moves selected elite athletes from grassroots sports to the professional sports, all the while discarding athletes for any number of reasons. The factors affecting Black male college athletes do not magically emerge at predominately White higher education institutions but may be found at all-levels of sport, including in youth and interscholastic sports.

I argue Black male athletes in youth and interscholastic sports must also contend with their dual identities as a student and as an athlete. They must endure the same dumb-jock stereotypes that are so pervasive in college and professional sports, particularly as it relates to Black males (Simons et al., 2007). Historically, Black males, including Black children have been dehumanized and criminalized as captured in the Brute caricature among others (Smiley & Fakunle, 2016). Black athletes in youth sports and interscholastic competition also likely experience a sense of alienation given the demands placed upon them that often separate them from their non-athlete peers and sometimes the broader community (Beamon, 2010; Howard, 2014). The amount of time that youth and interscholastic competition takes, particularly for Black male athletes in sports like basketball and football, limits their abilities to

engage in other community-building activities.

Like their counterparts in college, Black youth, and interscholastic athletes, are affected by a host of factors at the meso- and macro-levels that negatively influence their holistic development. Friday Night Lights was a popular television series based on a book by H.G. Bissinger because it highlighted the significance of high school football in places like the Southeastern U.S. (Bissinger, 1990). We can see through these dramatizations and real-world experiences how youth and high school culture around sports and perceptions about athletes can affect their holistic development. Sports are by most definitions organized and controlled by one or more governing bodies (Coakley, 2017). Much like Black male athletes in college sports, Black male youth and interscholastic athletes are affected by policies, enrollment at under resourced schools, lower graduation rates (and related sub-par academic support), and associated challenges (Cooper, 2016).

In response to these alarming trends, Cooper (2016) presented six holistic development principles for enhancing the experiences and holistic development of Black male college athletes. It is my contention these same principles may and should be applied to addressing the challenges facing Black male athletes prior to their arrival on the campuses of predominately White institutions where they feel the same lack of belonging as in the case of Black male youth and interscholastic programs where Black males are overrepresented among the athletes in sports like football and basketball and underrepresented among the overall student population.

The six principles of what Cooper (2016) called the Excellence Beyond Athletics (EBA) approach, included: “(1) self-identity awareness, (2) positive social engagement, (3) active mentorship, (4) academic achievement, (5) career aspirations, and (6) balanced time management” (1). These principles would support the holistic development of Black male athletes competing in youth and interscholastic sports and preparation for life after their athletic careers conclude. ABIS, Inc, is a nonprofit organization aiming to address racial inequities in sports and their approach to addressing the needs of Black athletes in youth and interscholastic sports is one example of the EBA model at work.

ABIS and the Excellence Beyond Athletics Approach

ABIS was officially established in September 2020. The author held membership and several leadership positions in the organization between August 2020 and November 2021. Grassroots basketball legend, Gary Charles, and other men’s basketball coaches were inspired to organize and address racial inequalities in sports after the killing of George Floyd. Floyd was killed on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, after being held down by several police officers as former police officer Derek Chauvin, kneeled on George Floyd’s neck until Floyd took his last breath. The group soon included many Black women’s basketball coaches and expanded to include individuals from every sector of the sports world. ABIS was intentional about including Black youth, including those involved in grassroots and high school sports.

According to organization’s official website, the organization recently celebrated its one-year anniversary and the following identified six keys to victory: a) Economic Stability, b) Education, c) Racial Equity Research, d) Voting & Civic Engagement, e) Student Athlete, and f) Grassroots & Community Outreach (weareabis.org). The latter two are most relevant to the discussion at hand. It is important to note an organization that boasts support from some of the most well-known individuals in sports and in popular culture thought it was important to center student athletes at all levels, including at the grassroots-level to maintain ties with the broader Black community.

Specifically, ABIS cites several target areas under the heading of “Student Athlete.” The target areas include, “Career Building, Mentoring, Marketing, Transition from Sport Program, Health and Safety Initiative, Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) and Standardized Test Elimination Advocacy (weareabis.org). Again, the organization is focused on advancing Blacks in sports and addressing racial inequities

and anti-racism. Under “Grassroots & Community Outreach,” the key to victory in this area includes empower and connecting grassroots leaders, advocacy for Black Lives Matter, and social justice activism. In their October 2021 newsletter, ABIS reported, “students interacted with over 20 companies spanning 15 industries. ABIS is invested in addressing racial inequities in sports from the grassroots level and beyond. Grassroots coaches associated with ABIS organized “Community Days” in their local cities across the country. Community-identified needs were met in cities such as Richmond, Virginia, Los Angeles, California, Atlanta, Georgia, and Little Rock, Arkansas.” The newsletter also highlights, Etop Uda-Ema, Director of Compton Magic. Uda-Ema is the founder of the American Athletic Union (AAU) powerhouse team that has produced many NBA and Division I players. He is described as “a grassroots pioneer working tirelessly to empower, support and elevate the same Compton, CA community that birthed his storied basketball program, the Compton Magic. Beyond the court he supports by giving back to the communities that made them” (weareabis.org).

In early 2021, ABIS launched the Historically Hidden Figures initiative. This initiative raises awareness about Black historical figures to educate Black youth and others about this important, yet often overlooked, history and to aid in their awareness of self (weareabis.org). This type of culturally responsive programming, which involved reading books about Black historical figures to elementary aged children by Black college athletes is important to the holistic development of Black people, including Black athletes at all levels of competition (Jolly et al. 2020).

ABIS also provided opportunities for positive social engagement with community-based events for Black athletes in youth and interscholastic sports (weareabis.org). Black male youth in sports like basketball were actively mentored by Black male coaches. Bean et al. (2020) showed how important coaching strategies were to the development of high-quality youth sport programming and this even more so the case for Black coaches and their relationship to their Black male players given the historic and ongoing inequitable treatment Black male athletes face both as players and as coaches. Indeed, ABIS, has created several watch-lists to encourage colleges to hire more Black coaches in sports like men’s and women’s basketball, track & field, and volleyball not only because they were qualified and deserving of the positions but also because of the added value they bring to programs, particularly those where Black male athletes are overrepresented in high-revenue generating sports and underrepresented as students at these institution more broadly (weareabis.org). Similarly, efforts to expand the number of Black coaches in youth and interscholastic sports and in sports management is important for many of the same reasons. The Executive Board of ABIS once met with the Black Athletic Directors Association, which was comprised of self-identifying Black Athletic Directors from PWIs as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). One would be hard pressed to find enough Black sport managers at elite youth and interscholastic programs to form such a group and that must change.

ABIS hosted a fundraising golf outing in 2021. With some of the funds raised, the organization gave out two \$10,000 scholarships. While the scholarships went to currently enrolled college students, the organization’s generosity highlighted their commitment to academic achievement. Members of the organization have also supported the academic achievement of Black athletes playing youth and interscholastic sports (weareabis.org). Furthermore, ABIS has explored partnerships with several corporations to focus on expanding knowledge and access to careers in and around the sports world beyond being an athlete. Initially, the program would target college-aged students but I content it could be replicated to address the needs and interests of students in youth and interscholastic sports.

ABIS, primarily through its legal team, has focused on the ways in which institutions, such as the NCAA are structured and may harm the physical and mental well-being of athletes, particularly Black male athletes in big-money sports. Working with elected officials, ABIS supported a college athlete bill of rights and other local and state legislations to compensate college athletes for their name, image, and likeness (NIL), and to promote and protect their mental health and well-being. Similarly, ABIS has expressed concerns about these issues as they pertain to athletes participating in youth and interscholastic sports.

Much like at the college-level, youth, and interscholastic sports “requires institutions to change the nature of their conditions, facilitate more positive relationships from community building and sense of belonging, and enhance academic and educationally purposeful engagement expectations for Black male student athletes” (Cooper 2016).

ABIS, a collection of individuals and organizations from all areas of sports from grassroots sports to professional leagues, is one example of the Excellence Beyond Athletics (EBA) approach in action, which could be modified and expanded to meet the needs of Black athletes more comprehensively in youth and interscholastic sports. The group employs an anti-racism framework for sport organizations to follow.

Road map to Racial Equity in Youth and Interscholastic Sports: ABIS as an Anti-Racism Framework in Sport Organizations

Any road map to diversity must focus on equity and be willing to disregard equality as a goal. The focus must be on racial equity and anti-racism. For far too long, American society has treated Black people unjustly, including Black people in sports. Addressing past and contemporary injustices against Black people, including in sports, will require accounting for these past wrongs in ways that require race-specific as opposed to universal or race-neutral solutions. Hence, efforts to create a more racial equitable environment for Black athletes in youth and interscholastic sports will require consideration of the EBA approach and a willingness to adequately study, monitor, and address ongoing anti-Black racism, which may manifest in outbursts from non-Black fans and backlash from White coaches and administrators among other ways. It requires being intentional about training and hiring Black coaches and managers in youth and interscholastic sport organizations. It means not joining calls to not to teach about racism in primary and secondary schools but leading the charge to ensure that Black athletes in elementary and high schools see themselves reflected in course content in authentic and positive ways. It requires seeing Black athletes in youth and interscholastic sports not only as athletes but as total persons. It means that everyone connected with Black athletes in youth and interscholastic sports must give more than lip service to the phrase Black Lives Matter and make an ongoing commitment to creating more equitable spaces for Black athletes in youth and interscholastic sports that are transformative and mutually beneficial for individual Black athletes and the organizations for which they compete.

The implications for such commitments to an anti-racism framework in sports may prove invaluable for young Black athletes, especially young Black male athletes in big money sports. An anti-racism framework in youth sport organizations increases the likelihood that young Black athletes will be treated holistically. An anti-racism framework in youth sport organizations will also increase the chances that young Black athletes receive the support required to combat anti-Black sentiments from multiple sources. Moreover, young Black athletes will find the advocacy and empowerment required to redress historic and contemporary exploitation of Black labor including unauthorized uses of their name, image, and likeness (NIL).

ABIS has shown how focusing on racial equity and anti-racism can yield positive outcomes for the Black community. ABIS embraces many of the principles outlined in the EBA approach. The organizations use of a holistic and anti-racism framework can set us on the path towards the realization of a fairer society where institutions such as sports represent a more leveled playing field without the expectation that the permanent subordination of Black people and athletes will change anytime soon. Derrick Bell’s (1992) Racial Realism reminds us that while the subordinate status of Black people in America is permanent and racial equality is an unrealistic goal, there is power in continuing to fight in the broader ongoing struggle for Black liberation for greater racial equity. Racial Realism also points to the fact that the EBA approach should be more widely used to create programming and practices that intentionally allow young Black athletes to become their best selves all the while living in in a society that may not see the best in them.

Future research should focus on the collection and analyses of relevant data to evaluate the effectiveness

of the EBA approach among young Black athletes. Ideally, the research would be conducted by an independent evaluator, preferably a scholar who identifies with the historic and contemporary struggle of Black people in America, including Black athletes. The scholar should also center racism and not treat racism as a mere byproduct of some other processes. Such studies should enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of the EBA approach as an anti-racism framework for improving the experiences and outcomes of young Black athletes in sport organizations.

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Chapter 3

The Time is Now:

Restructuring Intercollegiate Athletic Governance through an Anti-Racist and Equitable lens

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Abstract

This chapter discusses race, athletic capitalism, and governance issues in college sports. We begin with an overview of the historical evolution of intercollegiate athletics and the creation of structures rooted in racism and anti-Blackness. Then, using these critical lenses, we also discuss current manifestations of racism and anti-Blackness and the negative impact on the college athlete experience. Finally, we conclude the chapter by offering recommendations for reforming and restructuring governance and control of college sports rooted in humanizing values.

Keywords: athletic governance, intercollegiate athletics, anti-racism, equity, NCAA

Intercollegiate athletics is at a major turning point in the history of college sports in higher education. This turning point represents an opportunity to rethink various aspects of college sports, including governance and control structures that are racist and rooted in anti-Blackness (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Gayles et al., 2018; Hawkins, 1995). For the first time in almost two centuries of intercollegiate athletics in the United States (U.S.), college athletes are allowed to profit from their name, image, and likeness (NIL) without risk of losing their athletic eligibility. College sports have grown from student-organized competitions between schools to a multi-million-dollar commercial enterprise on some college campuses (Thelin, 1996). As college sports grew, became increasingly commercialized, and even dangerous, the need for control, oversight and regulation evolved (Thelin, 1996). As a result, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was created to govern and enforce rules and regulations for fair play. The NCAA has also become a major source of revenue for intercollegiate athletics programs across the country, revenue that has traditionally and disproportionately benefited those at the top of the system while the people who generate the revenue through their athletic labor (particularly football and men's basketball players at the Power 5 institutions) experience exploitative limits on their compensation.

This chapter examines anti-racism within the governance structure of intercollegiate athletics and offers recommendations for re-imagining an anti-racist governance structure for college sports. We begin with a historical overview of governance in intercollegiate athletics, including how neoliberal capitalist values conflict with anti-racist values. Over time this conflict in values has yielded uneven student outcomes, particularly for Black college athletes, who make up many revenue-generating sports participants (Harper, 2018a). To fully comprehend what is happening in college sports today and why it is problematic, a reckoning with historical legacies of exclusion rooted in colonialism is imperative. We do

so by using anti-Blackness and racism as critical perspectives to illuminate the dehumanizing aspects of governance and control in college sports. Anti-Blackness extends beyond racism to contextualize what it truly means to be Black in a world that refuses to honor the humanity of Black people (Dancy et al., 2018). This analysis forms the basis for the recommendations for structural and organizational change.

Governance in College Sports: Historical Background and Implications

Division I college athletics has been heavily criticized for having anti-Black policies and exploiting Black athletes (Harrison et al., 2017; Nocera & Strauss, 2016; Shropshire & Williams, 2017). Additionally, when considering race, scholars have highlighted how Black college athletes experience less favorable academic outcomes (Eckard, 2010; Harper, 2018b), social experiences (Cooper, 2012; Cooper et al., 2017a; Cooper et al., 2017b), and career outcomes (Navarro, 2015; Tyrance et al., 2013) compared to their non-Black peers. Differential outcomes by race date back to the formalization of college athletics, specifically establishing the NCAA (Hextrum, 2021; Byers & Hammer, 1995; Thelin, 1996). The NCAA was created during the early 20th century when Black people had limited access to college and few rights as citizens.

Unsurprisingly, the first form of anti-Blackness began by excluding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from joining the NCAA (Cavil, 2015). Leaving Black colleges out of the NCAA ultimately meant Black institutions did not have the same financial and economic support historically White colleges and universities (HWCUs) received (Cooper et al., 2014). As a result, Black institutions created conferences for Black athletes to compete, often beating White institutions in sports competitions (Edwards, 2017; Hawkins, 2010). HWCUs realized the talent in the Black leagues, eventually leading to more anti-Blackness through exploitative policies and practices. HWCUs that once excluded access to Black people began to recruit Black athletes to participate in athletics while not providing adequate attention towards redressing the institutional racism they would face post enrollment (Hawkins, 2010). As Black athletes began competing for HWCUs, anti-Blackness turned into athlete exploitation (e.g., using Black athletes to promote revenue generating sports while also blocking Black athletes from earning money through name, image, likeness, or not providing true educational degrees to Black athletes), which has had severe consequences to the wellbeing and fair treatment of Black athletes over time.

Exploiting athletes (across race and gender) has been a common theme throughout the NCAA's history and embedded in the collegiate model espoused by this organization. In 1950, then NCAA Executive Director Walter Byers coined the "student-athlete" as a means of separating "amateur" sports from professional sports (Byers & Hammer, 1995). The term "student-athlete" was intended to keep education at the core of college sports (Smith, 2021). However, Byers later admitted to creating the student-athlete model of amateurism in college sports to control and suppress college athletes' economic rights, namely worker's compensation and related benefits (Byers & Hammer, 1995). This was especially true for college athletes participating in the high revenue-generating sports such as football and basketball because these sports were responsible for funding worker salaries (a majority of which were and remain White) and other operational expenses (Byers & Hammer, 1995). The NCAA pillaged Black athletes from HBCUs, primarily in football and basketball, which led to more exploitation disproportionately affecting Black athletes and their academic, social, and career outcomes (Rhoden, 2006).

Although the NCAA promotes a balance between athletics and education, there are many empirical and anecdotal examples of how this does not happen (Milford & Smith, 2020; Singer, 2016). In reality, college athletes at Division I Power 5 institutions are primarily athletes first and students second. This dynamic is especially true for college football and men's basketball players, as evidenced by the amount of time spent in athletic facilities training and what is emphasized during recruitment (Rubin, 2016; Rubin & Moses, 2017). This imbalance creates academic inequities, such as lower grade point averages (GPAs) and graduation rates for Black athletes compared to White athletes (Harper, 2018a), academic cheating, and enrollment in fraudulent courses (Smith & Willingham, 2015). Not only are there massive educational inequities, but social inequities exist for Black athletes at HWCUs. Black athletes at HWCUs

are celebrated during victories but face harsh and racist comments when not entertaining White crowds (Cooper et al., 2017a). For example, after deciding to opt out of the 2020-2021 men's basketball season, Jalen Johnson, a forward for Duke, received questions about his character and commitment to basketball from media pundits and fans (Dator, 2021). The character criticism that Johnson faced highlights what can happen to Black college players once they refuse to "shut up and dribble" and no longer accept the role as sole entertainers for fans (Castleman et al., 2020; Galily, 2019). When a person's sense of worth and belonging is contingent upon athletic performance, it creates a level of mistrust between Black college athletes and their peers, faculty, and staff at these HWCUs because support is not genuine and consistent; rather, it is disingenuous and transactional. Therefore, it should be no surprise that Black athletes have lower academic and career outcomes than White college athletes, given the anti-Black racism they experience at these institutions (Eckard, 2010; Harper, 2018b; Navarro, 2015; Tyrance et al., 2013).

College athletic reformists have called for more equity and fair treatment for college athletes. Economic reforms, such as those designed to give college athletes NIL rights, have been led by National College Players Association (NCPA) and The Drake Group. The NCAA's most visible athletes compete in Division I athletics; some have called this the front porch of these institutions. Even though athletics has been shown to marginalize enrollment, fans and die-hard college athletic supporters believe that college athletics bring people to campus (Bass et al., 2015; Goff, 2000). Unfortunately, from 1906 to 2021, NCAA schools used athletes' NIL to promote institutional brands, while it was a major NCAA infraction for players to do the same. By refusing to let college athletes leverage NIL, the NCAA denied college athletes a basic civil right granted to nearly all U.S. citizens for over 100 years, and Black athletes were most negatively affected by this, given their disproportionate representation in the two highest revenue-generating sports and broader socioeconomic disparities that position Black people among most impoverished.

In addition, policy groups, such as the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, and National Association for Social Workers in Sport (NASWS), have called for more support for college athletes' wellbeing, which connects back to how the NCAA was formed. The NCAA was originally founded as the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) in the 19th century, but this only happened after a public outcry from President Teddy Roosevelt following a series of injuries and deaths to football players (Byers & Hammer, 1995). Unfortunately, player safety and wellbeing continue to be important issues in college sports. For over 20 years, the NCPA and other scholars have called for changes that would improve player safety, for example, providing college athletes with better health insurance policies and more mental health support (Beauchemin, 2014; Griffin, 2017; Ryan et al., 2018). Others attempted to end practices that increase potential injuries to players, such as demanding an end to playing extra games for more money (Faure & Cranor, 2010; Jones & Black, 2022). Calls for change frequently emerge outside college athletics, and since the NCAA is meticulously bureaucratic, change can be difficult and slow.

NCAA Governance Structure

The NCAA governance structure is complex, with multiple layers. At the highest level, the NCAA Board of Governors and nine association-wide committees govern broad issues that may affect college athletics (National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA], 2021). For example, the Board of Governors holds power to change rules that all NCAA divisions must follow. At the same time, the association-wide committees work with each Division to make legislative recommendations. In addition, 21 voting members on the Board of Governors create the strategic vision for the NCAA while also overseeing the NCAA's budget, employing the NCAA president, and settling litigation as it appears. Although the Board of Governors has the ultimate power, the NCAA has three divisions that make regulations and monitor daily operations.

Given the exorbitant revenue generated through commercialism associated with Division I athletic programs, this section will discuss the Division I governance model. At the top of the Division I governance

model is the Division I Board of Directors, which is a 24-person committee made up of 10 college presidents from the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) conferences, ten presidents from the other 22 conferences that rotate, one athletic director, one faculty athletic representative, one senior woman administrator, and one college athlete. The Board of Directors set the strategic visions and oversee the Division's legislation. Additionally, there are nine Division I committees that review various topics that affect Division I athletics. In Division I athletics, there are five autonomy conferences, the Atlantic Coast Conferences (ACC), Big 10 Conference, Big 12 Conference, Southeastern Conference (SEC), and Pacific-12 Conference (PAC-12). Each conference possesses votes for proposed legislation. For any new legislation to pass, it must receive either a) a majority vote within three of the five conferences and 60% of the overall votes or b) a majority vote in four of five conferences and a majority of overall votes. These conferences have the freedom to make their own rules in certain areas, such as player health and resource allocations

For a rule to be implemented in Division I, it must be proposed through one of the ten division-wide committees or conference sponsorship. After the respective council debates the proposed legislation, the decision is made on whether the proposed rule will be implemented by the Division I Council. The Division I Council consists of 41 Division I practitioners, including one representative from each of the 32 conferences, two college athletes, two faculty athletic representatives, and four commissioners. This Council manages issues in Division I athletics. When a conference suggests a new idea for legislation, the committees review it, but regardless of the committees' views, the Division I Council votes on conference-sponsored legislation. After receiving support from the Division I Council, legislation is passed, but it may be subject to review by the Board of Directors to ensure alignment with the strategic vision.

Race, Athletic Capitalism, & Governance

Governance issues in college sports are inextricably linked to race and capitalism. College sports, particularly at Power 5 institutions, are governed such that market-driven values inform decision-making about how revenue is generated and distributed and to whom (Van Rhee, 2013). As commercialism grows, revenues increase. For example, in 2013, the total revenue received by the NCAA was nearly \$8 billion (NCAA, 2013). According to the 2021 NCAA consolidated financial report, over \$9 billion of college sports revenue comes from television contracts and marketing rights. The big business enterprise of college sports on campuses mirrors what Giroux and Giroux (2004) called "corporate culture" in college sports, which can create a conflict in values. A primary issue with market-driven values in college sports is that revenue generation often takes precedence over institutional academic values that are supposed to be central to the student-athlete experience. Under the amateur model of college sports, college athletes are considered students first, which should translate to academic values such as knowledge generation, intellectual freedom, and equity and inclusion taking precedence over other competing monetary values. Instead, market-driven values have created a cartel marked by corporations and universities enriching themselves through exploiting college athletes, most of whom are Black (Branch, 2011). Lack of governance and oversight has led to abuses in college sports that are contrary to the mission and goals of higher education institutions. Harper and Donnor (2017) released an edited book on scandals in college sports that includes stories of unethical conduct in recruiting, abuse and harm to college athletes, sexual misconduct, and gender discrimination, to name a few. Moreover, such abuses in college sports compromise the overall wellbeing and fair treatment of college athletes, the majority of whom are Black.

Neoliberal capitalism is a useful framework for contextualizing governance problems that detract from college athletes' wellbeing and fair treatment. Harvey (2005) defined neoliberal capitalism as a set of economic practices that advance individual entrepreneurial freedoms characterized by rights to private property, free markets, and free trades. When applied to college sports, neoliberal capitalism unearths the lie that college sports operate under a model of amateurism characterized by unpaid participation. However, the policies and practices governing intercollegiate athletics' behavior are contrary to the spirit and values associated with amateur sports. Big-time college sports operate as commercial entertainment

enterprises with significant revenue and monetary payouts. Commercialism in college sports also creates a situation where college athletes function as employees (without pay) rather than students (Comeaux, 2015; McCormick & McCormick, 2006). In fact, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) recently issued a memo classifying college athletes as employees entitled to the same rights and protections, including the right to unionize (Carrasco, 2021b). Under a model of amateur sports, academic values would be prioritized over neoliberal values, and the commercialism and large payouts that benefit only people at the top of the hierarchy would be absent.

Further, as commercialism in college sports grows, so does the insertion of market-driven values that undergird capitalism and create oppressive systems and structures, in all aspects of society, particularly in revenue-producing sports where the majority of college athletes are Black (Harper, 2018a; Slaughter & Rhoads, 2009). Gayles et al. (2018) used critical perspectives to question and illuminate how neoliberal values and practices in college sports damage student-athletes' wellbeing and overall college experience. Conflict arises when neoliberal values and practices create situations in college sports such that intercollegiate athletic enterprises place greater value on college athletes' skills and abilities compared to bringing out their academic talents and abilities to engage in independent thought and enhance their critical learning skills (Gayles et al., 2018; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Further, this conflict in values is dehumanizing and mirrors present-day manifestations of anti-Blackness, where Black bodies are commodified and disposed of at will (Comeaux, 2018; Comeaux & Grummert, 2020). Gayles et al. (2018) name the conflict in values between the corporatization and commercialism of college sports, the espoused academic values and mission of higher education institutions, and the practices and behaviors resulting from athletic capitalism.

One of the biggest debates in college sports has been revenue and the compensation of college athletes. The reality is college athletes are the labor force on the fields and courts, generating millions of dollars in revenue from their athletic abilities, names, images, and likeness; yet, they do not receive market-based compensation and lose out on thousands of dollars due to the NCAA's restrictions (Huma & Staurowsky, 2012; Koblenz, 2017; Thacker, 2017). Furthermore, Huma and Staurowsky (2012) Supporters of paying college athletes, otherwise known as "pay for play," have continuously pressured the NCAA to consider what a culture of equitable college athlete compensation could exist. This debate has spanned for decades, with very little interest in change from the NCAA until recently (Colvin & Jansa, 2019; Hobson & Strauss, 2019; Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015). The foundation of the decision not to compensate college athletes beyond tuition, room and board, and modest stipends is rooted within the amateurism model. For example, the NCAA's rule that prohibits college athletes from receiving compensation for their NIL prior to 2021 reflects the extent of economic control the association wields on this vulnerable group of students (Comeaux, 2020; Edelman, 2001; Koblenz, 2017; Zema, 2019). This prohibition has prevented students from receiving money from school affiliated (e.g., the institution itself, conferences, etc.) and non-school-affiliated sources (e.g., endorsements, income generated from apparel sales, advertising, and autographs). As a result, the only true source of compensation for college athletes is the total cost of attendance at their respective institutions, which is not enough money to cover all basic expenses (Koblenz, 2017).

The amateurism model of college sports continues to be critiqued heavily. Many scholars and supporters of college athletes continue to speak out against the economic exploitation of college athletes because they do not receive an equitable allocation of the revenue they generate for these universities and the NCAA (Comeaux, 2017, 2020; Gayles et al., 2018, Melendez, 2008). Furthermore, supporters of pay-for-play argue institutions should equitably compensate college athletes due to the psychological and physical demands of being a college athlete and the risks of playing on their health and overall wellbeing, as well as the fact that the revenues are directly generated by their labor (Thacker, 2017). However, opponents of pay for play argue that college athletes receive scholarships to earn a college degree, which should be deemed equitable compensation for their athletic services (Graham et al., 2013; Klobenz, 2017). The reality, however, is that athletic scholarships are only a small percentage of the money college athletes

could make if they were paid based on fair market value (Garthwaite et al., 2020; Schwarz, 2016).

In their 2020 National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) article, Garthwaite and colleagues propose an estimation of what Power 5 men's basketball and football players could make if the NCAA replicated the collective bargaining agreements of the National Basketball Association (NBA) and National Football League (NFL). Under these leagues' collective bargaining agreements, professional athletes receive approximately 50% of their revenue. NCAA were to enact a similar process in college and consider that 58% of the NCAA's annual \$8.5 billion revenue comes from men's basketball and football programs, NBER suggests college football players would receive approximately \$360,000 a year. Men's basketball players would receive approximately \$500,000 a year. Conversely, the average cost of enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities, including tuition, books, and living expenses, is approximately \$35,331 per student per year (Hanson, 2022). Following the parameters of NBER's study, approximately 10% of what a college football player could receive and approximately seven percent of what a college basketball player could receive if the NCAA replicated the current NBA and NFL collective bargaining agreements. Of course, these numbers would vary when you consider a variation in revenues generated across conferences and the degree to which players individually impact the success of their respective teams (i.e., similar to the difference in professional athlete salaries on the same team) (Garthwaite et al., 2020). However, these numbers suggest individual players could receive significantly higher compensation for their athletic payment compared to their current benefits within the amateurism model. Tatos and Singer (2021) also make a similar suggestion about the amount of money Black college athletes have had unjustly denied to them at the expense of the NCAA's amateurism restriction. Using multiple data sets and institutional financial reports, such as the College Athletics Financial Information (CAFI) database, Tatos and Singer (2021) concluded that the NCAA's amateurism policy has led to the loss of approximately \$17 billion to \$21 billion in compensation for Black football and men's and women's basketball athletes at the Division I Power 5 Conference level from 2005 to 2019. More specifically, Black football and men's and women's basketball athletes lose an estimated \$1.2-1.4 billion annually (Tatos & Singer, 2021).

Another common critique of amateurism and the reluctance to equitably compensate college athletes is that intercollegiate sports have evolved into what some call "modern-day slavery" (Dancy et al., 2018; Hawkins, 2010). This critique rises from existing practices of heavily recruiting Black college athletes primarily for physical labor to entertain fans and for the financial gain of athletic programs at Division I HWCUs. Under amateurism, Black college athletes' labor within this oppressive structure does not allow for equitable compensation based on fair market value for their skills and talent (Dancy et al., 2018; Gayles et al., 2018, Harper, 2018b; Hawkins, 2010; Tatos & Singer, 2021). Tatos and Singer (2021) expanded on this problem by drawing attention to the connection between race and revenue and highlighting the large percentage of Black college athletes in the highest revenue-generating sports (Black athletes make up 49% of D1 football and basketball players) compared to the lack of representation (13%) in overwhelmingly White sports such as golf, lacrosse, and tennis, at Power 5, public institutions. Here, the authors compare basketball and football revenue to the revenue of other team sports from 2004-2019. During this period, basketball and football combined for net revenue of \$20.6 billion, while other team sports combined for only \$9.4 billion. As a result, the money generated from football and basketball programs is enough to cover not only their respective expenses but also the expenses and contracts of White athletic directors, coaches, and team staff, in addition to other collegiate sports that are heavily populated by White athletes (Tatos & Singer, 2021). In other words, the labor of Black athletes funds the pockets of mostly White athletics staff and creates opportunities for many White athletes at NCAA D-I institutions.

The conversation on race and funding within collegiate sports also illuminates the disparities that exist when comparing the finances and funding of HBCUs and PWIs. First and foremost, research shows that HBCU athletic departments are earning significantly less revenue than their counterparts at PWIs (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Elliott & Kellison, 2019). Cheeks and Carter-Francique (2015) highlight

these disparities between HBCU and PWI athletic programs by expanding on the idea of institutional distancing, which refers to institutional distancing as the process of constructing barriers to prevent less-resourced groups from access to full, societal participation (Lott, 2002). As it relates to college athletics specifically, Cheeks and Carter-Francique (2015) use this concept to illuminate the differences in athletic revenue and departmental development between HBCUs and PWIs. They specifically draw attention to the abundance of White leadership that make up the NCAA governing boards and have used their power to uphold barriers to equitable growth and development of HBCUs. Additionally, the lack of media portrayal of HBCUs directly impacts how HBCU athletic programs are seen and diminishes their perceived value, limits their visibility, and ultimately results in barriers to recruitment and revenue-generating opportunities.

NIL and the Current State of the NCAA

Over the last few years, progress has been made in increasing revenue-generating potential for athletes to profit off their NIL while also retaining athletic eligibility in college. Specifically, supporters have pushed the NCAA to seriously consider ideas of how to create a system of equitable college athlete compensation (Colvin & Jansa, 2019; Hobson & Strauss, 2019; Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015). As a result, in June of 2021, all three divisions of the NCAA adopted an interim NIL policy until an official policy was established. While this compensation does not come from the revenue college athletes bring in, the current NIL policy provides the following guidance:

- Individuals can engage in NIL activities consistent with the law of the state where the school is located. Colleges and universities may be a resource for state law questions.
- College athletes who attend a school in a state without a NIL law can engage in this activity without violating NCAA rules related to name, image, and likeness.
- Individuals can use a professional services provider for NIL activities.
- Student-athletes should report NIL activities consistent with state law or school and conference requirements to their school (NCAA, 2021).

Since the passing of the current NIL policy, male athletes have led the way in NIL compensation, leaving inequities and uneven NIL opportunities among genders (Berger, 2022; Hunzinger, 2022). With specific attention to numbers, male athletes constitute 59% of the total NIL deals in Division I as of December 31, 2021, according to data collected by INFLCR, a NIL online platform created to support college athletes grown their brand (Hunzinger, 2022). Furthermore, men athletes also brought in 67.4% of total NIL compensation, while women athletes have brought in 32.6% of the compensation as of December 2021 (Hunzinger, 2022). Although records show that women college basketball players have been putting more effort into their social media engagement and the posts they make on behalf of the companies, their male athlete counterparts have reaped more benefits with far less engagement (Berger, 2022).

The NIL conversation also discusses how these deals have created opportunities for Black college athletes in revenue-generating sports to finally receive compensation. While this is a bright spot, it is also important to acknowledge that Black women college athletes have not seen as much success in NIL deals as their Black male counterparts (Ariail, 2022; Brennan, 2022). Additionally, the benefits of White women athletes far exceed those of Black women athletes and bring more attention to the racial inequities NIL has upheld. With consideration of the NIL success of their Black men and White women counterparts, the NIL deals further illuminate the double bind for Black women in collegiate sports as they have navigated the dual impact of racism and sexism within this space (Carter-Francique, 2018; Cooper & Jackson, 2019; Simien et al., 2019).

Anti-Blackness & Racism: Critical Perspectives

It is important to understand the distinction between racism and anti-Blackness in society and various

microcosms of society, including college sports. This distinction is particularly helpful in understanding exploitation and the overall mistreatment of Black athletes and how the governance structure of college sports allows such behaviors to occur (Hawkins, 1995). Racism is defined as unearned systematic advantages afforded to people based on their dominant social identities (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009; Tatum, 2017). In other words, people who hold dominant social identities in society have privilege and power simply based on their identification with a dominant social group. Racism, however, falls short in explaining and helping us understand much of what happens to Black people, including Black athletes, in U.S. colleges and universities. In fact, racism can oversimplify what it means to be Black in an anti-Black world (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009).

Anti-Blackness is a framework that illuminates the unwillingness of people in society to humanize Black people (Dancy et al., 2018). The level of disdain, disregard, disrespect, and inferiority to the existence of Black people dates to chattel slavery in the Americas. Although chattel slavery ended 400 years ago, current manifestations of enslavement, also referred to as the afterlife of slavery (Hartman, 1997), continue to exist. In the afterlife of slavery, Blackness as property, dehumanization, Black suffering, and even murder have been re-inscribed in other forms and institutionalized as normative practices through governance structures, legislation, and policy (Dumas, 2016). Anti-Blackness is a lens that accurately captures and explains the kind of relentless violence that encapsulates Black life (Hartman, 1997; Dancy et al., 2018). Such violence often does not make sense on the surface, particularly when it is not tied to a Black person's actions. Further, violence toward Black college athletes has been present in college sports since its inception (Comeaux, 2018; Hawkins, 1995; Singer, 2005). Examples include segregation in college sports, the refusal to allow Black athletes access to participation, and the many college sports scandals occurring to the detriment and mistreatment of Black athletes in recruitment, academics, compensation, and coaching, to name a few (Harper & Donnor, 2017).

Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness

Anti-Blackness is rooted in settler colonialism. According to Dancy et al. (2018), to understand the irrational nature of anti-Blackness, one must contend with the connection between labor and property that emerged as a function of settler colonialism. When colonizers arrived on occupied land, they raised questions about the humanity of the people unlike themselves and decided to use Christianity to dehumanize Indigenous peoples (Omi & Winant, 2010). This same ideology also determined which people should have freedom, the right to live, and the right to own other people, which also determined who should be enslaved, eliminated, and owned as property (Omi & Winant, 2010). Colonizers distinguished humans from "others" by seizing land that did not belong to them and subjecting Indigenous peoples to servitude, enslavement, elimination, and stripping them of political rights (Glen, 2015).

Damaging Implications from the Racial Contract

Forced social dominance because of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness is also a function of a racial caste system solidified in the form of a racial contract established in 1740 as the Negro Act (Anderson, 2016; Wilkerson, 2020). The racial contract outlined conditions that still exist today to maintain and uphold White supremacy and White colonial state control (Mills, 1997). Further, this contract essentially privileges White men over all other so-called subsets of people and makes the exploitation of the latter's bodies, resources, and land permissible (Dancy et al., 2018). One of the most severe and long-standing consequences of the racial contract for Black people is that it designated Blackness as a clear indicator of chattel enslavement. This designation is important to understand in the context of capitalism and fully understand Black bodies as property. For the colonies of colonizers to survive and profit, they needed labor. Enslavement of Black bodies served this purpose because, as Williams (1994) asserted Negro labor was the most cost-effective.

To be sure, the rationales in a series of court cases further dehumanized people and established a precedent

for the irrationality of the relationship between labor, property, and people (Anderson, 2016). The 1863 case of *Johnson v. McIntosh* and the 1902 case of *Lowe v. the United States* determined that Indigenous people were incompetent savages who were not considered laborers, nor could they possess property or treat their land as their home. A key contradictory ruling in these court cases established that colonial settlers were laborers and Indigenous peoples did not participate in labor. These decisions were clearly false because settlers did not labor on the land for agricultural purposes; they relied on enslaved Black people as labor. Naming and defining White settlers as laborers then erased not only Indigenous labor but Black labor as well.

Defining Properties of Anti-Blackness

Manifestations of Anti-Blackness rooted in settler colonialism include dehumanization, Blackness as property, Black fungibility, and Black suffering, all evident in how Black athletes are seen and treated in college and professional sports even today (Hawkins, 2010). The inability of society to treat Black people as human (rather than as property) is at the heart of dehumanization (Haslam, 2006). Dehumanization is characterized as a moral disengagement strategy of redefining people by assigning inhumane characteristics to them to justify violence against them. Redefining people normalizes behaviors that would otherwise be unethical and unfair. Further, people with privilege and power dehumanize people on the margins of society to justify greed, abuse, and violence to maintain power, financial gain, dominance, and control (Dancy et al., 2018; Haslam, 2006).

Another defining characteristic of anti-Blackness is the consideration of Black bodies not as relational beings but as property. In an 1856 court case, *Dred Scot v. Stanford* ruled that the property status ascribed to Black people as a function of chattel slavery remains whether they are owned. Moreover, this ruling continues to inform ideological thinking linked to violence towards Black people we have seen (and continue to see) over time. Violence and suffering toward Black people are consequences of living in a world that continues to view Black bodies as property. This troublesome ideology remains in our culture, in systems and structures that govern society, and in some people's minds. A current example can be seen through the prison industrial complex that explicitly names the problematic use of surveillance, imprisonment, and policing by government and industry to solve social, political, and economic issues (Alexander, 2016). Relatedly, critical scholars such as Hawkins (2010) and Comeaux (2018) draw important parallels to the use of hyper surveillance and policing in college sports and how policies and practices mirror the prison industrial complex.

Treating Black bodies as property and not as relational beings stripped Black people of the right to interact and participate in democracy (Wilderson, 2010). When Black people resist, they have been and are still treated as if they are the problem. Further, Black suffering is on public display, as Anderson (1995) described, for White audiences to consume and witness. Sadly, Black suffering and resistance are often treated in society as an inconvenience. It is a troublesome and deeply complex situation because, amid the hatred and violence of Black people in this society, they also need to exist for exploitative purposes.

Manifestations of Anti-Blackness & Racism in College Sports

Anti-Blackness and racism are reflected in college sports in several ways, including “relying on predominantly Black athletes to generate revenue and promote the university under the guise of amateurism” (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020, p. 62). This labor issue can be further understood by examining who holds power and control within college sports. Across Division I institutions, 77% of athletic directors and 80% of head coaches are White (NCAA, 2021). Even more troubling is Black athletes constitute up to 20% of college athletes at Division I institutions despite representing only 12% of the student population at four-year institutions (NCAA, 2021; PNPI, 2021). Furthermore, most Black college athletes at these institutions are concentrated in high revenue-generating sports, where 47% of Division I football players, 55% of Division I men’s basketball players, and 44% of women’s basketball players are Black

(NCAA, 2021). The distribution of power, control, and wealth within college sports is inherently anti-Black because while the leadership in college sports is predominantly White, the labor force in the areas that generate the most revenue is predominantly Black. Further, the treatment of Black athletes who comprise the overwhelming majority of college athletes in high revenue-generating sports but have little to no access to the revenue they generate is a current manifestation of anti-Blackness. Black bodies historically and contemporarily have been controlled and governed by wealthy White people for capital gain.

Consequences of anti-Blackness and racism within college sports are also reflected in student outcomes. For example, only 60% of Black Division I collegiate athletes graduate, compared to 73% of White college athletes and 69% of all student-athletes (NCAA, 2021). Low graduation rates speak to the disposability of Black athletes (Hawkins, 2010, Gayles et al., 2018). Disposability in college sports describes Black athletes as “possessing value only relative to the interests of primarily White athletic stakeholders” (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020, p. 57) and represents a manifestation of Black bodies as property (not as relational or intellectual beings). Low graduation rates and under-preparedness to pursue careers outside of playing sports upon graduation exemplify Black collegiate athletes’ disposability. At the same time, their coaches go on to recruit new talent to continue generating revenue (Comeaux, 2018). Furthermore, prior literature demonstrates that due to coach-imposed time demands, Black college athletes rarely engage with the college environment in educationally purposeful ways, such as joining student organizations, experiencing internships, studying abroad, or engaging with non-athlete students in meaningful ways (Gayles & Hu, 2009; Riley, 2015). This is particularly troubling because engaging in these high-impact practices is connected to important educational outcomes that set students up for success both in college and after graduation (Gayles & Hu, 2009; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Walker, 2018; Walker et al., 2019).

Anti-Black procedures and practices impose consequences on the experiences of Black college athletes in particular. For example, academic clustering describes the over-saturation of student-athletes in certain classes and/or majors, which limits students’ agency to pursue majors aligned with their interests beyond sports (Case et al., 2017; Fountain & Finley, 2009; Paule-Koba, 2019). Clustering is most prevalent for athletes in football and men’s basketball, two sports over saturated with Black athletes (NCAA, 2021). Clustering is one way Black athletes are hyper-surveilled within the athletic environment (Comeaux, 2018). Hyper-surveilling, or “intense purposeful monitoring for the sake of control” (Comeaux, 2018, p. 33), allows for monitoring athletes’ behavior in academic and social settings. Other surveillance practices include class checking to ensure athletes attend class (Engstrom et al., 1995; New, 2015) and monitoring athletes’ social media, which Comeaux (2018) argued impedes student-athletes constitutional (e.g., free speech) and privacy rights. While these practices may be enforced on all student-athletes, historically situated, deficit-minded stereotypes about Black people’s intellectual capacity and perceived criminality leave them vulnerable to these policies and practices (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020). Such ideologies represent another manifestation of Black bodies as property, not capable of intellectual engagement. Ultimately, anti-Black practices function to contain Black athletes’ academic eligibility and the athletic capitalist enterprise at the expense of their academic and career development (Comeaux, 2018; Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Gayles et al., 2018; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016).

Furthermore, literature on the experiences of Black student-athletes reflects the lived experiences of racism within college sports. An abundance of literature has captured how Black college athletes navigate unwelcoming campus climates (Oseguera et al., 2018; Rankin et al., 2011), stereotypes and micro-aggressions in academic and athletic settings, and unruly spectators (Beamon, 2014; Carter-Francique et al., 2011; Lawrence, 2005; Singer, 2005, 2016). Additionally, Beamon (2008) found that Black college athletes believed their institutions benefited from their labor far more than they benefited from their athletic scholarships and/or the opportunity to pursue higher education, particularly in light of low graduation rates and limited employability trends post-college (Singer, 2019). The literature demonstrates the lived experiences and perceptions of racism within college sports. Despite these circumstances, literature has documented how Black athletes have persisted in these environments, despite the racist and

anti-Black structures that are in place (Bimper et al., 2013; Cooper, 2016; Cooper et al., 2016; Cooper et al., 2017b; Harrison et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2010; Ofoegbu et al., 2021). Practitioners within athletics can leverage such literature to reimagine more inclusive and equitable environments that reflect a commitment to anti-racist models of support for Black students.

Reimagining an Anti-Racist Governance Structure for College Sports: Practical Applications for Sport Managers

It is beyond time to reform NCAA governance and irradicate anti-Blackness and racism that are apparent within the system. Thus, we conclude this chapter by suggesting transformative approaches to disrupt anti-Blackness and racism in NCAA governance. Creating anti-racist or anti-Black change is challenging because it is uncomfortable and White stakeholders may resist change that dismantles the status quo (Welton et al., 2018). Therefore, if real anti-racist change is going to take place, organizational leaders must commit to humanizing values that prioritize wellbeing and fair treatment of college athletes. Further, leaders must educate themselves on the difference between transactional and transformative change. Transactional change typically results in surface-level solutions that do not solve the problem at its root. Further, transactional changes are often done to appease people instead of transform systems. Transformational change, however, disrupts systemic oppression and new organizational structures that are equitable and just being put into place.

We recognize that anti-racist change can be challenging to operationalize because it is deeply embedded within systems and structures in athletics and the world. At the core of transformational change should be the intention to dismantle institutional racism (DiAngelo, 2018), which requires interrogating current systems and structures and placing something equitable and values-centered in its place. We know enough about the presence of anti-Blackness and racism within governance structures to do the work to dismantle it. There are multiple layers to organizational change (see Kezar, 2016; Slack & Parent, 2006), but structural change must be at the center of reform.

Structural change involves transforming policies, procedures, and institutional reward systems (Kezar, 2016). Thus, we offer suggestions for structural change at the organizational level of NCAA governance. What we suggest here represents a starting point, and we encourage leaders to engage in continuous, reflexive, and proactive change as college sports evolve. The suggested changes focus on addressing economic inequities, inclusive legislation, intentional organizational oversight, and changes to academic accountability. By creating change in these broad areas, the NCAA can work toward becoming a more inclusive and just organization and address systemic racism currently shaping the organization and the experiences of people within.

NCAA Changes

Organizational change starts at the top. At the core of college athletics is the myth of amateurism, and through neoliberal capitalism, the NCAA continually shows that amateurism does not exist in college athletics. We recommend that the NCAA avoid using amateurism as an organizational core value. Amateurism in college sports is rarely defined in terms of what amateurism really is. It is generally defined as what amateurism is not (Hextrum, 2021; Smith, 2020). Therefore, it is not surprising that the NCAA consistently fails to uphold amateurism because no one (including the NCAA) knows what it is and how to operationalize it in college sports. The term “student-athlete” was created in the spirit of amateurism. However, Walter Byers, who coined the term, explicitly stated that the term was created to deny college athletes rights to employer benefits, such as pay for play and the right to unionize (Byers & Hammer, 1995). The myth of amateurism has been used for decades as a fear-mongering tactic to stop college athletes from receiving NIL benefits. It was argued that NIL would ruin college athletics because players would no longer be amateurs, fans would no longer be interested, and NIL would be impossible to regulate (Schwarz, 2016; Southall & Staurowsky, 2013). Critical Scholars have long called

for the NCAA to stop using the term “student-athlete” (Harry, 2020; Staurowsky & Sack, 2005). While discontinuing the term and moving away from using amateurism as a coverup for denying rights to college athletes are good first steps, more must be done to ensure fair treatment and wellbeing. No longer having amateurism as a guise means the NCAA will fundamentally change. Instead of amateurism, the NCAA could use this shift as an opportunity to truly center equitable education and economic rights in college athletics. The idea that college athletes must forgo economic rights to earn an education while administrators and coaches continue to capitalize on a multi-billion-dollar industry is a fallacy at best and, at worst, is an anti-Black system of exploitation.

In addition to moving away from amateurism as a core value, the NCAA should consider structural changes at the association level. The NCAA and member institutions continually profess diversity, inclusion, and equity as important initiatives (Ofoegbu & Ekpe, 2022; Ortega et al., 2020). Enacting such values will fundamentally shift the NCAA and its revenue structure. However, we realize that as a multi-billion dollar organization with revenue that continues to increase under the current model (Lawrence, 2013; Zimbalist, 2013) that there is little to no incentive to dismantle this neoliberal system (Kotz, 2015). This is partly why NCAA’s statements have primarily been viewed as symbolic rather than transformative. Suppose the NCAA wants to move beyond symbolism to create transformational change. In that case, it must rethink and revise the current system and practices, especially those rooted in anti-Blackness and/or neoliberal capitalist values.

A good starting place for the NCAA to enact transformative change is with HBCUs. For instance, the NCAA could create an association-wide committee specific to overseeing HBCU athletic compensation. The committee should primarily consist of HBCU athletic directors, college athletes, and presidents to oversee how NCAA policies affect HBCU athletics. The NCAA has the Minority Opportunities and Interest Committee as an association-wide committee. While this is a good start, it does not specifically address how HBCUs have historically been excluded or HBCUs’ unique position in higher education. Creating an association-wide HBCU committee creates an opportunity for HBCUs to be involved with dismantling some of the anti-Black policies that affect those institutions.

For example, HBCUs are overly scrutinized through current academic eligibility measures and more frequently face academic penalties (Cooper et al., 2014; Ostielu, 2019; Westman, 2018). Being disadvantaged through academic policies highlights how such policies do not account for institutional differences and negatively affect economic outcomes that disproportionately impact HBCUs. The NCAA has acknowledged that these issues stem from HBCUs having fewer economic resources (Charlton, 2011); yet, the organization has done little to address this, and the institutional distance between HBCUs and HWCUs continues to widen (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). By creating an association-wide committee, HBCU leaders and athletes would have the political power to advocate for these issues to be addressed through changes to formal organizational policies (Birnbaum, 1988; Manning, 2018). We offer specific recommendations for addressing academic policies that disenfranchise HBCUs further down in the discussion.

Another strategy involves redesigning current revenue distribution systems within college athletics. Currently, the NCAA distributes revenue equally to all conferences, which may seem fair on the surface, but it does not account for institutional distancing where HWCUs already receive more financial support than HBCUs (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Marshall, 2022; Milligan, 2021). For instance, the Power 5 conferences receive revenue from television and media rights deals and the NCAA’s distribution. Still, because HBCUs were not allowed to join these conferences during the original formation, those institutions are also not allowed access to those funding sources. Additionally, HBCUs continue to receive less funding from states and federal governments, which creates resource gaps between HBCUs and PWIs (Cooper et al., 2014). To reconcile this, the NCAA should consider these factors and change the revenue distribution to be equitable, not equal. The NCAA should require each Power 5 conference to commit one percent of its annual revenue to HBCU athletic conferences. This would align with other

revenue distribution initiatives the NCAA has in place, such as the basketball performance fund or the academic enhancement fund (NCAA, 2022). In 2020, the Power 5 conference earned over 2 billion dollars in revenue (Berkowitz, 2020), so committing one percent would generate nearly 30 million dollars for HBCU athletics. This revenue could eliminate HBCUs' need to participate in guaranteed games (Jones & Black, 2022) and other economically exploitative practices.

Removing anti-Blackness and racism from college athletics starts by disrupting neoliberal capitalism embedded in this country and college sports. Across the United States, it is common to find buildings or other physical spaces named after racist people (Wilder, 2013). Statues and buildings named after people symbolize honor, history, and celebration, but for many colleges, these symbols celebrate racist people. They are a reminder of anti-Blackness in the past and present (Wilder, 2013). College athletic facilities are no different, as currently, at least 18 Division I football and basketball arenas are named after racist people (Turick et al., 2021). The NCAA does not control individual naming rights; however, it can implement policies that prevent naming athletic facilities after people who are knowingly racist and offer guidance on how to handle the issue once it has been discovered. Further, while the NCAA may not receive compensation from naming rights (e.g., money from donors or alumni), the NCAA could dedicate research funds or collaborate with researchers to better understand how racist rituals, rites, and symbols affect college athletes (Manning, 2018)—implementing legislation and demonstrating a commitment to learning more about how anti-Blackness and racism affects college athletes would help to negate ways Whiteness is affirmed in college athletics (Keaton & Cooper, 2022).

Not only do anti-Black, racist, and neoliberal capitalistic logics permeate the NCAA through athletic rituals, rites, and symbols, but these logics are also apparent through hyper surveillance and monitoring (Keaton & Cooper, 2022). We recommend that the NCAA develop a policy for member institutions that would ban institutions from having social media monitoring or academic monitoring policies. College athletes, predominantly Black college athletes, are subject to several control mechanisms that dictate their time (e.g., class checkers, academic clustering, siloing college athletes to only athletic settings), which ultimately limits college athletes' educational agency (Keaton & Cooper, 2022). Recently college athletes have taken to social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) to protest and advocate for economic rights (Hruby, 2017), but because athletic departments have rules dictating what or how frequently college athletes can post to social media (Sanderson, 2020; Sanderson, 2018; Sanderson et al., 2015) this form of activism is hindered or even avoided, thus silencing college athletes and preventing potential solutions to current problems (Black et al., 2022; Kluch, 2020). By banning monitoring policies as an organization, the NCAA gives agency educational and social experiences back to college athletes.

In July 2021, NIL legislation officially began, and while this is a step in a progressive direction, the organization must create policies and guidance that ensure equitable opportunities. Thus far, the NCAA has taken a *laissez-faire* approach to create an organization-wide NIL policy by relying heavily on federal government regulation (Carrasco, 2021a). For over four decades, the NCAA denied college athletes economic rights to their NIL through their policies and court cases upholding the myth of amateur college sports (Byers & Hammer, 1995; Norcera & Strauss, 2016). Now that NIL legislation is in place, university presidents must be accountable for creating equitable policies to guide good practice. This should occur through the NCAA governance structure to create a permanent organization-wide policy on NIL. The policies must be equitable and ensure that NIL will be something that Black athletes across institutions and sports can leverage responsibly. Scholars have accurately predicted that NIL would be promising, but thus far, it has been promising mainly for White athletes (Moore, 2021). These early data points allow the NCAA governance structure to create accountability policy and guidance to ensure NIL practices are equitable and above board.

Division I Changes

Racism and anti-Blackness in college sports are ongoing challenges that deserve attention. The entire

NCAA organization needs to become anti-racist. Still, it is equally important for the NCAA Division I to irradicate current manifestations of racism and anti-Blackness that continue to exist. Black college athletes are overrepresented in NCAA Division athletics compared to their non-athlete peers but have significantly worse academic outcomes (Harper, 2018a). Further, because of academic eligibility standards, HBCUs are disproportionately more negatively affected by academic sanctions (Jackson, 2020). The current NCAA structure exploits Black athletes for their labor while penalizing Black institutions. Therefore, the NCAA Division I governance structure should implement changes to support Black athletes and institutions.

Just as Black athletes are exploited through academic clustering, HBCUs are exploited through current academic eligibility measures, which need to be reformed. HBCUs face more frequent academic penalties that prevent them from postseason competition and limit the revenue those institutions can receive (Jackson, 2020). Scholars have critiqued the graduate success rate (GSR) and academic progress rate (APR) as inaccurate measures of student success (Eckard, 2010; LaForge & Hodge, 2011; Southall, 2014). Further, the GSR and APR measures hold college athletes to different academic standards than their non-athlete peers (LaForge & Hodge, 2011). There is enough evidence to suggest that the NCAA discontinue using such inequitable metrics. The federal graduation rate is an alternative and more equitable measure to assess academic performance.

Academic performance is an important outcome; however, the current governance structure does not account for differences in institutional resources. This likely contributes to why HBCUs are overly penalized for academic outcomes (Cooper et al., 2014; Ostielu, 2019; Westman, 2018). The fact that HBCUs have fewer resources to support their college athletes academically should be considered in evaluating their outcomes because of the institutional distancing that has historically taken place in college athletics (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). To address this issue, the NCAA should commit more resources to support academic outcomes for HBCU college athletes. That could mean allocating more funding to institutions to hire academic advisors or to create institutional-level programming designed to improve academic outcomes for HBCU college athletes. This type of equity could help improve the academic experiences of HBCU college athletes.

Conclusion

College athletics were created during a time when anti-Blackness and racism were much more overt in society than they are today. As a result, we now have a college athletic system and governance structure rooted in these problematic principles and ideologies. Interrogating existing systems and governance structures is necessary to see how such systems and structures dehumanize, exploit, dispose, and cause suffering for Black athletes and HBCUs. The NCAA has taken strides to rectify some of these issues, but there is still much to be addressed. The suggestions in this chapter are only a starting point for eliminating some anti-Black and racist policies and practices within the current NCAA structure, specifically in Division I institutions. Becoming an anti-racist organization is an ongoing effort that the NCAA and its leaders must commit to if they truly want equity, liberation, and fair treatment for Black college athletes and Black institutions.

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Chapter 4

Beyond Building Character: Addressing Racial Inequities in and Through Youth and Interscholastic Sport

Rhema Fuller

Abstract

The mantra that “sports build character” is ubiquitous in the United States (U.S.). Participation in youth and interscholastic sport is widely accepted as a means to promote cognitive, physical, and social development in youth, adolescents, and teenagers. Despite these purported benefits of sport participation, the possibility remains that youth and interscholastic sport also serve as a mechanism to perpetuate societal inequities, including institutional racism. To this end, this chapter examines the possible intersection of youth and interscholastic sports and racism. In doing so, the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE) and the King County Play Equity Coalition are highlighted as two sport organizations that are overtly challenging racism and discrimination in youth and interscholastic sports. The chapter concludes with recommendations for encouraging an anti-racism perspective in youth and interscholastic sport.

Keywords: youth sport, Seattle-King County, Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality

“Sports build character.”

- *Everybody*

The mantra that “sports build character” is ubiquitous in the United States (U.S.). According to Project Play by Aspen Institute Sports and Society Program, approximately 75% of youth between the ages of 6 and 12 participated in team or individual sports in 2020 (Project Play, 2021). Likewise, the Centers for Disease Control and prevention (CDC) estimates that 57.4% of high school students participated on at least one interscholastic sport team in 2019 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Indeed, the notion that sport can build character in its participants has driven a vast amount of research on youth and interscholastic sports and sport-based youth development (e.g., Coakley, 2016; Fuller et al., 2013; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Within sport research, the positive youth development (PYD) framework is prominent as it seeks to emphasize strength-based approaches that result in the promotion of cognitive, physical, and social capabilities in sport participants (Ersing, 2009; Fuller et al., 2013). At their core, sport programs adopting a PYD framework attempt to improve “health, happiness and competence of adolescents in a way to becoming productive and satisfied adults” (Linver et al., 2009, p. 354). The long-standing belief is that character developed in sport is transferable to other domains of life, such as in the home and at school, which will result in adaptive and healthy outcomes (Weiss, 2008). The PYD framework is believed to give voice to youth, adolescents, and teenagers while also promoting their empowerment (Ersing, 2009; Fuller et al., 2013).

In short, PYD youth sport programs are “designed with the purpose of helping youth to reach their full potential” and “effective PYD programs promote social flourishing and instill a sense of resilience in youth” (Fuller et al., 2013, p. 470). For example, the Sport Hartford Boys Program, a sport-based PYD

program in Hartford, Connecticut, reported that outcomes for its Black and Latino adolescent male participants included increases in social, physical, nutritional, and cognitive competence as well as growth in self-concept, self-worth, self-efficacy, caring for others, and connection with others. Likewise, Gators in Motion, a sport-based youth development program in Gainesville, Florida, focuses on holistic development of youth, particularly in the areas of academic enrichment, physical literacy and health, and character and life skills (Bopp & Roetert, 2018). Despite these purported benefits of sport participation, some scholars question if youth and interscholastic sports, including those who adopt PYD approaches, also serve as a mechanism to perpetuate societal inequities, including institutional racism (Anderson et al., 2021; Coakley, 2016; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). This might be especially the case when sports are focused on “underprivileged, “disadvantaged,” or “at-risk” youth and teenagers as the relationship between the athletes/participants and the facilitators/coaches can “mirror traditional racialized roles wherein the Black child is the target of a White program of design” (Anderson et al., 2021, p. 543).

Youth Sport and Racism

Despite claims of a post-racial society, the U.S. remains rife with racism – including in sport. As racial bias can develop at an early age – as early as four years old – sports have long been viewed as an effective mechanism to combat racism and create a level and equal playing field for all (Grenardo, 2021). But when examined from a more critical perspective, it becomes readily apparent that inequities, including institutional racism, exist and persist in youth and interscholastic sports. Within the U.S., disparities in physical activity and sport are closely aligned with race and socioeconomic status where youth from under-served and marginalized communities are negatively impacted (Bopp & Roetert, 2018; Farrey & Isard, 2015). Studies consistently show Black youth engage in physical activity at significantly lower rates than White youth. Likewise, children and teenagers from lower socioeconomic neighborhoods engage in physical activity at lower rates than those from more affluent areas (Bopp & Roetert, 2018; Farrey & Isard, 2015).

Consider the city of Seattle, Washington, as a textbook example. In 2019, Seattle, Washington ranked second in the American Fitness Index of healthiest cities, and Washington state was rated the most livable state (American College of Sports Medicine, 2019; U.S. News & World Report, 2019). In the same year, though, Project Play of the Aspen Institute Sports and Society Program analyzed the physical activity and sport in Seattle and the county where the city is located, King County (Farrey et al., 2019). Project Play found racial and ethnic inequities in youth sports in the region, leaving many without the ability to participate (Farrey et al., 2019). For example, youth of color were significantly less likely to participate in organized sports.¹ Moreover, Black, and Latino youth are participating in fewer types of organized sports than their White counterparts (Farrey et al., 2019). Of the 49 potential sport and physical activities asked of respondents, at least one White youth indicated participation in 48 of the activities, while only 32 were identified by at least one Black or Latino participant. Sports that were not being played by Black and Latino participants included lacrosse, rowing, ice hockey, and ice skating. These same youth of color also spent less time at local parks than their White counterparts due to fewer and more restrictive outdoor spaces near their houses. Likewise, youth in Seattle and King County who do not speak English in their home were nearly three times more likely to not have participated in youth sports and recreation (Farrey et al., 2019).

The racial and ethnic inequities in sport participation in Seattle-King County, just as across the county, partly the result of the increased privatization of sport which has increased the out-of-pocket expenses for youth and interscholastic sports, whether on the recreational or club/travel levels (Farrey et al., 2019). Consequently, youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are disproportionately affected. Specifically, Project Play found that nearly one out of every four youth in Seattle-King County either dropped out of sport or did not participate altogether because sport was deemed too expensive. While the national average for one child to participate in sport over a 12-month period is approximately \$700, the average in

1 In this section of the report, “youth of color” were participants whom were non-White.

Seattle-King County was \$825 (Farrey et al., 2019). This problem is not just concentrated at the youth sport level, but is also prevalent in interscholastic sports.

According to the University of Michigan Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health (2019), required interscholastic sport participation fees averaged \$161 across the nation, with nearly 20% of sports requiring fees greater than \$200 (C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, 2019). When additional costs of interscholastic sport, such as equipment and travel, are added to the required participation fees, the true cost to participate in interscholastic sport rises to over \$400 per sport nationwide (C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, 2019). Again, the impact of these rising costs of youth and interscholastic sport are disproportionately felt by families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Parents from lower socioeconomic situations were three times more likely to express the benefits of interscholastic sports did not justify the costs (C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, 2019). The Project Play report found similar results, but some Seattle-King County families with multiple students having to decide that only one child would be able to participate (Farrey et al., 2019). Beyond impacting the ability to participated, the cost of youth and interscholastic sports is also affecting the outcomes of the athletic contests.

Over the last decade, 80% of the public schools that won state titles in Washington were those whose population of free and reduced-price lunch students was below the state average (Farrey et al., 2019; Webeck, 2019). Thus, there is a differential outcome for schools with respect to athletic success depending upon, in part, the socioeconomic makeup of its student body. To address this socioeconomic divide, the State of Washington legislature proposed and passed House Bill 1660, which requires that "school districts that charge a fee for attendance at or participation in any optional, noncredit extracurricular event must adopt a policy for waiving all fees for students who are low income" as of June 11, 2020 (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2021).

The iniquities found in Seattle and King County are not outliers, but instead mirror the plight of youth and interscholastic sports in cities across the country (C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, 2019; Farrey & Isard, 2015). Even when designed to promote positive development and provide opportunities for youth from marginalized backgrounds, scholars argue that sports still can perpetuate inequities and racism (Anderson et al., 2021; Coakley, 2016; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). This is because sports focused on positive development in effect "decontextualize and essentialize life skills and notions of social functioning tied to sport among youth athletes of color in problematic ways" (Kochanek & Erickson, 2020, p. 229). Though sport proponents often promote and tout character-building and life-skill acquisition as an outcome of involvement, these qualities and traits might be grounded in race-neutral or "White/Euro-American middle- and upper-class standards." In turn, the cultural capital that youth of color might already possess is often ignored in pursuit of conformity to what mainstream "White-standards" deem as appropriate positive development (Coakley, 2016; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). Anderson and colleagues (2021) refer to this pattern as the White-Savior Industrial Complex whereby PYD sports programs can serve to reinforce negative public perceptions of Black youth about affirm while simultaneously influencing what people believe sports should be about (e.g., character building). When youth sports are structured in such a way that they fail to acknowledge diverse cultural perspectives, they end up reproducing systems of racial inequities and racism (Coakley, 2016).

The Midnight Basketball initiative is one such example of how racial inequities can be reproduced by sport (Anderson et al., 2021; Hartmann, 2001; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). To recall, in the 1990s a multitude of cities in the U.S. organized late-night basketball leagues for young men of color in inner-cities and under-resourced areas (Hartmann, 2001). While Midnight Basketball Leagues were initially supported by the general public, they eventually drew scrutiny from some because the leagues operated during high crime hours and with police oversight (Hartmann, 2001; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). Those critical of the initiative saw Midnight Basketball Leagues as a thinly veiled attempt to control and discipline young men of color. In contrast, White youth were not targeted for similar initiatives. Instead, they were encouraged to participate in sport for fun and recreation - as opposed to participation for

control and discipline (Hartmann, 2001; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). As demonstrated, the Midnight Basketball initiative is just one way in how sport designed for positive development can in fact serve to reproduce systems of racial inequities.

Coakley (2002) cautioned against focusing on youth as the problem when pursuing youth and interscholastic sport, and instead concentrating on real societal problems including as racism. For this reason, the remainder of this chapter will focus on two organizations that explicitly and overtly seek to challenge racism through youth sports, the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE) and the King County Play Equity Coalition.

Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE)

The Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality, or RISE (www.risetowin.org), is a nonprofit organization founded in 2015 by Stephen Ross, the owner of the NFL franchise the Miami Dolphins (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018). RISE was created to “harness the unifying power of sport to end racism and champion social justice (RISE, 2022b).” As an organization, RISE is a coalition of key figures and entities in the sports industry, including professional sports leagues, media outlets, athletes, and educators. With programming in more than 40 states, RISE seeks to educate and empower communities to eliminate racial discrimination, uphold social justice, and bolster race relations (RISE, 2022c). Self-admittedly, the vision of RISE is bold: “to create a nation unified through sports committed to racial equity and social justice.” RISE participants learn and agree to the RISE Pledge to End Racism which states, “I pledge to treat everyone with respect and dignity. I will not tolerate racism or discrimination of any kind. I will speak out, RISE up and be a Champion of Change (RISE, 2022c).”

The two primary foci areas for RISE are (1) athlete engagement and (2) leadership and education. RISE has partnered with professional sport leagues such as the National Football League (NFL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) and community organizations such as Police Athletic Leagues (PAL) and Boys and Girls Clubs to provide youth sport programming designed to educate, inform, and ultimately combat racism (RISE, 2022b). The impact of RISE’s programming is noteworthy. After participating in RISE programming, 97% of youth indicated a desire to deepen their knowledge of race and diversity issues, 93% believe they are equipped to have difficult conversations surrounding race and diversity, and 97% indicate they would act to stop racial discrimination (RISE, 2022c).² Two key RISE programs for youth include the Youth and High School Sports Leadership Programs and the Building Bridges Through Basketball Program.

RISE Youth and High School Sports Leadership Programs

With the Youth and High School Sports Leadership Programs, RISE works with area schools and community organizations to engage youth and high school athletes and their coaches in programming that combines experiential learning and skill building with sports (RISE, 2022b). The RISE leadership curriculum is designed for athletes and their coaches to be leaders in discussing and confronting issues such as diversity, inclusion, and racism (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018). Grounded in a PYD framework, the curriculum “acknowledges that youth can be built upon to enhance and optimize their own development (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018, p. 162). The ten-week leadership program provides education and training on topics such the history of race in sport, how to use sport as a vehicle for change, racial imagery in sport, and identity and diversity (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018). A key aspect to note about the Youth and High School Sports Leadership Programs is that although it is grounded in a positive youth development perspective, it addresses a major critique of youth sport programs related to contribution as an outcome of participation.

Within the PYD framework, “contribution” is often presented as an outcome of sport participation

2 At publication of this chapter, the RISE website did not provide demographic data on its participants.

(Coakley, 2016; Fuller et al., 2013; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). Yet, when sport programs highlight contribution as an outcome, they generally refer to social contributions. With the Sport Hartford Boys program, for example, researchers noted youth sport participants found ways to assist in their home, classrooms, and community (Fuller et al., 2020). Examples of these social contributions included helping parents out at home when and where needed, helping keep the school classroom clean, and participating in a neighborhood cleanup (Fuller et al., 2020).

Some argue, however, youth and interscholastic sport programs should move beyond a focus on social contributions to also foster critical contributions (Coakley, 2016; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). When focused on critical contributions, youth and interscholastic sport programs would not only be concerned with how participants can contribute to society (i.e., neighborhood cleanup), but also emphasize how sports can foster thought and action that challenge systems of inequity and oppression (Coakley, 2016; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). That is to say, critical contributions “diverge from typical understandings of social contribution (or functioning) in that they encourage youth to question and disrupt unjust social systems and work toward a better alternative” Kochanek & Erickson, 2020, p. 226). Critical contribution, rather than just social contribution, as an outcome of youth and interscholastic sport is, therefore, an important aim - particularly when working with individuals who frequently experience marginalization and racism (Coakley, 2016; Hershberg et al., 2015; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020).

The RISE Youth and High School Sports Leadership Programs’ emphasis on critical contribution is helping develop agency in its participants to challenge and confront inequities in society, something that is imperative for all youth and high school students (Coakley, 2016; Hershberg et al., 2015; Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). For example, Mac Intosh and Martin (2018) evaluated the outcomes of the RISE High School Sports Leadership Program at seven high schools in urban areas in Michigan. Data were collected from approximately 400 athletes, with nearly half (n=191) completing both pre- and post-test measures. Fifty-eight percent of the athlete sample were girls and 42% were boys. Of the 191 participants, 93 self-identified as White and 60 self-identified as Black.³ After completing the High School Sports Leadership Program, participants’ self-reported understanding of all topics covered in the RISE curriculum increased. Specific content included: (1) race, (2) ethnicity, (3) implicit bias, (4) racial ideology, (5) perspective taking, (6) leadership, (7) critical thinking, (8) racism, (9) diversity, (10), cultural competence, and (11) microaggressions (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018). Moreover, athletes reported increased attitudes with respect to participating in diverse social and cultural activities. Likewise, athlete participants reported advances in their perspective on diversity and racial equality, as well as how diversity can influence their own personal growth. For example, athletes reported they would be more willing to have discussions with teammates about race and diversity (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018). Readers are encouraged to review (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018) for more detailed information on the formation, implementation, outcomes, and theoretical underpinnings of the Youth and High School Sports Leadership Programs.

Building Bridges Through Basketball

Another RISE program for youth is the Building Bridges Through Basketball program, which won the Corporate Community Impact Award at the 2019 Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) Sports Humanitarian Awards. In an effort to “break barriers, build trust, and create pathways for positive communication” the program unites youth and law enforcement in communities throughout the U.S. (RISE, 2022a). Since 2016, RISE has created and implemented 25 programs in 15 major cities that have used sports as vehicle to bring together local youth, officers, and community leaders to discuss topics such as race and diversity (Williams et al., 2020). Cities that have hosted this programming include Charlotte (NC), Chicago (IL), Los Angeles (CA), Detroit (MI), and New Orleans (LA) among others. The program spans 10 weeks and combines basketball training with cultural competency curriculum such as diversity, racism, conflict resolution, and other themes (RISE, 2022a). After gathering

3 The authors did not provide the racial and ethnic self-identification of the remaining 38 athletes.

data from program participants, RISE found that prior to engaging in the Building Bridges Through Basketball program, youth held a combination of positive (i.e., protectors) and negative (e.g., abusive and/or racist) perceptions of law enforcement officers. Likewise, the program found members of law enforcement also held a combination of positive (i.e., future leaders) and negative (i.e., disrespectful troublemakers) sentiments about youth prior to program participation (Williams et al., 2020). After participating in the Building Bridges Through Basketball, though, RISE found that positive interactions between law enforcement and youth helped facilitate more positive perceptions among both groups (Williams et al., 2020). Though not exhaustive, these are just a few ways that RISE seeks to address inequities and racism through youth sports.

King County Play Equity Coalition

Another youth sport organization explicitly dedicated to anti-racism is the King County Play Equity Coalition. As previously mentioned in this chapter, Project Play by the Aspen Institute Sports and Society Program analyzed the physical activity and sport in Seattle and King County and found wide disparities across area youth experiences and outcomes (Farrey et al., 2019). In response to the Project Play report, over 100 organizations across King County formed a coalition called the King County Play Equity Coalition (KCPEC) to address these disparities. Member organizations include those across the sport, recreation, public health, business, and education sectors in King County, Washington (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021b; Wong et al., 2020). The KCPEC works to address systematic gaps in sport and physical activity for disenfranchised youth, which the coalition defines as youth that are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), youth that have disabilities, youth who do not speak English as a primary language at home, girls, and youth from low-income families (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020b).

It is at this point critical for the reader to understand that at the time of publication for this chapter, the KCPEC is a relatively nascent organization. The first coalition meeting occurred in February 2020 and the leadership team was installed in March 2020 (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020c), at which time the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread in the United States and the rest of the world. The reader should keep these circumstances in mind as the COVID-19 pandemic has likely impacted the trajectory of the KCPEC. Specifically, it appears the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the implementation of the KCPEC initiatives such that the organization completed its first strategic plan during Fall 2021. Additionally, the focus of the KCPEC appears to be how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted equity in youth and high school sports.

The mission of the coalition is fundamentally anti-racist as the coalition seeks to challenge and change “systems to shift power and center physical activity as a key part of health and youth development” (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021b). Additionally, the vision of the KCPEC is “a King County - where all youth - and particularly youth from historically under-served groups - experience the transformative benefits of play, sports, outdoor recreation and physical activity” (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021b; Wong et al., 2020). To this end, KCPEC has adopted values grounded in an anti-racism perspective.

The four values of the KCPEC include: (1) communities of Color-centered, (2) empowering play at all levels, (3) collaboration across sectors, and (4) disruption of traditional systems. With its first value, communities of color-centered, the KCPEC recognizes the expertise located in communities of color and seeks to shift the power to those communities (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021b; Wong et al., 2020). For example, members of the coalition’s leadership team come from community organizations including African Community Housing and Development and the Congolese Integration Network, a non-profit organization for Congolese immigrants and refugees.

The second value, empowering play at all levels, recognizes that youth involvement in sport, play, and

physical activity can be protective and empowering. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the KCPEC distributed a community survey to gauge the impact of the pandemic on families and youth (King County Play Equity Coalition, n.d.). The organization discovered the pandemic had a disproportionate impact on under-resourced members of the community such that there were reduced opportunities for play and physical activity. As one way to empower play despite the impact of the pandemic, the KCPEC organization created a resource guide for youth, families, and coaches to implement when time, space, and other resources are limited (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020d). Content of the resource guide includes free physical activity apps and videos and sport-specific resources. Another way the KCPEC is attempting to empower play for all is through its Facilities Access Action Team (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2022). The Facilities Access Action Team was created due to inequities in access to recreation facilities across Seattle and King County. The team spent eight (8) months analyzing recreation facility policies such as rentals and fees, practice schedules, and reservations “through a lens of impact on equity evaluating how Black, Indigenous, and communities of color have been impacted (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2022). The outcome of this analysis are recommendations that area facilities improve reservation processes to prioritize access to organizations that serve most of the youth who experience inequities in sport and physical activity. Additionally, the Facilities Use and Access Action Team has proposed that local facilities develop goals to improve equity of access, revise their policies to allow prime time usage for new users, not just historic ones, and to change their facility fee structures to allow for tiered levels based on financial capacity of individuals and organizations (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2022). The Facilities Use and Access Action Team is now working with Seattle and King County park agencies, school districts, and private organizations to implement the proposals (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2022).

Rather than seeking to operate in isolation, the KCPEC focuses on system level solutions that necessitate collaboration with both the public and private sectors (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021; Wong et al., 2020). As previously mentioned, the KCPEC is comprised of over 100 organizations across Seattle and King County. In May 2021, the KC Play Equity Coalition received a \$20,000 community impact grant from the Seattle Mariners (Major League Baseball) to support its work (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021a). Further, the coalition employs a bottom-up approach with respect to collaborations. Rather than the KCPEC forming community collaborations, the coalition created a collaboration program by which community organizations form their own collaborations to serve BIPOC and other disenfranchised youth (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020b). In turn, the KCPEC provides financial assistance, up to \$10,000, to support those collaborations selected for the program (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020b). Given the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on under-represented populations, collaborations under this program must either (1) address current pandemic-related gaps or (2) address a system gap service to youth most disenfranchised from physical activity (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020b).

The final value of the KCPEC is unequivocal in its anti-racism perspective in that the coalition is actively working “to disrupt systematic racism and oppression that are upheld and perpetuated by the status quo” (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021b). One of the methods the coalition utilizes to achieve this end is its Action Teams. According to the KCPEC, the Action Teams are intended to create systematic change by centering on the experiences of “youth most disenfranchised from physical activity and the programs that serve them” (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020a). As of Spring 2022, the KCPEC has four action teams: (1) Covid-Related Advocacy, (2) Facility-Use and Access, (3) Youth, and (4) Gender Equity Shared Learning. For example, during early stages of the covid pandemic (May 2020), the Covid-Related Advocacy Action Team created a two-page “Return to Play Equity Resource” designed to ensure Covid-related safety, while also advocating for disenfranchised youth to not be left out of sport and physical activity (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020e).

Additionally, to uphold its four-fold values the KCPEC has identified five primary goals to drive its work. These goals are:

1. Shift power in the youth sports and physical activity sector to BIPOC, community led organizations
2. Raise up play as a central component of healthy child development and a priority in regional policy-making, funding, and education decisions.
3. Build a strong, connected, cross-sector network of organizations committed to Coalition mission.
4. Build and support a strong, sustainable organizational structure grounded in equitable governance
5. Work towards equitable access to and change in ownership of sport and play infrastructure, facilities, and fields.

Anti-racist strategies to achieve the goals of the KCPEC include recruiting and retaining BIPOC leadership, identifying where power does and does not reside in the physical activity sector, creating a structural plan to shift power to community-based organizations, and working with county government agencies to distribute funds to community organizations (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021b). The aforementioned coalition collaborations program is one such strategy to achieve the goals of the KCPEC. Collaborations are community and member-driven projects, funded by the KCPEC, and designed to address current pandemic-related or system gaps in sport and physical activity services to disenfranchised youth. Likewise, the Action Teams are another strategy to achieve the goals of the Coalition. For example, the Facilities Use and Access Action Team is working with community-based organizations, park agencies, school districts, and sports leagues to ensure use and access disenfranchised youth. To recall, the Facilities Use and Access Action Team found that access to adequate facilities was a barrier for disenfranchised youth sports participation in Seattle and King County. To this end, the Facilities Use and Access Action Team created a model joint-use agreement that schools, community organizations, and park agencies can implement to improve equity of access to facilities. Though the model joint-use agreement is specific to Washington state law, interested readers can download a copy of the template at https://kcplayequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/KC_PLAY-Model-Joint-Use-Agreement-FINAL.pdf. Likewise, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the KCPEC has prioritized input from communities most vulnerable and most impacted by COVID-19. As previously discussed, the Covid-Related Advocacy Team distributed a community survey whereby it gathered information on how the pandemic has impacted families and how the KCPEC could help. Findings from the survey indicated that the pandemic has decreased sport and physical activity access for youth in under-resourced communities. Based on the results of the survey, the Coalition has begun hosting regular Zoom sessions with community members, creating and distributing resources Covid-related sport and physical activity resources, and advocating for federal, state, and local funding to help support youth physical activity (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2020d).

Recommendations for Encouraging Anti-Racism in Youth Sports

Though the focus of this chapter was on the RISE and the KCPEC organizations, others are also adopting anti-racism practices to youth and interscholastic sports. For example, Davis County and the state of Utah announced a partnership to combat racism and discrimination in the Davis County School District, including in interscholastic sports (Davis School District, 2022).⁴ When considering how to use youth sport to combat racism and systems of oppression, coaches, administrators, parents, and others involved would do well to move beyond the traditional PYD framework that was discussed earlier in this chapter. Rather, intentionally orienting youth sports to address racism is required to prevent youth sports from perpetuating systems of inequities and racism. In a discourse on if sports can be used to combat racism, Grenardo (2021) proposed four concepts youth sport practitioners can use to promote anti-racism in youth sports: (1) education, (2) experiences, (3) early, and (4) opportunity.

⁴ The partnership is the result of a federal investigation by the Department of Justice that found “serious and widespread racial harassment” of Black and Asian American students.

Education

First, education is critical for combating racism in and through youth sports (Grenardo, 2021). Youth sports can be used to educate youth on the importance of an anti-racist perspective, including the importance of valuing diversity and inclusion (Grenardo, 2021). RISE's Youth Sport Leadership program serves as model for education in youth sports. The program does not just focus on skill acquisition or positive developmental characteristics such as teamwork and confidence. Rather, RISE's programming educates its participants – both young and old alike – on topics such racism, prejudice, diversity, and inclusion, and how sports can be used as a vehicle for change. Just as some states require mandatory trainings for coaches and athletes, such as those related to concussions, Grenardo (2021) suggested required courses on anti-racism and diversity should be embedded in youth sports for all participants – including, players, coaches, administrators, and parents. RISE's strategy of using high-profile professional athletes and professional leagues and franchises to partner with and promote their anti-racist curriculum could be a model to follow, when possible.

In addition to RISE, other sport organizations attempt to leverage the celebrity of professional athletes to combat inequities in sport. Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the international governing body for soccer (football/futbol), for example, has a 94-page guide on how to promote diversity and anti-discrimination in the game of soccer (football/futbol) (FIFA, n.d.). In the guide, FIFA encourages the involvement of professional players to communicate the importance of diversity and anti-discrimination to youth players. At the very least, a pledge such as RISE's Pledge to End Racism or a statement on diversity and anti-racism by the organizing league could be infused in youth sports. Grenardo (2021) proposes such a statement that could be communicated to youth while participating in sport:

In this great country of the United States of America, laws prevented some people from having basic rights... People were very mean to each other just because someone looked different than them, had a different color of skin, or came from a different culture. The United States saw this was bad and changed the laws so that everyone may be treated the same, regardless of what they looked like or where they came from, but the laws did not change everyone's attitudes about each other. Sports are where people of all different colors, cultures, and backgrounds come to play and have fun. To win as a team, you must work together with everyone on your team... We should appreciate those differences and celebrate them... We want to play hard, play fair, and treat people the way we want to be treated. And, remember, we always want to say "yes" to unity and "no" to racism. (p. 298)

Similarly, the Aspen Institute, in effort to recognize the right of every child to play, created the Children's Bill of Rights in Sports (Aspen Institute, n.d.). Contained within this bill of rights is the statement that youth sports should be free of discrimination and youth sports should be a safe and healthy environment. More than 60 prominent sport organizations, including the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Under Armour, and ESPN have endorsed the Children's Bill of Rights in Sports. Youth sport adopters of the Children's Bill of Rights in Sports might consider modifying it to contain more explicit and overt statements about the importance of diversity and anti-racism. In doing so, the bill of rights will truly recognize the human rights of youth who participate in sport.

Experience

In addition to education, experience with people from other racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds is another key factor in combating racism through youth sports (Grenardo, 2021). At least in the scholarly community, the idea that sport can be a fertile ground for promoting positive and healthy interactions and experiences amongst and between people from different backgrounds was popularized

by Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis. The hypothesis suggests experiences with members of an out-group, especially when from different racial and/or ethnic groups, are effective in changing negative prejudicial attitudes. In fact, Allport (1954) highlighted sport as a textbook example of how experience can reduce prejudicial attitudes as he stated: "The (hypothesis) is clearly illustrated in the multi-ethnic athletic team. Here the goal is all important: the ethnic composition of the team is irrelevant. It is the cooperative striving for the goal that engenders solidarity" (p. 276).

Research testing Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis, including in the domain of sport, have found positive outcomes are best achieved when three mediating conditions are present in the experience (1) increased knowledge about the out-group, (2) reduction of anxiety about the out-group, and (3) an increase in empathy toward the out-group (e.g., Bruening et al., 2014). These key conditions are present in RISE's Building Bridges Through Basketball program, which is the likely reason that youth and law enforcement officers who participate in the program report more positive perceptions and less negative perceptions of one another.

As many youth sport leagues tend to be organized based on geographical location, there might not be opportunity for intergroup contact in a team setting in which the majority of residents in that area are racially and ethnically homogeneous (e.g., predominantly White). Even still, providing youth and teenagers with opportunities to interact with other kids from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds can prove vital in helping to promote and encourage anti-racist perspectives (Grenardo, 2021). Recruiting, hiring, and retaining coaches from different racial and ethnic groups could be an effective experience when a youth or interscholastic sport team or league is primarily homogeneous in its racial and ethnic makeup. It will be important, though, that avoid tokenism by hiring just making one or two hires to "diversify" the coaching staff. Instead, a critical mass of representation is needed – something that will likely not happen overnight. Likewise, pre-season, mid-season, and end-of-season events with teams from other leagues, conferences, and geographical areas can help promote youth from different racial and ethnic groups to interact with one another (Grenardo, 2021).

It should be acknowledged, however, that a major impediment to achieving the aforementioned experiences might be funding (Grenardo, 2021). Where funding is an issue, youth sport leagues can look to establish partnerships across their geographical communities, as well as within the larger sport community, as done by both RISE and the King County Play Equity Coalition. Large corporations such as Nike, Under Armour and ESPN have already increased their grant funding to programs serving Black youth and under-resourced communities in the wake of the killings of George Floyd and other people of color. Likewise, after legalizing sport gambling, the state of New York earmarked 1% of all of first year gambling revenue and \$5 million annually thereafter to youth sports programming (Scanlon, 2021). Moreover, of the \$1.9 trillion contained in The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, some \$350 billion is allocated for states and local governments to address economic and social impacts, including in recreation and physical activity (National Recreation and Park Association, 2021). These are just a sample of the many funding sources that can be used to promote positive intergroup experiences in youth sports.

Early

Next, the promotion of diversity and anti-racism in sport should occur early in life, as racial bias can begin as young as four-years old. This will likely require buy-in from youth sport organizations with younger athletes, such as Little Leagues Baseball and Softball and Pop Warner. Again, RISE provides a useful case study as its anti-racist curriculum can be tailored based on the age group of the targeted audience. RISE's Digital Learning Series, a web-based interactive experience that provides users with tools to develop their cultural competency is a relevant example. Combining technology with gamification to teach cultural competency to youth and teenagers could be an effective approach. Additionally, multimedia and digital organizations such as Disney and YouTube could be useful vehicles. For example, recent Disney films including *Moana*, *Raya and the Last Dragon*, and *Encanto* have featured a

predominately non-White cast of characters. Moreover, youth sport organizations might also consider partnering with early childhood development institutions or social justice organizations to promote diverse racial and ethnic perspectives during an athlete's formative years. While the experts in early childhood education would likely have the most ideal methods to promote racial diversity, one example might be an adapted version of Clark and Clark's (1940, 1947) doll experiment in which the dolls are sport characters. To recall, the researchers used dolls identical in every way except skin color to analyze racial perceptions of children. The use of sport-based dolls might reveal racial and ethnic preferences specific to the sport domain.

Opportunity

One final strategy for using youth sports to combat racism is to provide individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds the opportunity to exercise and maintain leadership and influence (while keeping in mind the need for critical mass rather than tokenism) (Grenardo, 2021). This strategy for combating racism through youth sports is exemplified in the efforts of the King County Play Equity Coalition. The KCPEC recognizes that expertise already resides in their local communities of color. Accordingly, the coalition is attempting to shift the power to those communities by promoting BIPOC led community organizations in their area. Additional opportunities to build leadership and influence for those from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds include targeted hiring, mentoring, and training programs. Sport leagues and organizations at higher competitive levels already have practices and policies in place to promote diversity and inclusion (or at least give the appearance of promotion). The NCAA, for example, provides diversity grants to fund athletic administration positions at Division II and Division III colleges and universities. Youth sport leagues could likewise establish programs to recruit, train, and mentor future youth sport leaders from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Such programs will likely take time to establish, particularly given the financial constraints of youth and interscholastic sport leagues. As previously noted, where funding is an issue, leagues should seek partnerships with corporations or apply for local, state, and federal funding. A prime funding opportunity is the \$350 billion in The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for state and local governments to address economic and social impacts, including in recreation and physical activity (National Recreation and Park Association, 2021).

Conclusion

As racial bias can occur in children as early as four years old (Grenardo, 2021), youth sports has the potential to be an ideal vehicle to challenge and combat racism. A combination of proactive and concerted efforts around education, experience, and opportunity can work towards achieving these aims. Thankfully, practitioners and proponents of youth sports are not without guidance for promoting an anti-racist perspective in youth sports. Organizations such as RISE and the King County Play Equity Coalition stand as models for addressing racism in sport, and particularly in youth sports. When pursued with intentionality, youth sports indeed has the potential to build more than character in youth. Instead, youth sports can help to build a more just and equitable society by encouraging its participants "to disrupt systematic racism and oppression that are upheld and perpetuated by the status quo" (King County Play Equity Coalition, 2021b).

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Chapter 5

The Fire This Time: Prioritizing Critical Research on Racism and Antiracism in Athletics

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Abstract

This chapter challenges racism-neutral and racism-evasive approaches in athletics scholarship by highlighting critical research that explicitly examines how racism and antiracism operate within the intercollegiate athletic enterprise. The authors review publications from the past two decades that center on race, racism, and antiracism and employ critical race-based and antiracism frameworks. Finally, the chapter includes recommendations for how future scholarship on the interplay of higher education and athletics can acknowledge racism and antiracism and its residual impacts on Black athletes, coaches, administrators, athletic staff, and their families.

Keywords: Black athletes, racism, antiracism, campus racial climate, critical race theory, intersectionality, athletics

Over the past year, critical race theory (CRT) has become a political buzzword and rallying cry across the United States for conservative-leaning politicians and many dominant group members. Several Republican-led states are working to ban CRT in K–12 classrooms, including teaching about racial history, systemic racism, White privilege, and intersectionality (Ray & Gibbons, 2021). CRT opponents argue—with a well-organized effort—that teaching CRT creates division and indoctrinates White students to hate themselves and their country (Meckler & Natanson, 2021). This is not a new narrative and is widely considered a manufactured myth, arguing instead that there should be a commitment and willingness to discuss race, racism, and other forms of oppression. Such a discussion is essential because the United States was built upon colonization—the material theft of land and labor—and federal law and public policy have preserved the unequal protection and treatment, exclusion, and elimination of people based on race (Blackmon, 2009; Crenshaw, 2019). Social institutions, in particular, have been proficient at producing and reproducing Whiteness, which protects the interests, well-being, lifestyles, and property of primarily White people—members of the dominant race—and disadvantages Black people (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Harris, 1995).

Racism operates at many levels, stretching from the individual to the structural. Structural racism includes policies, practices, and norms embedded in established institutions that result in the production and reproduction of inequitable outcomes for racially minoritized groups, especially Black people and vulnerable people of Color, such as Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American people (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). For example, the inhumanity of slavery and racist Jim Crow laws and policies resulted in social and economic inequality for Black people, and these effects continue today. Racially disparate outcomes occur in areas of education, health, housing, and criminal justice (to name a few)

and lead to greater rates of concentrated poverty, preexisting conditions and health risks, criminalization, premature death, and higher mortality rates (Johnson & Louis, 2020; Kahn & Martin, 2016; Pager & Shepherd, 2008). On average, household income for Blacks in 2018 was \$41,361, while it was \$70,642 for their White counterparts (United States Census Bureau, 2019). Income is a significant factor in a family's ability to access quality health care. Moreover, Black people have the highest death rate of any racial group in the United States, largely attributable to structural inequalities (National Center for Health Statistics, 2021).

In his essay entitled "The Fire Next Time," Baldwin (1963) reminded us that the freedom of Black people requires "the most radical and far-reaching changes in the American political and social structure" (p. 335). Baldwin interprets the title, "The Fire Next Time," to mean that the fire will bring much-needed change, including resolution and racial justice. Baldwin, critically aware of the structural positionality of Blackness, believed that changes in our social structures would happen when we address inhumane policies and practices of state-sanctioned violence and social exclusion rather than simply integrating into White society or what he called "a burning house." He also understood that acknowledging Black people's humanity would be central to the change process. Indeed, although outcome differences are sometimes ascribed to alleged internal deficiencies of individuals or groups (e.g., low cognitive ability or a lack of motivation), a structural lens remains the most reliable approach to understanding the conditions of racially minoritized groups.

In 21st century America, the intellectual discussion and hotly debated public discourse on how race and racism can be taught in K–12 public schools should be a constant reminder of the need for more race-centered approaches and perspectives from higher education scholars and higher education scholars researchers particularly those who study intercollegiate athletics. Indeed, if we accept that racism and racial inequities are a real and destructive force in our society, as Bell (1991) suggested, patterns of racism and antiblackness remain at the center of ongoing practices in athletics (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Grummert, 2021), we must prioritize research that makes visible these ongoing systems of oppression. Unfortunately, however, critical scholarship on racism and antiblackness in athletics is limited and has not garnered the proper attention of scholars studying the interplay between higher education and athletics.

More than 15 years ago, Singer (2005) called for sport management scholars and practitioners to include critical race-based frameworks and epistemologies to stretch our understanding of the role of race, racism, and power in sport. Additionally, Harper (2012)—in a systematic review of 255 higher education articles focused on campus racial climate and minoritized students, among other race-related topics—found that researchers failed to name and critically discuss racism in their empirical studies. A racism-evasive approach—that is, a failure to acknowledge and examine racism—when engaging in race-related studies perpetuates and maintains systems of oppression, including racial inequality in higher education.

With this context in mind, this chapter aims to challenge racism-neutral and racism-evasive approaches in studies on intercollegiate athletics by prioritizing research that clarifies how racism and antiblackness operate within the athletic enterprise. The following literature review is limited to peer-reviewed journal articles and dissertations that employed critical race-based and antiblackness frameworks published over the past two decades. By situating this body of work within its proper societal context, we reveal knowledge gaps on the juxtaposition of race, antiblackness, athletics, and higher education. In the next section, we provide an overview of the experiences of Black students who participate in intercollegiate athletics.

Black College Athletes' Sporting Experiences

As we high-step into the 21st century, narratives touting the declining significance of race and anti-black racism are at odds with the lived realities of Black college athletes. These athletes routinely face

mistreatment of all kinds in the disproportionately White space of college athletics. One case study after another illuminated the painful realities Black athletes encounter while in college (e.g., Beamon, 2014; Bimper, 2015; Bimper et al., 2013; Carter-Francique et al., 2017; Comeaux, 2010; Singer, 2019). For example, Black college athletes in football and men's basketball are undeniably profitable. Yet, they are not fairly compensated—educationally or financially—for their athletic labor, even as athletic departments have morphed into multi-million dollar businesses (Nocera & Strauss, 2016). Huma and Staurowsky (2012) examined the market value of football and men's basketball players at Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools. They found that, between 2011 and 2015, football and men's basketball players in big-time sports programs were being denied at least \$6.2 billion under National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules that prohibited them from receiving endorsement deals from sponsors. They also reported that if big-time college athletes had access to the same fair market as professional athletes, the average player in these programs would be worth \$137,357 per year.

In contrast, the average basketball player at that level would be worth \$289,031. These projected numbers are likely higher today, considering the NCAA's revenue increase through their ongoing multimedia rights contract with CBS Sports and Turner (NCAA, 2016). To a significant degree, the racialized bodies of Black college athletes are alluring commodities that align with material structures of profitability for NCAA institutions and disproportionately White stakeholders in athletics (Comeaux, 2019). This capitalist underpinning of college athletics positions Black athletic bodies as exploitable, disposable, and undervalued laborers (Comeaux, 2018, Hawkins, 2010).

Measures of this racially based system of privilege and inequality—one created by and maintained by athletic stakeholders—remain evident. Division I Black college athletes experience more hostile campus racial climates than their White counterparts (Comeaux, 2018). Black athletes are surveilled and controlled through various mechanisms, such as major clustering and class checkers, more often than their non-Black counterparts (Comeaux, 2018; Grummert, 2021). Since athletic personnel seek to control Black athletes for their athletic prowess rather than supporting their academic goals and obligations, only 59 percent graduate within six years, compared to 69% of athletes in 2019 (NCAA, 2020).

Another example of racial inequality in college athletics is the gross underrepresentation of Black head coaches in the high-profile sports of football and men's basketball at Power 5 NCAA schools—the sports with the highest percentages of Black athletes (Lapchick, 2019). When Black football coaches are not adequately represented in these sports, it likely gives Black athletes the impression the campus racial climate is hostile and not welcoming, supportive, or inclusive of them (Francique, 2018). Relatedly, between the 2014–2015 and 2017–2018 academic years, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) accounted for the vast majority of schools penalized for low Academic Progress Rates (APRs) despite only constituting roughly 6 percent of all NCAA Division I institutions (Marot, 2019). The APR essentially provides an instant snapshot of a school's academic culture—particularly the eligibility, retention, and graduation of its athletes in team sports. It tends to penalize low-resource Division I schools, such as HBCUs because these institutions do not have the financial resources that big-time Division I schools do to support athletes to meet APR standards (Cooper & Comeaux, 2017).

Black athletes generally are poised to use (and are capable of using) their collective agency to serve as agents of change rather than as spectators on the sidelines to contribute to the creation of new sustainable campus environments. However, particularly in recent years during the Black Lives Matter era, sport administrators who advocate for their well-being face heightened pressure to respond to hostile campus racial climates. The quality of the educational experiences for Black athletes will be shaped by those who are racially literate and commit themselves to become better allies and providing equity-driven leadership in this athletic enterprise. Keen advocates of Black college athletes must commit to racial justice education and structural changes, which aim to build a culture of resistance to racism and antiblackness.

Critical Race Theory and Race Consciousness in Athletics

CRT is an analytical lens that emerged in the mid-1970s, primarily from criticisms that the critical legal studies movement insufficiently accounted for and addressed race, racism, and White supremacy in legal scholarship. Progressive legal scholars, such as Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Jean Stefancic, and Kimberlé Crenshaw, have argued that race is a social construct and the law and public policy perpetuate racism and racial hierarchies within social institutions, including education (Crenshaw, 1997; Delgado, 1984; Matsuda, 1995). As such, CRT has utility for anti-racism—an active process of disrupting and dismantling race-based systems of advantages (Deepak & Biggs, 2011)—in intercollegiate athletics. Over the past two decades, scholars have used CRT and intersectionality as analytic frameworks in athletics research to understand the experiences of college athletes across race, gender, and institutional type. As discussed in the following sections, this work has revealed how students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds who participate in athletics tend to view intergroup relations on campus and instances of racism differently (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020).

Black Male Athletes

Black male athletes, in particular, may perceive the campus climate as quite racially hostile (Agyemang et al., 2010; Armstrong & Jennings, 2018; Beamon, 2014; Bimper, 2015; Bimper et al., 2013; Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Comeaux, 2010; Comeaux et al., 2017; Cooper & Hawkins, 2016; Donnor, 2005; Singer, 2005, 2016). Singer (2005), for example, employed CRT as an analytical lens and examined four Division I Black male football players at a predominantly non-Black institution. His goal was to understand their views on racism, and the potential impact racism might have on the quality of their college experiences. Through focus groups and in-depth interviews, Singer found participants expressed that they were treated differently than their White counterparts in the scheduling of classes, random drug tests, and consequences for behavior off the field that could be detrimental to the team. These findings suggest that stakeholders within NCAA schools have become, at times, complicit and have failed to identify and understand the material impact of their inhumane policies and practices on Black male athletes' quality of experience in college.

Likewise, through a qualitative case study of seven Black male athletes attending a Division I predominantly non-Black institution, Bimper and colleagues (2013) explored the self-perceptions and behaviors that contributed to participants' success in managing their dual roles as students and athletes. The authors found race played a key role in the experiences of Black college athletes, including lowered academic expectations from faculty and peers. This supports Comeaux's (2010) finding that faculty view Black athletes' accomplishments less favorably than the accomplishments of their White counterparts. And consistent with Bimper et al. (2013) and Singer (2005), Agyemang and colleagues (2010) employed CRT as an analytical lens in their interviews with six Black male athletes who reported race remains a critical issue in American society.

When Beamon (2014) examined the perceptions of racism among 20 former college athletes at Division I universities, she found their high-profile status did not protect them from experiencing racism. She found when acts of racism occurred on campus; Black athletes faced additional struggles compared to Black students who are not athletes. While other Black students can collectivize to respond to racial conflict, athletes in Beamon's study described restrictions on their ability to speak out about racism from their coaches and athletic staff (e.g., fear and threat of scholarship revocation), furthering the disconnect between themselves and their non-athlete peers.

Additional studies have revealed athletic departments fail to address racial inequality in their mission statements and strategic plans, perpetuating the normalcy of racism in college athletics and reproducing the inequitable conditions experienced by Black athletes (Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Rockhill et al., 2021). For example, Rockhill and colleagues (2021) analyzed the mission, vision, diversity, equity, and

inclusion statements of Power 5 athletic departments and their affiliated universities. They found these institutions normalized a lack of racial diversity by omitting diverse values from their statements, focusing on symbolic statements, and publishing statements that lacked meaning in creating a racially just reality.

While athletic departments produce detailed policy statements designed to establish accountability, their omission of race-specific discourse suggests matters of race are of little concern to their programs (Bimper & Harrison, 2017). This is consistent with Donnor's (2005) assertion that the interests of athletic stakeholders are purely financial and not in alignment with those of the athletes themselves. Utilizing Bell's (1992) theory of interest convergence, Donnor (2005) identified that predominantly White universities' primary interest in admitting Black male athletes is generating revenue and visibility through successful athletic programs. Unfortunately, the educational or social justice interests of Black male athletes are not aligned with the profit interest of the athletic stakeholders and are therefore not prioritized.

Black Female Athletes

Black female athletes face unique difficulties due to intersecting forms of oppression related to their race and gender. They have reported unwelcoming, unsupportive, alienating, and racially hostile campus environments (Bernhard, 2014; Bruening et al., 2005; Carter-Francique, 2013; Carter-Francique et al., 2013, 2017; Cooper & Jackson, 2019; Hextrum, 2019; Simien et al., 2019). For example, through document analysis and interviews, Bruening and colleagues (2005) examined the collective experiences of 12 Division I Black female athletes at a large Midwestern university. Using CRT and intersectionality as interpretive frameworks, they found that mass media, coaches, athletic administrators, and other athletes played a role in virtually ignoring their experiences and concerns. The authors revealed how Black female athletes encounter challenges that differ from those of non-Black women, and their Black male counterparts must overcome. For example, Black women in this study had to deal with racist and sexist remarks made by men in spaces such as the weight room with inadequate and inconsistent support on these matters from coaches and administrators, rendering their experiences invisible. Thus, they demonstrated the need to consider intersectionality and how multiple marginalized Black student experiences are shaped by their various social positions (Crenshaw, 1991).

Similarly, Simien and colleagues (2019) examined the existing literature. They found that, despite increases in athletic opportunities for women, Black female athletes remain largely invisible and marginalized in educational and sports contexts. They noted Black female athletes consistently graduate at lower rates than White female athletes; in fact, the only subgroup that Black female athletes outperform academically is Black male athletes. Likewise, Cooper and Jackson (2019) utilized a semi-structured focus group and in-depth interviews to examine the perceptions and experiences of four Division I Black female athletes at a predominantly non-Black college. Their participants experienced role conflict due to athletic department pressures, whereby their athletic roles dominated their lives and resulted in an abandonment of academic roles.

Additionally, Black female athletes have been described as being hyper-sexualized or hyper-feminized by coaches, administrators, and male athletes (Bruening et al., 2005; Ferguson & Satterfield, 2017; Foster, 2003; Withycombe, 2011). Foster (2003) found that they experience control and hyper-surveillance specific to their race and gender. Through ethnographic research at a Midwestern university, Foster found that staff believed Black female athletes needed considerable guidance to avoid being sexually promiscuous. Foster described counselors calling athletes' dorm rooms at 1:30 am to ensure they were not, as one counselor put it, "out sleeping around" (p. 314). Other scholars have found that Black female athletes find it difficult to assert their individuality because they are often thought of as either being women or being Black, but not at the intersection of their race and gender (Carter & Hart, 2010; Simien et al., 2019).

Black queer women, particularly, have reported hostile team and campus climates (Rankin et al., 2011).

Melton and Cunningham (2012), through interviews with 12 female athletes of Color, explored how multiple identities (e.g., gender, race, and sexual orientation) shaped their academic and athletic experiences during college. Their participants' marginalized identities, both racial and sexual, uniquely influenced their college experiences. Specifically, coaches and staff members displayed overt forms of sexual prejudice, compelling many participants to conceal their sexuality. While participants described experiencing racism in classroom and community settings, sexual prejudice persisted across all contexts. Melton and Cunningham (2012) found that female athletes of Color were more resilient when managing racial conflict but found it more difficult to cope with sexual prejudice. These negative experiences related to sexual identity prejudice contributed to participants' feelings of social isolation and shame.

Race and Senior Leadership Positions

Some researchers have explored the role of race in senior sport leadership, such as coaching and athletic director positions (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010; Cooper et al., 2017; Singer et al., 2010). For example, utilizing CRT and social dominance theory, Agyemang and Delorme (2010) explored the dearth of Black head coaches at the NCAA FBS level. Through examinations of data from the Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA) Hiring Report Card and 2008 Racial and Gender Report Card, they found Black head coaches were grossly underrepresented, particularly in comparison to the representation of Black collegiate athletes. They pointed to this discrepancy as evidence that racism is still deeply embedded in collegiate athletics.

Similarly, Singer and colleagues (2010), using a CRT framework, examined the five criteria used in the BCA Hiring Report Card to assess the openness and fairness of the hiring process and to illuminate issues of race and racism. They found that schools failed to engage with the BCA—theorizing that hiring committees would rather communicate with their own well-established or “good old boy” networks—and did not feel responsible for consulting race-conscious social justice organizations (p. 280). They also noted the lack of racially minoritized candidates on these committees. Without representation on hiring committees, candidates are much more vulnerable to racial stereotypes and discrimination (Singer et al., 2010). Citing Bell's (1991) theory of interest convergence, Singer et al. concluded that Black athletes are seen as financially valuable to athletic stakeholders, but Black leadership candidates are not.

Scholars have also examined the intersection of race and gender in athletic leadership positions (Borland & Bruening, 2010; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Pointer, 2018; Price et al., 2017). For example, Borland and Bruening (2010) interviewed 10 Black female assistant basketball coaches working at Division I institutions. Through a lens of intersectionality, they identified barriers contributing to the lack of representation of Black women in head coaching positions in women's basketball. Their participants reported stereotyping and discrimination based on gender, race, and sexuality, a lack of institutional support, and limited access to necessary social networks. They concluded the barriers facing Black women made them invisible and isolated. Further, using intersectionality theory as a lens, McDowell and Carter-Francique (2017) found that African American women athletic directors across different divisional classifications faced constant challenges to their authority, misperceptions concerning their roles, and perceptions that their hiring was related more to their demographics than their qualifications.

The low representation of Black men and women in senior leadership positions is evident in college athletics. Racist and sexist hiring practices limit their presence in sport leadership, such as head coaching and athletic director positions. The responsibility for real change will require champions who continue to organize, lead, resist, and actively disrupt business-as-usual hiring practices.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Studies have revealed how HBCUs suffer from systemic racism in college athletics (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cooper, 2018; Cooper & Cooper, 2015; Cooper et al., 2014). For example, Cooper and

colleagues (2014), using CRT as an analytic tool, found that HBCUs face numerous challenges because of decisions made by the NCAA and state and federal government, including loss of talent to major Division I predominantly non-Black colleges and universities, loss of accreditation, and subsequent loss of federal financial aid. Moreover, they found that HBCU budgets have been impacted by a loss of athletic talent resulting from racial integration in college sports. Rather than collaborating with HBCU athletic programs, larger, well-funded, predominantly non-Black institutions have extracted talented Black athletes from Black-operated entities and shut HBCUs out of the revenue streams produced by said athletes. Cooper and colleagues (2014) concluded: that “structural arrangements such as post-season tournament formats, bowl games, and multi-million dollar television contracts primarily benefited HWCUs and either excluded and/or significantly disadvantaged limited-resource institutions (LRIs) such as HBCUs” (p. 310).

Cheeks and Carter-Francique (2015) employed CRT to identify how institutional racism and systemic oppression have perpetuated the institutional distancing of HBCUs, resulting in loss of athletic revenue. Through conference eligibility and policies specific to each conference, HBCUs are restrained from full participation in the revenue streams afforded to universities in the FBS, the NCAA’s most financially lucrative and visible sub-division (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). For example, institutions in the FBS are allowed 85 scholarship athletes, while Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) schools, including all Division I HBCUs, are only allotted 63 scholarship athletes (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). Thus, the social stratification between Division I institutions and conferences significantly disadvantages HBCUs and predominantly favors non-Black colleges and universities (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cooper et al., 2014). In the next section, we provide an overview of research on Black athletes using an anti-deficit perspective.

Anti-Deficit Framing of Black Athletes

Some scholars have employed an anti-deficit framework—broadly defined here as an asset-based approach aimed at identifying characteristics related to the academic success of Black college athletes (see Harper, 2010)—to understand the academic achievements and experiences of Black colleges athletes (Cooper et al., 2016; Cooper & Cooper, 2015; Cooper & Hawkins, 2016; Martin et al., 2010; Oseguera, 2010). For instance, Cooper and Hawkins (2016) utilized an anti-deficit achievement framework to identify key institutional characteristics and practices that contributed to a positive educational experience for Black male athletes at an HBCU. Their study included 57 Black male football and basketball players, and they derived their data from a 79-item questionnaire, three focus group interviews, and four individual interviews. Their findings revealed that the HBCU created a nurturing familial campus climate that enhanced Black male athletes’ sense of belonging. Participants expressed their ability to depend on their coaches for support on and off the court or field, and they described their professors as approachable and affirming. Athletes also found support in culturally relevant events and organizations, like a homecoming, step shows, and band performances.

Cooper and colleagues (2016) also employed this anti-deficit approach to explore the experiences of Black female athletes at Division I predominantly non-Black institutions. Interviews with five Black female athletes identified key factors contributing to academic achievement and positive transitional experiences. In addition, several external elements influenced the Black female athletes’ success, including family members centered on educational achievement, athletic departments with structures designed to cultivate productive academic behaviors, positive relationships with professors, and pre-college academic preparation.

An anti-deficit achievement framework can disrupt deficit-oriented discourse and narratives. The highlighted research studies elucidate how Black male and female athletes develop and cultivate meaningful and value-added relationships contributing to academic success across different institutional types. In the next section, we provide an overview of research on the experiences of Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander,

and Native American athletes and athletic staff of Color in senior leadership positions.

Experiences of Latinx, Asian, and Pacific Islander Athletes and Athletic Staff

Extant research has rarely used critical theoretical frameworks to examine the experiences of athletes who identify as Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American students (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021; Kukahiko, 2017; Ortega, 2021; Shim et al., 2020). Ortega (2021) analyzed how Latino male athletes' college experiences are shaped by the intersection of their racial and athletic identities. Questionnaires and interviews with three Latino male athletes revealed they experienced hostile racial environments in athletics, including teammates engaging in racial jokes about their immigration status. Moreover, Ortega found these Latino college athletes experienced negative perceptions from their non-athlete peers due to their status as athletes.

Grafnetterova and Banda (2021) identified similar themes in their case study of 16 first-generation Latinx students participating in Division I non-revenue-generating sports. Utilizing LatCrit, they sought to identify how cultural capital impacts persistence to degree attainment for Latinx college athletes. Like Ortega's (2021) participants, their participants viewed college athletics as an opportunity to combat negative perceptions of Latinx people in the United States because they could excel in academics and athletics. Their participants also described a sense of inspiration stemming from their families' immigration status and the sacrifices their families made to provide them with new opportunities.

Kukahiko (2017) employed Pacific Islander cultural racism theory to explore how college football players experience culture and race and how this may inhibit their transitions and persistence. He used surveys and interviews to gather data from 40 Pacific Islander college football players. Participants experienced mental and physical trauma through football participation, and most believed they were exploited for profit by their institutions. Moreover, these athletes experienced stereotypes and expressed feelings of cultural dissonance because they were separated from their families and communities.

There is a scarcity of research that uses a critical theoretical framework to investigate the role of race for Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American people in senior leadership positions. One such study by Shim et al. (2020) utilized Asian critical theory to investigate the underrepresentation of people of Asian descent in intercollegiate athletic administration positions, ranging from athletic trainer to athletic director. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews of five self-identified Asian employees who had worked at or were currently working at Division I institutions, Shim and colleagues (2020) found that Asian personnel tended to be underrepresented because of language barriers and because Asian culture placed more value on education than on participation in sports. The authors concluded that "people of Asian descent have been marginalized in hiring practices in intercollegiate athletics, and this has been omitted from diversity discussions" (p. 87). Given these findings, racist stereotypes and discriminatory hiring practices have likely contributed to the underrepresentation of people of Asian descent in intercollegiate athletic administrations. The NCAA and members schools should find ways to disrupt racist stereotypes commonly placed on people of Asian descent and work to address the gross underrepresentation of Asians in athletic leadership positions.

CRT has provided researchers with the tools necessary to illuminate the reality of racism in college athletics. Scholars using CRT have identified how race and racism impact the lived experiences of Black college athletes and administrators. Both face racially hostile climates, negative assumptions about their abilities, and overall mistreatment. Black women endure interlocking forms of oppression related to their race and gender while participating in intercollegiate athletics (Carter-Francique et al., 2013, 2017; Cooper & Jackson, 2019; Simien et al., 2019). Though research is limited on Latinx, Asian, and Pacific Islander athletes, coaches, and administrators, scholars have noted that Latinx and Pacific Islander athletes and Asian administrative staff encounter racist and discriminatory practices in college athletics (Kukahiko, 2017; Ortega, 2021; Shim et al., 2020). Through a CRT lens, researchers can explore the

subtleties and salience of race and racism and the challenges encountered by athletes and administrators who experience racial and intersectional marginalization. Doing so exposes inequitable structures, policies, and practices that reinforce White supremacy on college campuses and amplifies the unique life experiences of these campus stakeholders.

Centering Antiracism: Black Athletes as Disposable Property

Much of the critical research on the structure of the athletic enterprise and vulnerable athlete experiences have been explored through the theoretical lens of neoliberalism (e.g., Comeaux, 2018; Tompkins, 2017), capitalism, and colonialism (e.g., Gayles et al., 2018; Hawkins, 2010; Harrison et al., 2021; Sack, 2009; Southall & Weiler, 2014; Thacker, 2017), racism (e.g., Beamon, 2014; Bimper, 2015; Cooper et al., 2017; Donnor, 2005; Singer, 2016), Whiteness and White supremacy (e.g., Haslerig, et al., 2020; Hextrum, 2018, 2020, 2021), and antiracism (e.g., Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Dancy et al., 2018; Grummert, 2021). In this section, we focus on antiracism and antiracism scholarship. Antiracism remains woefully undertheorized and understudied within the context of athletics. Often, there is a tendency to conflate the concept of racism with the concept of antiracism. Such a distinction is necessary and beneficial to the understanding of this section. Jung and Vargas (2021) explain:

The incongruity, the conceptual crisis, bespeaks the incommensurability of antiracism and the need to distinguish antiracism from racism. The analytical and political imperative of establishing a break from the social concept of racism emanates from the recognition of antiracism as an ontological condition of possibility of modern world sociality, whereas racism is an aspect of that sociality. A world without racism requires deep transformations in social practices and structures. A world without antiracism necessitates an entirely new conception of the social, which is to say a radically different world altogether. (p. 7)

Importantly, the social concept of racism is not suitable for capturing antiracism. Antiracism is “not simply racism against Black people,” but instead a “broader antagonistic relationship between Blackness and (the possibility of) humanity” (Dumas & Ross, 2016, p. 429). Theories of antiracism, informed by Saidiya Hartman, Hortense Spillers, João H. Costa Vargas, Jared Sexton, Joy James, and Frank Wilderson III, to name a few, suggest that Black people do not experience the same ongoing coordinated and relentless attacks on their humanity as non-Blacks. Moreover, Dumas (2016) argues that “the very technologies and imaginations that allow a social recognition of the humanness of others systematically exclude this possibility for the Black” (p. 13). By this logic, there is a fundamental and strong opposition to Black people, and they do not have much human value through the White gaze (Yancy, 2008). Similar to the enslavement of Black people, Blackness, as Patterson (1982) suggests, is a social death, signifying an intentional erasure from humanity or social life. As such, “to investigate antiracism then, is to call into question the very notion of the “human” as an unethical formation” (Grummert, 2021, p. 29).

Following Vargas (2018), the intent of theorizing antiracism, unlike multiracial frameworks, is not to offer possibilities of redemption to our current system or to provide restorative solutions to racial inequality. Rather, to engage antiracism requires a deeper understanding of the Black condition and a movement beyond normative expectations and cultural acceptability within a context of reckless disregard, marginalization, dehumanization, and fungibility of Black people (Hartman, 1997). Vargas (2018) insist that antiracism is “inescapable unless and until the very structures of our cognitive and sociability are deeply transfigured, removed, destroyed. To get to the desired and necessary transformative moment, however, we must first figure out what exactly needs to be replaced.... such is the imperative of freedom” (p. 28). As such, it is important and necessary to connect Blackness and the Black body to historical and ongoing projects rooted in antiracism.

In athletics, there is a scarcity of research that centers on antiblackness as a separate logic from racism to understand and explain the recurring failure to recognize Black humanity. Too often, multiracial frameworks ignore, decenter, or deny structural forms of antiblackness (see Shange, 2019; Vargas, 2018). However, a handful of scholars have used a theoretical framework of antiblackness to engage in a more robust analysis and interpretation of Black college athletes' dehumanization (e.g., Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Dancy et al., 2018; Grummert, 2021). Their work interrogates the violence and suffering of Black athletes and how they navigate the "afterlife of slavery"—an ontological and social condition of Black life (Hartman, 2008, p. 8). For example, Dancy et al. (2018) analyzed the relationship between predominantly non-Black institutions and Black people using settler colonialism and antiblackness as theoretical lenses. They explained that higher education institutions, developed under settler colonialism, function under slave-owner labor techniques, with administrators at the helm. Due to a lack of access to sufficient academic resources and opportunities, Black people—unlike most of their White and non-Black counterparts—tend to pursue sport labor as an avenue for social mobility. Dancy and colleagues argued that the Black male athlete narrative, under the settler colonialism arrangement, is consistently pushed onto Black boys starting at a young age and throughout their adolescent years as a way to escape poverty. They concluded that labor coercion is reinforced through police power, patrolling/hyper-surveillance, and the settler colonial perspective of the Black body and Blackness as property.

Hawkins (2010) likewise compared the current intercollegiate athletic model to the structure of slavery. Dancy et al. (2018) identified it as an exploitative system in which Black men are used to generating revenue, evolving from the association of Blackness with property, with universities shifting from enslaved Black labor as a source of revenue to a system in which predominantly Black athletes generate revenue without being eligible for compensation. And Grummert (2021) used antiblackness and carcerality as an analytic to examine 20 current and former college athletes' experiences with individuals—teammates, coaches, administration, and medical staff—and with surveillance mechanisms. She found that the structural arrangement of college athletics across Division I FBS, FCS, and non-football Division I institutions resembled other antiblack state projects and structural forms of antiblackness. In particular, Black female athlete participants, to a greater extent than their non-Black counterparts, were subjected to surveillance and disciplining mechanisms and, at times, bodily and psychological harm designed to maintain antiblack structures and practices.

Although there is little extant research on Black college athlete purposeful engagement activities—and few direct studies focused on antiblackness—we do know that revenue-generating athletes, who are majority Black, interact within the campus community less frequently than their non-Black counterparts (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020). Furthermore, the subculture of low academic expectations and the overemphasis on athletic obligations significantly decreases the chances of Black athletes reaching their maximum learning potential. This is evidenced by their lack of quality campus experiences, limited preparation for postgraduate careers, and dismal graduation rates (Comeaux, 2018; Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Harper, 2018). Comeaux and Grummert (2020) concluded that excessive athletic time commitments are a structural impediment within a problematic system driven by antiblack logics of fungibility and disposability.

In sum, although the available work on antiblackness in college athletics is scarce, researchers have detailed the ways that antiblack settler colonial practices of enslavement and the construction of the Black body as subhuman, inferior, and property have influenced the current model of college athletics (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Dancy et al., 2018; Grummert, 2021). Framed as an opportunity for social mobility through the structure of college athletics, the Black athlete (mind and body) continues to be exploited, devalued, and dehumanized and serves as "a site of contestation for the White imaginary between the inferior intellectual and the elite athlete" (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020, p. 61). The evidence is clear that scholars must explore Black students who participate in athletics, independent of non-Black students who face marginalization, to better understand how antiblackness, including structural conditions that perpetuate Black suffering, might be produced and reproduced at predominately

non-Black colleges and universities. We are not opposed to multiracial frameworks, but they tend to ignore, gloss over, or deny structural forms of antiblackness (Sexton, 2010; Vargas, 2018). Multiracial frameworks, moreover, tend to work against Black people (see Shange, 2019). Only a theoretical framework of antiblackness or critical theorization of Blackness addresses the specificity of antiblackness in the construction of human/nonhuman (see Sexton, 2010; Walcott, 2018; Wilderson, 2010). Thus, before focusing on multiracial struggles, experiences, and possibilities, it is instructive, timely, and necessary to use a theoretical framework of antiblackness to engage in a more comprehensive analysis and interpretation of antiblackness in college athletics.

Directions for Future Research

Over the past two decades of higher education and athletics research, a steadily growing body of work centers on racism and, to a lesser extent, antiblackness in analyzing inequities and injustices in athletics. The literature reviewed in this chapter sheds light on the role of racism in maintaining racial inequities in the athletic enterprise. For example, there are racial injustices in the experiences of Black men and women who participate in athletics at predominantly non-Black institutions, there is an underrepresentation of people of Color in administrative positions, and there is hostile racism and discrimination directed at Latinx, Asian, and Pacific Islander students and administrators in athletics. In addition, our review provides insight into the antiblackness patterns at the center of ongoing policies and practices in athletics.

While some insights have been gained about the nature and influence of race, racism, and antiblackness, this area of inquiry has significant room for further exploration. Future efforts should examine a wider spectrum of stakeholders, including current and former athletes, coaches, administrators, fans, and advocates of athletes. In addition, future studies should use CRT as an interpretive framework and consider vulnerable athletes of various racial/ethnic groups, such as Latinx, Native American, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander athletes at predominantly non-Black colleges and universities other institutional types. CRT will help explain and operationalize the role of race and racism in discourses on racialized bodies and help us understand lived experiences in different institutional contexts. Questions should include:

- Do vulnerable athletes of Color feel a sense of belonging at predominantly non-Black institutions?
- Do athletes of Color have more positive campus experiences when there are more administrators and head coaches of color?

Employing a theoretical framework of antiblackness, future studies might ask:

- What impact does antiblackness have on Black players and coaches in higher education athletic settings?
- What are Black athletes' perceptions of structural forms of antiblackness such as unfair compensation (educationally and financially)?

Future research should employ critical theoretical perspectives that resist oppressive social constructions to explore the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, non-binary, and transgender college athletes, particularly students of color. Future studies should also consider critical perspectives such as Black feminist thought, Womanist theory, intersectionality, African American Male Theory, critical studies of Whiteness, BlackCrit, LatCrit, TribCrit, and AsianCrit to demonstrate the complexities of identities and lived experiences within minoritized groups. Little attention has been devoted to critical issues such as the racialized and gendered violence and antiblackness that women of Color experience on their teams. A multidimensional understanding of the experiences of vulnerable athletes and athletic stakeholders offers an important opportunity to assess the climate and culture of colleges and universities.

Conclusion

This chapter's consolidation of knowledge about racism and antiblackness offers a solid foundation for future work to examine the interplay of higher education and athletics and its impact on athletes and athletic staff from diverse racial backgrounds. It is imperative that higher education leaders, including sport administrators, policymakers, education researchers, practitioners, and activists, make deep commitments to name, analyze, and adequately respond to structural racism and various forms of antiblackness in athletics. By building on existing research and pursuing the avenues of inquiry identified above, we can help ensure that we move toward a more racially just, equitable, and inclusive athletic model.

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Chapter 6

Athlete Branding in the 21st Century: Former Athletes' Voices and Vision for More Education and Life After Sport Content, Messaging, and Representations

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Abstract

The branding of athletes has a long history and has received a great deal of scholarly attention in certain epistemological areas. However, one of the gaps in the research literature is the former athlete's scholarly and applied perspective on the continuum of high school sport to the professional level. While this is inherently a United States of America (USA) perspective, implications may be relevant to other nations. This chapter focuses on filling a gap in the research and applied literature related to athlete branding in terms of examining life during and after sport and "real-time" cases of athletes' attributes. The resulting discussion extends beyond the scope of athletic prowess and offers future theoretical directions and practice for scholars and sport managers. The goal of this approach is to influence positive change(s) with the athlete's brand in both theory and practice.

Keywords: brand, race, sport, education, life after sport

The neoliberal makeover and refinements to the state of intercollegiate athletics, in reply to a complex crisis of schooling Black student athletes, has enabled an undeterred investment in instruments of policy and programming for production of knowledge capitalism through which people are reimagined and reconstructed as human capital and economic entrepreneurs of their own lives, including the quality of their education. The institutions of higher education and intercollegiate athletics have been all but immune to the marketization of education. (Bimper, 2020, p. 156)

Athlete Branding Overview

Athletes are some of the most visible racial and ethnic identities in society across all global nations and cultures, from school systems to organized and informal sports. As citizens in the United States of America (USA) and the world, we are bombarded with images and representations of athletes. Athlete branding cultivates messages and products from food/beverage to technology to fashion. However, less attention to athlete branding systemically (theory and practice) focuses on education and the holistic aspects of athletes in the culture. Thus, this chapter poses the following questions: (a) What might one glean from the research literature on athlete branding? (b) What theory or theories encompass the current chapter's thesis? and (c) What gaps are there in the research literature that the current paper could

fill, especially in terms of education, athlete branding, and race?

As participant observers, i.e., three of the four co-authors of the current paper are former competitive collegiate athletes at nearly every level, how might our perspective offer a unique bridge between sport management scholars and practitioners on the topic of athlete branding? We begin in the next section by briefly reviewing the literature on athlete branding.

Brief Review of Literature

The first inquiry of the chapter requires compilation and evaluation. What might one glean from the research literature on athlete branding? Researchers and scholars have paid great attention to the subject of athlete branding. This attention primarily focuses on the areas of career transition and retired athletes (Bernes et al., 2009; Taniyev & Gordon, 2019), women (Kristiansen & Williams, 2015; Lobpries et al., 2018), social and new media (Ballouli & Hutchinson, 2012; Doyle et al., 2020; Hodge & Walker, 2015; Su et al., 2020), philanthropy (Kunkel et al., 2020), psychometric scales (Arai et al., 2013), athlete brand images (Arai et al., 2014; Emmons & Mocarski, 2014; Hasaan et al., 2020; Razvan & Catalin, 2018) and sport-brand architecture (Williams et al., 2015).

These empirical and theoretical papers have contributed to the research literature in key ways. Branding impacts all athletes at each level of competition, and there are differences based on gender and sexual orientation even with the passing of Title IX 50 years ago. The impact of social media on modern athletes deserves the attention of scholars and practitioners who work with athletes in team and business capacities. Yet, the educational outcomes of these branded sporting identities are often overlooked. How athletes are positioned with community, charities, etc., is as important as measuring the perceptions of athlete branding through empiricism. The images of athletes create a continuum over time of emotion, nostalgia, and access to the fans that consume their representations. The perception of gender equality allows women and men involved in sport to have the opportunity to compete in the classroom. In these settings, the baseline of performance attributes is up to each individual—to achieve intellectually with their brains and brawn. In the next section, we synthesize how cultural memory theories align with the need for researchers to inform the best practices of higher education with cultural representations that humanize athletes.

Theory on Cultural Memory, Race, and Sport

History is not only about the past but also about the contemporary and the future. Assmann (1995) refers to our collective memory of history as reflexivity in his work on cultural identity. Cultural memory is reflexive in three ways: (a) it is practice-reflexive in that it interprets common practice through proverbs, maxims, “ethno-theories” to use Bourdieu’s term, rituals (for instance, sacrificial rites that interpret the practice of hunting), and so on; (b) it is self-reflexive in that it draws on itself to explain, distinguish, reinterpret, criticize, censure, control, surpass, and receive hypothetically; and (c) it is reflexive of its image insofar as it reflects the self-image of the group through a preoccupation with its social system.

Similarly, the cultural memory of athlete branding in America contains both the past and the present. History is as much about today as it is yesterday (Thomas, 2018). In terms of yesterday, one of the most lucrative sport commodities has been the African American male. This exploitation of Black male productivity for labor has a long history in sport and society (Hawkins, 2010). Researchers have recently centered their theory and practice around the productive aspects of education, race, and sport for the Black male athlete (Cooper, 2016). However, the notion of scholar-athlete excellence in African American male culture is not new.

Consider McMahon’s take on education, race, and sport through the iconic Duke Slater, an alumnus of Iowa. While lengthy, it is pertinent to convey the capacity of athlete branding to include holistic aspects

of athletes in the culture:

Slater's career after college also sparkled. After graduating from Iowa in 1921, he played professional football in the 1930s. He also returned to Iowa in the 1920s to study law. He earned his law degree in 1928 and later became a respected judge in Chicago. He returned to Iowa frequently, giving public speeches and attending Hawkeye football games. Slater also helped to recruit Black players—by his image and through personal contact. More than just a living legend, he identified and evaluated Black talent and sent it Iowa's way. Slater is arguably the most influential and enduring legend of all African-American athletes at Iowa. In 1972 the university dedicated a dormitory in his honor, Slater Hall. (McMahon, 2001, p. 77)

The influence of Slater's actions promoted anti-racism in sport organizations before empirical literature on the topic was ever documented. Still, his actions and attitudes remain an enduring element of the cultural memory of Black excellence in collegiate sport.

Studies parallel to the current chapter's thesis examine how athletes are presented in advertising and other cultural platforms. This research by other scholars focuses on the stereotypes and stigmas of athletes in a society that often sees this population as physical beings, not mental, strategic, and/or humans that are interlocutors. For example, the work of Edwards (1984) illuminates that the brain attributes of athletes, especially African American male athletes, are often missing or erased in media and marketing content. Dyson (2021) has also critically addressed that "balling out" extends beyond the physical talents and gifts of athletes (especially Black men) that many audience viewers gaze at; the art and science with the merger of intellect and athleticism are not a duality.

The specific literature on athlete branding, primarily from sport management and sport studies scholars, tends to focus on the bodies of Black male athletes in predominantly White spaces. Our current chapter contribution adds to theory and practice—the case exemplars of current and former athletes from high school to professionals advance cultural reflexivity and give sport managers applied strategies to brand athletes through various platforms. This includes high school counselors, academic support units in higher education and intercollegiate athletics, and player engagement and development specialists at the collegiate and professional levels.

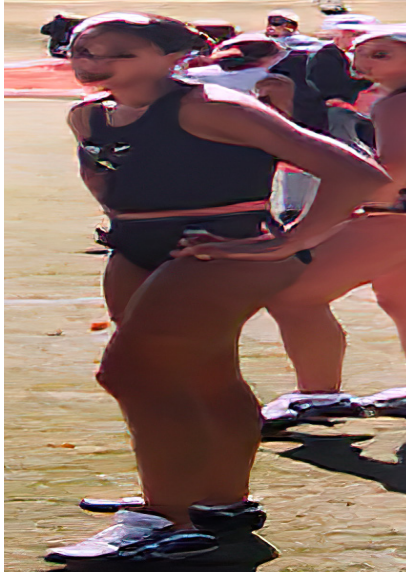
It is important that our chapter highlights athletes from all backgrounds, sports, and identity perspectives. However, revenue sports such as men's basketball and football are the most visible in the USA and across the globe. Other studies run counter to the current chapter's thesis and focus. For example, some researchers have found that male athletes receive more attention and branding than female athletes. However, we should ask what type of media content and attention is being constructed. The current authors did their best to include women athletes and their branding attributes that combine cognitive and athletic skills through the visual texts earlier, as well as the descriptions of each athlete as a human being.

Practical Applications for Sport Managers

The systemic messages about the scope of an athlete's identity beyond sport are limited. In short, they are in dire need of a branding makeover that promotes education. Policies and institutions, e.g., National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), that cultivate this messaging would enable the structural focus on athleticism to shift in a culturally relevant way toward education and achievements beyond the athletic competition. Examples of these structural policies will be discussed at the conclusion of this chapter. To understand the necessity of these structural policies, best practices for sport managers are given at diverse levels of athletic competition, as discussed in the following pages.

Professional Cases: Sport and Professionals

All athletes will exit from sport at some point in their lives, regardless of the level of competition. However, some athletes understand this transition and embrace the workforce (Boyd et al., 2021). As such, we synthesize a visual litany of former athletes in what will hopefully become “athletic vintage” as the years pass. These images demonstrate traits and characteristics across diverse sporting experiences that all have the potential for transferable skills. Some of these images also represent educational content that is missing from the popular text of today’s athletes—and yesterday’s athletes.



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Dr. Amanda Schweinbenz is a tenured professor and former competitive rower in college (Canada). Photo courtesy from the Paul Robeson Research Center for Innovative Academic & Athletic Prowess at UCF.

The Case of Dr. George Jewett: Contemporary College Nostalgia

In addition to the value of intercollegiate athletics in higher education, one way to integrate the message of academic and athletic prowess is through contemporary nostalgia. In 2021, the first author of this chapter was one of the advisors who assisted with the design of a trophy with so much meaning and nuances. In February 2021, Michigan and Northwestern University announced the establishment of the first rivalry game trophy named for an African American student-athlete in Football Bowl Subdivision History (FBS). The schools partnered to honor Dr. George Jewett (MD), an alumnus of both universities and the first African American to play for both football programs. The George Jewett Trophy will be played each time the two programs meet on the football field (see picture below).

Jewett played for Michigan during the 1890 and 1892 seasons, enrolling at the university after being named valedictorian at Ann Arbor High (now Ann Arbor Pioneer High School), where he was a stand-out in track, football, and baseball. Fluent in four languages, Jewett studied medicine while starring on the gridiron for the Wolverines as a fullback, a halfback, and the team's main kicker. However, he left Michigan for Northwestern in 1893 due to racism and UM's medical school not allowing him admission to their medical school to finish his medical degree. While in Evanston, he also lettered and starred in football for the Wildcats for two seasons, including a four-touchdown performance against his undergraduate alma mater Michigan. After graduation, Jewett became a doctor in Chicago before returning to Ann Arbor in 1899. He coached briefly at Michigan Agricultural College and Oliver and later started a dry cleaning and pressing business on State Street. Unfortunately, Jewett's life was cut short, as he died in 1908 at 38, leaving behind a wife and two sons.

Several primary sources in yearbook comments are worth noting. The first comment is about Jewett's role in promoting diversity and inclusion in and out of the sport context: "This is a historic moment in major college football history," said Warde Manuel, UM's Donald R. Shepherd Director of Athletics. He went on to write:

We are proud to partner with our peer institution, Northwestern, to recognize and honor an African American pioneer in George Jewett. George achieved at a high level as a scholar, athlete and doctor. His

hard work and effort led to success not only for himself, but for those who would follow a similar path after him. His excellence at two Big Ten institutions as a student, athlete and citizen is something we want our current student-athletes to aspire to during their collegiate. The George Jewett Trophy will become a proud celebration of the importance to diversity and inclusion on our teams, campuses, and to our society. (Michigan football yearbook, 2021)

Jewett’s branding image would have been one of a holistic person who used both his mind and his body to position himself as a positive influence on the next generation.

The second comment noted Jewett’s mark on the cultural memory of anti-racism in sport organizations. “Dr. George Jewett’s academic, athletic, community and cultural accolades transcend time,” stated Big Ten commissioner Kevin Warren. Remarking on his excellence as a scholar and athlete, Warren continued:

Dr. Jewett’s dedication and perseverance to achieve excellence in every area of his life are an inspiration to every man and woman and provide evidence that with hard work and passion there are no limitations to achieving your dreams. We must continue to work together to honor Dr. Jewett by eliminating racism and hate and creating equality in our society. (Michigan Football Yearbook, 2021)

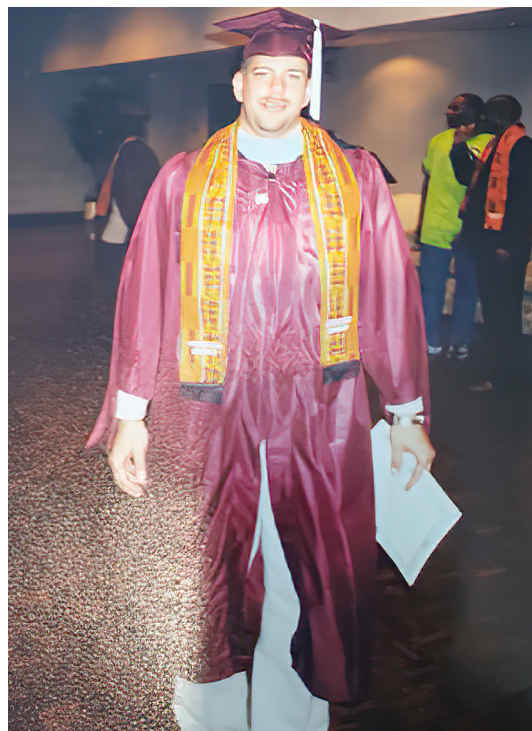
This holistic image of Dr. Jewett challenges the traditional ways we see sports participants. Learning about the cerebral attributes of athletes should be integrated into the systemic messages about the scope of an athlete’s identity beyond sport.



Photo courtesy from the Paul Robeson Research Center for Innovative Academic & Athletic Prowess at UCF. October 2021. Pictured left to right are Dr. Derrick Gragg (former football player at Vanderbilt University), Doug Gnodtke (Chief of Staff at UM), Warde Manuel (former football player at UM), and Dr. C. Keith Harrison (first author of this paper and former offensive center in football West Texas A&M University).

Community Colleges: Overlooked and Under-resourced

Jean Boyd and Cliff Parks are two best friends from southern California. They met in 1986 at Paramount High School. Growing up in Compton, both African American men are success stories, and as former athletes, their achievements need to be branded through education (see pictures below). The first author of the current paper met both men in 1990 while a first-year assistant football coach at Cerritos Community College and in graduate school at California State University, Dominguez Hills.



High School Cases: Planting and Growing the Seeds Early



Issues of name, branding image, and likeness do not only affect collegiate and professional sports. In the lower levels of athletic competition in the United States, the Name Image and Likeness (NIL) movement will continue to escalate. As various stakeholders strategically build business models that monetize the potential realities of high-profile recruits, the pre-college representations of scholastic individuals become more pertinent to athlete branding. The next four individuals are highlighted in high school at different stages of their schooling lives. All four are recent A students and stellar athletes in at least one varsity sport.

Tre Harrison has focused his physical and intellectual talents on the field with an emphasis on his high “football IQ.” Along with his academic pursuits, these attributes are the type of athlete branding needed in the 21st Century. His first offer is from Boston College.



Josh Hunter, an outstanding scholar, has signed a full athletic scholarship at San Diego State University. He will major in international business with a minor in entrepreneurship. He started varsity for four years at Mater Dei High School in California, one of the top high schools in the nation for academics and athletics) Hunter was a two-time defensive player of the year in the Trinity League, one of the best in the nation for competitive scholastic athletes. Hunter has also earned Athlete of the Year at Mater Dei High School.



Braelon Tate signed a scholarship with Colorado Mines, one of the top engineering schools in the country. Most of the football players at this Division II school major in engineering, and the team is very competitive, ascending to the playoffs consistently each year with a peer group of academic and athletic excellence. In addition, Tate has a strong family lineage: his parents are successful business leaders, his uncle is a famous professor, and his grandparents are pioneer educators and sportswriters in Atlanta's southern community.



Tate Lampman is a star scholar-athlete in soccer whose parents are both successful in education and business.

Discussion and Future Research

We have reached the final inquiry. What contribution to the research literature does this chapter fill for education, athlete branding, and race? Our theoretical and practical contributions include educational achievement and success beyond physical intelligence in athlete branding. Much of the athlete branding research literature focuses on areas that overlook educational themes and career transition representations that expand athletic identities beyond the playing fields, gyms, diamonds, and rowing waters. While the body of literature on athlete branding is important and plentiful (see the brief review of the literature section earlier in this paper), the intellectualism/cerebral attributes of athletes are where the gap in the research is more apparent. The NIL movement will intensify the need for researchers to inform the best practices of higher education with cultural representations that humanize athletes.

Education is not the only theme or approach that leaders can utilize. Iconic scholar-activist Professor Emeritus Harry Edwards critiques how plans could play out and are already playing out in the last decade, especially for numerous African Americans in sport:

While education was seen as plan B, the 20th Century was dominated by our role and images as athletes. It will be our minds, not our bodies that will determine our image, place, status in the arena of life over the 21st Century and there will be no Plan B. (Edwards, 2010, personal communication)

The evolution of Black athletes in the larger sociocultural context is evidenced in the changing branding that is already happening at each level of competition.

Future research should examine the career transition of athletes in geographical contexts. For example, Canada, Europe, Asia, China, Portugal, Italy, etc., all have environments that warrant unique and nuanced analyses related to athletes and branding aspects of their identity. Furthermore, aspects of racial and gender dynamics should be explored at the apex of academic perceptions, stereotypes, and stigmas about African American males in revenue sports, women in sport, Women of Color in sport, and BIPOC identities in sports where ethnic minorities are not typically perceived to achieve on and off the field. Finally, the intersectionality of branding with male and female athletes, especially with covert racism and sexism constructs, should be linked and compared at all levels of sporting competition.

Conclusions

Policy recommendations have the potential to impact athlete branding on a macro level. These policies should hone in on systemic mechanisms to brand the holistic aspects of athletes (e.g., print media, advertising, television) in high school, community college, university, and professional levels. This would allow us to maximize many platforms to create, cultivate, and even bombard society with images of athletes that educate, inform, and challenge traditional ways that we see sport participants. Branding in the 21st Century has untapped cultural aspects that have never been seen in previous eras. Social media, the Internet, and consumption in the contemporary world will continue to engage audiences. Why not engage our audiences with different narratives about athletes with new rituals and traditions about the perceptions of a unique identity with a rich branding history. Branding the mind, body, and soul of the athlete can only create a win/win for all that cheer, boo, and admire this human being with many talents in addition to athletic ones.

Coda (from the first author of the paper)

As a participant-observer (first author of the paper), I have a uniquely valuable view of the athlete from youth to high school to community college to pro to retirement for those lucky few blessed enough to make it professionally. Sport ends sooner than later, so athlete branding should reflect this cultural and social reality while simultaneously marketing, branding, and representing diverse attributes of the athlete across intelligence, career goals, and community impact. One of the areas where more research is

needed is around family, education, and athlete branding. My parents pushed education in concert with my sport participation from youth through college and graduate school. More practitioners should brand educational lessons from the parents of athletes, create, document, etc., representations of athletes with academic symbols (e.g., degrees, cap, gown), and include their parents when appropriate.



Professor Skip Gates, world-known Harvard Professor of African and African American studies at the Hutchins Center, captured my feelings below when he was quoted as saying: “That is one of the most powerful images I have ever seen” (Gates, 2020, during Harrison’s Harvard Nasir Jones Hip Hop Fellows Colloquial presentation). Professor Gates was referring to the prideful look on my father’s face at my graduation from West Texas A&M in 1990 after playing football (center) for two years after transferring from Cerritos community college. Mr. Harrison and my mother (Mrs. Harrison) always ensured that I was about my business with equal parts weighted—academic and athletic.

Left to right Mr. Claude Harrison and his son C. Keith Harrison, August 1990, West Texas A&M University graduation at the Amarillo Convention Center.

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All photos courtesy from the Paul Robeson Research Center for Innovative Academic & Athletic Prowess at UCF.

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Chapter 7

Humble Beginnings: The Depiction of Black Athletes' Upbringings in Commercials between 2016 and 2019

Drew D. Brown

Abstract

In 2016, Colin Kaepernick sparked a movement that called for an examination of many institutions, including advertising and marketing, for their racially insensitive content. Yet, in 2019, LeBron James highlighted how commercials still contain racial microaggression in the way they depict Black athletes' childhood. Building on previous literature, this chapter explores how Black athletes are portrayed in television commercials by examining the “humble beginnings” trope, which perpetuates the narrative that Black people come from undesirable backgrounds known as the ghetto or slums. It identifies and analyzes five commercials that aired between 2016 and 2019, of which all contain Black athletes (both U.S and non-U.S. born). It uses a theoretical framework that includes the White gaze, colorblindness, and tokenism to analyze the forms of racial microaggression in the commercials. The study found that the sample of contemporary commercials tended to depict Black athletes' upbringings in a ghetto (or slums) context. It argues that this 1) speaks to the racist lens of White-dominated marketing companies, 2) discredits the impact of institutional and systemic racism on Black people, and 3) labels “successful” Black athletes as a model for meritocracy, thus criticizing “unsuccessful” Black people in the process.

Keywords: race, sports, Black athletes, commercials, media

Over the past 30 years, significant academic focus has been on the depiction of Black athletes in the media, specifically in sports advertisements (Andrews & Silk, 2010; de Oca, Mason, & Ahn, 2020). This research revealed that racial stereotypes are often used when portraying Black athletes and their experiences. By providing a basic framework of stereotypes, sports advertisements influence how society views Black athletes. Beyond just stereotyping athletes, these depictions reinforce, and at times exacerbate, racist beliefs about Black people more broadly. They can also affect how Black athletes, people, and communities view themselves (Adams-Bass, 2014).

One recurring stereotype presented in commercials is the idea that a Black athlete's upbringing inherently involves a lack of financial resources, family support, and opportunities outside of sports (Sailes, 2017; Andrews & Silk, 2010). For example, in the 2019 Nike commercial “Beginnings,” National Basketball Association (NBA) player LeBron James criticizes the prevalence of these stereotypical stories by stating, “We always hear about an athlete's humble beginnings: how they emerged from poverty or tragedy to beat the odds [. . .] the stories of determination that capture the American dream” (Creative Videos, 2019). I refer to this characterization as the humble-beginnings trope, but other names have been ascribed to it over the years. Andrews and Silk refer to the narratives of Black people who made it out of “the hood” as the trope of “determined individualism” (Andrews & Silk, 2010, p. 1638). These narratives contribute to the misconception that all Black athletes overcame a difficult and impoverished upbringing and other characteristics associated with the “ghetto.” Leonard (2006) argues the obsession with the ghetto started with the rise of Black urban films during the 1990s hip-hop movement. Andrews

and Silk (2010) further the discussion, stating, “Today, it is now possible to discern a ghettocentric logic pervading the multiplicity of elements that constitute commercial basketball culture: It has become the game’s default promotional mode” (p. 1634). Even commercials with Black athletes from outside the United States (U.S.) feature narratives on the athletes’ upbringings that include similar characteristics associated with a more global form of the ghetto or “slums.” Based on the literature, the ghetto is described as a neighborhood or geographical area that contains a variety of characteristics, such as an over-representation of Black and Brown people, building congestion, little greenery, old and decrepit tenements, brick buildings, vacant lots, poverty, crime, abounding and nonconforming land use, liquor stores, and nightclubs. Slums share many characteristics with the ghetto, but slums are often positioned in international (i.e., non-U.S.) geographical areas and contain dirt roads and fields, minimally clothed people, shed housing, and outdated technology.

However, since Andrews and Silk’s (2010) study, Colin Kaepernick and the Black Lives Matter movement have made a significant push to end systemic and institutional racism in the U.S. and globally. As a result, several companies and marketing agencies have committed to changing their advertisements to be more inclusive. This has led to an increase in the number of socially acceptable marketing or “woke” commercials (de Oca, Mason, & Ahn, 2020). This change was an attempt to appeal to young, educated consumers by appropriating aspects of political activism and seemingly relevant in order to maximize financial gain (de Oca, Mason, & Ahn, 2020). Although there has been a concerted effort to appeal to the political views of Black people, the attempt to avoid racist stereotypes in commercials has proven to be more challenging, especially the deeper microaggressions that perpetuate false and negative beliefs about Black people (e.g., the humble-beginnings trope). Part of the difficulty in addressing this issue is the implicit and unconscious belief held by Whites that these stereotypical depictions of Black people are accurate and indicative of most Black people’s upbringings. Thus, even though there has been progress in eliminating stereotypes in commercials, was LeBron James correct when he said commercials still promote the Black athlete’s humble-beginnings trope?

This essay attempts to answer this question by building upon previous studies that suggest there is a trend in sports commercials that reinforces the narrative of Black people coming from undesirable backgrounds, known as the ghetto or slums. In this chapter, I examine contemporary commercials and identify how Black athletes’ upbringings are depicted to better understand this misrepresentation in the media. I also analyze the significance and impact of these representations on the way we understand Black life and experiences. Finally, the chapter provides tools for understanding and critiquing sports commercials and their role in perpetuating stereotypes while offering suggestions on how to do anti-racist marketing that uses appropriate representations of Black athletes.

Literature Review

Across various industries, there has been a quantitative increase in the representation of Black people in advertisements over the past 50 years. For example, Pollay et al. (1992) found that, compared to 1955, Black models were four times more likely to appear in cigarette commercials in 1965. This increase is also reflected in commercials portraying Black athletes. Blacks are more likely than Whites to be depicted as athletes, and Black athletes are more likely than White athletes to appear in advertisements (Dufur, 1997). However, with the continuous yet small increase in representation, quality becomes more of a concern. Scholars suggest that Black athletes are negatively stereotyped in advertisements. For example, in an article titled “Skill in Black and White: Negotiating Media Images of Race in a Sporting Context,” Daniel Buffington (2008) studied how college students perceived race in sports and sports-related media. Buffington outlined several stereotypes that are used to describe Black and White athletes and the differences between them. For example, Black athletes are often viewed as natural athletes with superior physical skills, such as speed, jumping ability, and strength, while White players are praised for mental skills, such as hard work, teamwork, intelligence, and leadership (Buffington, 2008). The article concluded that these stereotypes impact the perceptions people have of Black athletes as well as

Black athletes' perceptions of themselves.

Some scholars, such as Dufur (1997), argue that Eurocentric race logic contains preconceived notions or stereotypes of Blacks that are readily available in advertisements. These marketing efforts are utilized to attract and appease viewers. He explained the process of licking in these advertisements, whereby media producers engage in “manipulating images into forms that tap into viewers’ preconceived notions, allowing the viewers to place the image into their social world and move instantaneously to further interpretation” (Dufur, 1997, p. 347). Some commercials attract viewers by displaying things that are familiar to a targeted audience. In Bristor, Lee, and Hunt’s (1995) study, titled “Race and Ideology: African American Images in Television Advertising,” key findings revealed aspects of objectification in commercials where the focus was not on the athlete’s identity and skills beyond sport, but rather on what they can do as athletes. Additional findings showed that famous brands such as Nike targeted African American youth from urban environments by using mostly young Black athletes in commercials and urban-ghetto settings (Bristor, Lee, & Hunt, 1995).

Since the rise of hip-hop and urban films, a common trend in commercials has been placed on Black athletes in urban environments or ghettos. According to studies, the ghetto is a geographical space that is dominated by Blacks, dilapidated, and dangerous. In the American psyche, it is a terrible place that residents want to escape but where some people are forced to live because of their economic status (Griffin, 1979). In the article “Basketball’s Ghetto-centric Logic,” David L. Andrews and Michael L. Silk (2010) highlight the way common stereotypes in commercials involve Black athletes’ perceived ghetto upbringing. Andrews and Silk (2010) specifically focused on the depiction of Black male basketball players in Sports Illustrated advertisements to understand “basketball’s prevailing ghetto-centric logic” along with the “mobilization of a Black Urban Imaginary” (p. 1627). The authors explain how the language used, imagery portrayed, and stereotypes presented in sports commercials, specifically for the NBA, influence public perception of the African American community. They argue these tropes set the athlete apart from the urban space, which makes the commercial and the message more consumable for a White audience. The authors concluded that this stereotype could damage Black people because only these characteristics are associated with Blackness as opposed to positive characteristics or even a broader range of environmental and personal descriptors (Andrew & Silk, 2010).

The focus on poverty is particularly common in the depiction of Black upbringings. In the article “It’s Gotta be the Shoes,” Wilson and Spark (1996) found when Black youth are represented in shoe commercials, they are consistently positioned as emerging from poverty. However, this study also suggests a narrative often follows this stereotype that Black athletes use their physical abilities to escape their challenging upbringing, thus perpetuating the stereotype that Black people are physically strong but intellectually weak. In a comparative study, Czopp (2010) found that Black student athletes were discouraged from setting and completing academic-related goals due to racial stereotypes associated with their intellectual abilities, particularly in comparison to White student athletes. Czopp explained how Black student athletes are told to partake in behaviors that are “natural” to them, which may ultimately have a negative effect on them. The impact of this insidious stereotype on Black youth across various socioeconomic backgrounds is highly problematic, to say the least. These depictions suggest that Black youth have a greater chance of being successful through sports than in academics, which is statistically inaccurate and improbable. Perpetuating these unrealistic expectations furthers inequality by relegating Black youth to sports and entertainment (McKay, 1995).

Research Study

This essay focuses on a sample of contemporary athlete commercials to examine how the media reinforces racial stereotypes of Black athletes’ upbringings by positioning them in a ghetto or slum context. A textual-analysis research method was utilized for this research to analyze the commercials (McKee, 2001). Textual analysis is “a way of gathering and analyzing information in academic research” by “asking new

questions and coming up with new ways of thinking about things” (McKee, 2001, p. 140). An extensive search of commercials was conducted by reviewing various online commercial lists and groups for each year, such as 1) the best sports commercials, 2) commercials with the highest-grossing athletes, 3) the top social justice–related sports commercials, 4) commercials from the top apparel brands (e.g., Nike, Under Armour, Puma, Adidas, etc.), and 5) commercials that aired during top sports matches (e.g., the Super Bowl, the NCAA men’s Final Four, the NBA Finals, etc.). Several commercials were selected for this study based on a set of criteria: 1) included real athletes or fictional athlete characters, 2) depicted a younger version of an athlete, real or fictional, and 3) aired between 2016 and 2019, to account for the events sparked by Kaepernick’s kneeling protest in 2016 and the 2019 “Beginnings” commercial, starring LeBron James.

Theoretical Framework

This research uses a set of concepts and theories to analyze the depiction of Black upbringings in the selected commercials. The concept of racial microaggressions, first theorized by Chester Pierce (1969), is used as a lens for identifying subtle forms of racism that exist in the commercials. According to Sue (2007), racial microaggressions are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards people of color” (p. 271). While they seem to be isolated and minimal, the accumulation of experiences with racial microaggressions can impact the well-being of Black people (Sue 2010). Under a so-called “post-racist” society, microaggressions emerge as the predominant articulation of racism (Sue 2010). The concept of microaggression allows for an analysis that recognizes the changing forms of racism that increasingly work through surreptitious ways (Sue 2010).

The theory of the White gaze is also used in this study. It argues that White people see and interpret images of Black people differently than Blacks (Pailey, 2020; Yancy, 2013). For example, the beliefs about the ghetto or the upbringing of Black people are often viewed differently by Blacks than the mostly White marketing executives who create and approve commercials. But it cannot be overlooked that some Black people internalize White racial logic and its underlying assumptions, which can cause them to subconsciously subscribe to this harmful belief as well. The White gaze is a concept that appeared in the works of intellectuals, such as Toni Morrison, who attempted to reject racial tropes about Black people (Pailey, 2020). However, there have been many other scholars who have used different terms to describe the way European White colonizers possess blind spots that exist within a White-supremacist ideology that positions Whiteness as normal and universal (Coulthard, 2004, pp. 14-15; Feagin, 2013; Mbembe, 2017; Feagin, 2013; Mills, 1997; Hall, 1980). Philosophy and race professor George Yancy (2013) described the White gaze in an editorial concerning a young Black boy killed by a White police officer. He explains, “This officer had already inherited those poisonous assumptions and bodily perceptual practices that make up what I call the ‘White gaze.’ He had already come to ‘see’ the Black male body as different, deviant, ersatz” (Yancy, 2013, p. 1). This is an accurate example of how the White general public often engages in microaggressions by misinterpreting, misappropriating, or projecting false assumptions about Black people and their upbringings. The White gaze ignores institutional and systemic racism and believes success comes to a young Black athlete once they have escaped the problematic Black ghetto, which they are able to do because of their individual desire.

Critical race theory’s (CRT) critique of colorblindness is also a tool of analysis used in this study. Colorblind ideology is centered on the belief that it is most beneficial to ignore racial or cultural/ethnic bias when seeking to address discrimination. It downplays the importance of cultural identification, views White European experiences as normal, and fails to acknowledge the experiences of racial and ethnic groups who have been marginalized (Markus, Steele, & Steele, 2000; Rucker & Richeson., 2021; Hofhuis, Zee, & Otten, 2016). Color blindness is another microaggression connected to traditional Western values, such as meritocracy and individualism (Williams, Skinta, & Martin-Willett, 2021). But the criteria by which merit is rewarded “are often a reflection of the norms and values of the majority group

and are thus inherently biased against the minority group” (Sommier, Sterkenburg, & Hofhuis, 2019, p. 5). It does not account for the unique way social norms—created to benefit and support the majority—impact minority groups by protecting the existing status quo and inequality. The color-blind ideology demands that minority groups assimilate into the norms and values of the majority (Sommier, Sterkenburg, & Hofhuis, 2019).

Tokenism is another concept used in this study to analyze how Black athletes are portrayed as objects of manipulation to socialize viewers in ways that perpetuate Black inferiority. It is a process of inclusion that accepts individuals from disadvantaged groups into more-advantaged groups, albeit in very limited instances (e.g., superstar Black athletes versus entire Black communities). The token individuals are symbols of individual success and represent what others from minority groups can achieve. Tokenism is another microaggression that gives the impression that this mobility is available to all individuals. But capitalism has created a racist caste-like system that continues to deny masses of Black people from economic and social progress. The stereotypes are reproduced to satisfy, placate, or appease majority groups and maintain inequality with no true intention of advancing the success outcomes of minority groups beyond a few exceptions. It is a mechanism that maintains inequality and reinforces the features of the dominant group. Tropes, such as humble beginnings, are repeatedly used to degrade Black communities and criticize those who do not make it out of the ghettos and slums. The White gaze, color-blind ideology, and tokenism concepts are utilized as theoretical lenses to analyze commercials and the racial stereotyping that exists within them.

Findings

Five commercials met the criteria of this study. Four selected commercials starred at least one professional athlete, including Serena Williams, LeBron James, Kevin Durant, and others. A total of seven athletes were examined: one Black American woman, four Black American men, and three non-US Black athletes.

Table 1. Selected Commercials

Title	Company	Year	Director	URL
“Want It All”	Nike	2017	F. Gary Gray	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNB2aigymkE
“The Moment of Truth”	Crypto.com	2019	Calmatic	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sk_52aI_W1M
“To the Greatness of Small”	Alibaba	2018	Unknown	https://dailycommercials.com/alibaba-greatness-small-olympic-winter-games-2018/
“Dream Crazy”	Nike	2018	Wieden+Kennedy	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lomlpJREDzw
“Rise, Grind, Shine, Again”	Nike	2018	Lost Planet, New York	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQSiiEPKgUk

Overall, the study found that the selected commercials depicted Black athletes' upbringings, both U.S. and international, in ghetto environments. Several commercials show a young version of a Black athlete surrounded by low-income houses and large brick buildings that feature fire escapes and window air conditioners. Bikes and skateboards can be seen scattered about an urban backdrop. In the commercial “Want It All,” groups of Black people can be seen congregating on porches and stoops throughout the neighborhood, which is often seen in Black low-income areas because of the communal nature of the group and the scarceness of air conditioning in the summer, which causes people to assemble outside of their houses. “Dream Crazy” is the only commercial to feature a Black woman, Serena Williams, and references her upbringing in Compton, California, which is often classified as the ghetto and associated

with drugs, gangs, and poverty (Agustinus & Simanjuntak, 2021; Pryle & Palmer, 2018; Sides, 2004). It is the only reference made to her upbringing.

Across all commercials with Black athletes, there was a conspicuous dearth of well-resourced training facilities. Several younger Black athletes in some of the commercials were shown playing basketball on inner-city street courts as opposed to a well-maintained indoor or outdoor facility. In the commercial “The Greatest of Small,” a young Black athlete is using inline skates to train for hockey when one of the worn-down wheels comes off. Many of the commercials show young Black athletes using training methods that require little to no resources. One commercial shows a young basketball player running up a street with a large incline, which appears to be his training process. Even the young international Black players are placed in poor environments, which reveals the international pervasiveness of Black stereotypes regarding socioeconomic status. Some are shown playing their sport on dirt and run-down fields. While the young Black athletes are shown in slums and ghettos, the commercials often show their older selves playing at the professional level after scenes of them training hard. These images suggest the Black athletes’ hard work and rigorous training were the reason for their escape from the ghetto.

White Gaze

Although there has been a strong push for systemic and institutional change after s protest, sports commercials continue to perpetuate racist microaggressions and undertones that reinforce negative stereotypes about Black people. Consistent with previous studies, the commercials in this study are heavily attuned to the mainstream White gaze (Andrews & Silk, 2010). One reason for this consistent finding is that marketing companies are led by White people unfamiliar with the Black athletes’ diverse experiences and are more prone to making commercials that reproduce racist stereotypes (Zhang, 2017). The White gaze is invested in the myth that Black athletes, and Black people broadly, originate from “bad” socioeconomic environments and reinforce the trope of the humble beginning. In turn, it assumes White people come from (comparatively) “good” environments (read: safe, nuclear-family oriented, and higher socioeconomic status). The latter can only be true if the former is also. Thus, the White gaze privileges Whiteness and devalues Blackness. Stereotypical images of Black athletes in commercials uphold a larger ideology of White supremacy by perpetuating a racist social order. In addition to White people being the intended audience, the White gaze shapes the commercials and positions White people as an authority on Black athletes’ upbringings. The projected narrative is not viewed as a depiction but rather as a social fact. Even though Black people are directing more commercials, that does not disqualify the advertisements from reinforcing the White gaze. Two of the commercials in this study, “Want It All” and “The Moment of Truth,” were directed by Black people. This exemplifies how Black people can and do perpetuate racial stereotypes about their racial group. With expectations of the White gaze looming over Black directors and their colonized minds coloring their perspectives, they also hold some of the same tendencies as their White counterparts.

The belief is that consumers heavily influence how commercials are shaped (Bourdieu, 1984). The way commercials in this study have been framed by the White gaze is a reminder that White people are not only the main producers but also the intended audience (Sandell, 1995). Often, when White people interpret images of Black athletes in commercials, it is through a lens of Whiteness or an ideology of White supremacy which associates Black people with degrading stereotypes. These commercials do not try to impose desires on people; instead, the producers understand viewers’ existing beliefs about Black athletes and their upbringings and attempt to align specific commodities with these beliefs (Miller & Rose, 1997). Therefore, commercials make the commodity more attractive to White viewers by perpetuating the belief that all Black athletes are from the humble beginnings of ghettos and slums.

The White gaze often views Blackness as an object of fascination and fear. It conceives Black bodies as “symbolic representation and fantasy” and constructs “stereotypical images and societal barriers” to cope with the anxiety and desire (Harris, 2008, pp. 45–46). The ghetto symbolizes the challenging and

dangerous experiences of Black people that many White people wish to safely consume yet, in reality, avoid at all costs (i.e., White flight). Depicting the Black experience in the context of the ghetto connects White sports fans to a perceived “authentic” Blackness (Andrews & Silk, 2010).

If advertisement executives and companies wish to truly rid the commercials of this racist reproduction, they would need to consult with Black people who are knowledgeable of racial issues at play in media depictions and include these individuals in prominent roles in creating commercials to recognize and avoid racial blind spots. Additionally, commercials should be produced from a more subversive gaze that is the opposition to and moves beyond the binary approach of Black images to move it outside the social structures of capitalism. This would allow for a more nuanced and complex depiction of Black athletes’ upbringings.

Colorblindness and the (African) American Dream

The findings also highlight how commercials often focus on the intense training of young Black athletes. It suggests the devotion and work ethic of Black athletes are the reasons for their success and, conversely, the laziness of other Black people is the reason they are stuck in humble conditions. It ignores the impact of institutional and systemic racism that hinders the success of many Black people. None of the commercials identify any form of racism as a challenge for young Black athletes. Doing so would acknowledge that racism exists and profoundly impacts Black people’s experiences and life outcomes—and that getting out of the ghetto isn’t simply a byproduct of individual effort. Using a color-blind shield allows Whites to avoid being deemed racist while still participating in and benefiting from subtle forms of racism. Sociologist Abby L. Ferber claims, “Color-blind racism is part of the defense of a culture of privilege and contemporary White supremacy” (Ferber, 2007, p. 14). She argues that White supremacy credits inequality to the deficiencies of Black people and culture. In other words, individuals, not race or racism, are to blame for their shortcomings.

A color-blind lens also counters the public success of Black professional athletes by ascribing them a non-Black identity. Michael Jordan is an iconic athlete and a revolutionary in the athletic-marketing industry. Journalist and sports historian William Rhoden describes Jordan as a “dream come true for the NBA” (Rhoden, 2010, p. 204). The NBA, Rhoden explains, was trying to figure out how to take the style and showmanship of the growing Black population in the NBA and leave behind their “inconvenient” Black features. Michael Jordan became the poster boy for the ideal behavior of Blacks in sports. The NBA, and other marketers, bottled his smooth style of play, muscularly lean body, youthful look, and kind smile, and they sold it to America for a great profit. The key for the NBA was to promote Jordan's great athletic prowess while silencing his racial identity.

Before commercials can be deemed void of racial insensitivity, they must acknowledge the institutional and systemic racism that affect Black people. In addition, it cannot be forgotten that advertisements are often a response to the demands of the consumers. Therefore, as the Black experience becomes more commercialized, consumers must demand non-racist representations and reject commercials that contain racist stereotypes. Beyond simply being non-racist, successful efforts to transform perceptions of Black athletes’ upbringings must also ultimately undermine the White gaze and challenge White supremacy (Yancy, 2013).

Tokenism

By showing Black athletes growing up in the ghetto and ultimately succeeding in reaching their goals, these commercials promote the belief the American dream is accessible to anyone who shows persistence, work ethic, discipline, determination, and faith in themselves. The success of the Black athlete who makes it out of the ghetto or slums helps secure the narrative that the ghetto is bad. These athletes worked extremely hard to escape it by participating in a profession with the possibility of large financial

gain. The commercials are using the Black athletes as tokens to show Black athletes working hard by training intensely at their sport to gain sporting success, which is associated with the financial gain of escaping the ghetto. The tokenist biography authorizes a person from a marginalized community to be celebrated on the condition that their story is framed in neoliberal and capitalist terms (Cloud, 1996). They prove the American dream is possible for Black people (Creative Videos, 2019). By not including the racism that hinders the masses of Black people around the world, it blames oppressed people for their failures (Cloud, 1996).

This comes in contrast to the old belief that Black athletes are naturally more athletically talented than Whites. One of the effects of tokenism is the pressure of a double-edged sword: “simultaneously a perverse visibility and a convenient invisibility” (Frontiers, 1999). Black athletes are used as examples of “successful” Black people, based on their exceptional work ethic, and used as a measuring rod for other Black people. But when compared to their White counterparts, their success is solely attributed to their natural athleticism, and they should therefore “shut up and dribble” (Bristor, Lee, & Hunt, 1995; Martin, 2018). Though the commercials in this study avoid the trope of the Black brute by not presenting images of Black athletes possessing overemphasized or animalistic characteristics, they completely ignore the physical attributes that contribute to the success and survival of many of the athletes, such as height and speed. This survivor narrative within the humble-beginnings trope gives sole credit to the individual athlete for pulling themselves up by their bootstraps through hard work. In turn, this bootstraps viewpoint obscures Black people's collective oppression and individualizes the blame placed on Black people who remain in the ghetto (Cloud, 1996). The narratives of Black athletes using only their hard work to escape the ghettos and slums ignore the racist systemic and institutional oppression and discredit hard working Black people who remain in the ghetto for many reasons.

Suggesting that sports are one of the only ways for Black people, particularly boys and men, to escape poverty has a tremendous impact on society and Black people (Sandell, 1995). It is true that more Blacks have reached the professional level of sports in the late 20th and early 21st centuries compared to previous eras. However, feeding into the idea that sports are the only way out of the ghetto or slums has resulted in some Black athletes coming from the ghetto or slums and reaching success. Many other Black athletes in ghettos attempt to do the same in hopes that they, too, will reach success but fail over 99% of the time. The White capitalistic ideology intends to maintain inequality by presenting Black people who have overcome the challenges of the ghetto to show that it is possible and to avoid overplaying the narrative that oppression does not allow Black people to find collective liberation. Often, when tokenism is placed within the humble-beginnings trope, it is used to criticize Black athletes as being ungrateful. Black athletes are said not to show enough gratitude to their team owner and sometimes American “freedom” for their position in professional sports, given their assumed upbringing in the ghettos and slums.

When depicting Black athletes' upbringings in a way that shows images of Black athletes who became successful in sports, it is important to spotlight those who have become successful outside of sports. This concerted effort would help expand the images and perceptions of Black athletes. In addition, acknowledging the truth regarding the low success rates for Black athletes making it to the professional ranks of sports is also important in creating commercials that do not leave Black youth feeling disillusioned. Finally, it would also be beneficial to highlight the positive impact that Black communities have on the success of many of its youth. This would show how success comes through individual determination and a community of transgenerational work.

Conclusion

There is a stronger attempt to be more racially inclusive and diverse by having more Black people represented in sports advertisements. But as Andrews and Silk (2010) observed in the early 2010s, there is still a tendency to depict Black athletes' upbringings in a ghetto context. Showing Black athletes in the ghetto or slums perpetuates an existing stereotype internalized by many White people. While White

people are not the only audience of these commercials, using these racial microaggressions suggests they are the target audience. The current social structure makes these types of racial stereotypes valuable to marketing because it affirms an existing belief. Black athletes are used as tokens to show the American dream is for everyone, regardless of race and meritocracy, and is not a myth but a reality—even for Black people. But by not acknowledging systemic and institutional racism, the color-blind argument becomes focused on individuals instead of the masses of Black people hindered by it. The perpetuation of these stereotypes by the media is important in maintaining the social structure that continues to oppress Black people as a collective. So, although Colin Kaepernick sparked a global movement that caused marketing companies to question how Black athletes are represented, their response could only be strategically finding ways to appease the outcry while maintaining the current social order. To have a liberating representation of Black athletes' upbringings in commercials, they must show the diversity of Black experiences, place them in the context of a larger and connected Black community, and acknowledge the truth about sporting success and institutional racism. From 2016 to 2021, Procter & Gamble released a series of commercials developed using a majority-Black cast and crew (Procter & Gamble, 2022). They not only avoided the racist microaggressions that are present in many other commercials, but they also addressed the racism that surrounds the experiences of Black youth. This may signify a change in how Black people are represented in the media. At the very least, it provides more data for additional research.

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Chapter 8

A Noble Cause or Wishful Thinking?: Exploring the Trajectory of Corporate Social Responsibility in Sport

Shaun M. Anderson

Abstract

Sport organizations have developed social responsibility initiatives that support their bottom-line agenda and reputation for doing good for society. Yet, in recent years, racial injustice and other social ills have permeated the media landscape. So much so, high-profile athletes have challenged sport organizations, government leaders, and society-at-large to improve by pushing for societal reform. This chapter focuses on the history of corporate social responsibility (CSR), its connection to sport, and how scholars assess CSR initiatives. Future directions for research are also discussed.

Keywords: anti-racism, Black Lives Matter, social justice, politics

Wang (2015) explained the origins of corporate social responsibility (CSR) date back to the early 20th century in the United States (U.S.), when Henry Ford announced that the Ford Motor Company was built "To do as much as possible for everybody concerned, to make money and use it, give employment, and send out the car where the people can use it...and incidentally to make money" (Lee, 2008, p. 54). William Clay Ford Jr. also emphasized this notion nearly a century later when he said, "we want to find ingenious new ways to delight consumers, provide superior returns to shareholders and make the world a better place for us" (Meredith, 1999, para 3). The concept of CSR was started when business and management scholars began noticing the changes in society that influenced how businesses operated. Specifically, global changes following World War II, coupled with watershed moments such as the Civil Rights movement, created a platform where individuals began to hold big businesses accountable for their actions against society. This includes pay inequity, environmental endangerment, and gentrification, among others.

Consequently, these scholars expressed the necessity to understand how businesses influenced society and vice versa (e.g., updated diversity policies, work/life balance, stakeholder-focused bottom-line). Several scholars attributed the first of such inquiries to the economist Howard Bowen. In his landmark book, *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* (Bowen, 1953), he argued business ethics would be the most important solution to sustainable organizational performance.

Bowen would define CSR as an obligation for businesses "to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society." (Bowen, 1953, p. 6). Since that time, CSR has gone through several iterations. For example, several scholars developed terms such as corporate social performance (Wood, 2010), corporate citizenship (Dion, 2017), and corporate social responsiveness (Sturdivant & Ginter, 1977) that permeated much of the business literature for decades. Regardless, business leaders have taken heed of the importance of adding CSR as a component of their bottom-line agenda. More recently, scholars, business leaders, and governmental organizations have examined how sport organizations have concerted efforts to

engage in CSR as part of their overall business agenda, reputational management purposes, and value creation mechanism (Giulianotti, 2015). Former Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Kofi Annan, established the UN's Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) in 2001 to use the power of sport to create global change. Since then, sport has undergone several iterations in their social responsibility strategies. In the 21st century, sport organizations' leaders need to understand their brands' global reach. In addition, sport organizations are also often entrenched within local communities and directly affect the livelihoods of their fan bases (i.e., psyche income). In understanding this, it is imperative to examine how the use of CSR tactics within sport organizations has affected business outcomes. This chapter focuses on how scholars have used CSR, how it has been used by sport practitioners and the future of this important intersection.

Social Responsibility in Sport

One of the more exclusive ways in which sport differentiates itself from traditional organizations is that much of the power associated with engaging in social responsibility was based on the individual – distinct from CSR. For this chapter, social responsibility within the context of sport can be viewed as a push by an individual or groups of individuals who galvanize their constituencies to use sport's power of connectivity to create a more just society. For example, Muhammad Ali refused to become enlisted in the U.S. military in protest of America's stance on the Vietnam war. Consequently, he was stripped of his title and banned from participating in boxing matches. In 1968, Olympic sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos participated in a raised fist demonstration during their podium celebration. Smith and Carlos explained that the purpose behind their demonstration was to give attention to the plight of Black people in America. They also said their demonstration was a show of solidarity with Ali being Blackballed from boxing. These acts of activism, while not the only significant stances that athletes took, were some of the highlights of the Civil Rights Movement.

However, the early 1970s began a season of dormancy regarding athletes taking a stance against various social injustices. Some suggested the increased commodification of sport along with the various punishments athletes received from sport organizations (and state entities) for their activism were the catalysts for this dormancy (Wenner, 2009). The dormancy of athlete activism occurred concurrently with the increased global popularity of sport. Not only did athletes such as National Basketball Association (NBA) superstars Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley, along with National Football League (NFL) star Orenthal James "O.J." Simpson, become wealthy throughout the 1980s, but they also endorsed brands with apparel, hygiene, and other non-sporting products (Frey & Eitzen, 1991). In recognizing their popularity, society began calling on these athletes and sport organizations to use their platform to combat pressing global issues. For example, Jordan was criticized in 1990 for not backing North Carolina Democratic Senate candidate Harvey Gantt because "Republicans buy sneakers, too." (Lutz, 2020, para. 2). Also, Charles Barkley caught flack for his 1993 Nike commercial in which he suggested that he was not a role model and should not be seen as one just because he dunks a basketball (Eisenberg, 2019). Consequently, sport and non-sport organizations began to develop foundations and partnerships to answer this call.

For example, sport apparel giant, Nike, created the Sport for Social Change Networks (SSCNs) in 2007 to address social responsibility in sport. Nike collaborated with leaders in South Africa, Kenya, the United Kingdom, and Brazil to develop strategic collaborations between public and private entities to help develop youth. Additionally, sport organizations have teamed up with several globally renowned nonprofit agencies (i.e., the United Way, Anti-Defamation League) to develop various social responsibility initiatives (Zemeirs et al., 2019).

A Call to Action

Although CSR has been an area of inquiry among scholars for over 70 years, the intersection of CSR

and sport is relatively recent. In the Routledge Handbook of Sport and Corporate Social Responsibility, Paramio-Salcines et al. (2016) explained sport practitioners have engaged in several aspects of CSR since the 1980s. But scholars did not begin exploring the effectiveness of these initiatives until the early 2000s. It can be assumed that using sport as a platform for social responsibility can be traced to former South African President Nelson Mandela, who expressed the following remarks during the opening speech at the 2000 inaugural Laureus World Sports Awards:

Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a way that little else does. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination...(Edwards, 2013, para 1-2)

Considering President Mandela's mantra regarding the power of sport, Smith and Westerbeek (2007) were some of the first scholars to mobilize sport management scholars to examine the role sport can play in improving society. To explore how sport can be used to aid society, the authors used stakeholder theory (ST; Freeman & Phillips, 2015) as a theoretical framework. Since its inception, scholars have considered ST one of the most prominent theories in connecting the relationship between business and society.

Smith and Westerbeek (2007) explained the role of CSR from the view of stakeholders when they said: "...from a stakeholder perspective, corporate social responsibility requires organizations to consider the interests of investors, suppliers, consumers, employees, the community, and the environment in discharging their profit-directed activities" (p. 2). Their assessment described seven ways sport could be deployed as a CSR mechanism in the global economy. First, sport can be a force in mass media distribution and communication. With its global reach, sport allows for participation, inclusion, and social investment. Second, sport has youth appeal that provides an avenue for participation-based programs for their overall growth. Third, sport has the power to engage in eradicating various deteriorating health standards by providing an avenue for people to get active. Fourth, sport offers a space for people to engage in social interaction. Fifth, sport offers a platform to explore environmental and sustainability awareness relative to the construction and/or remodeling of arenas or other events held in local communities. Sixth, sport offers a platform for individuals of varying cultures to interact and gain awareness of differing values. Seventh, sport provides an escape from reality for patrons to have fun and other forms of gratification. These assertions follow other value-driven statements made by global sport entities. For example, the International Federation of Association Football's (FIFA) social impact mission is to promote the necessity for basic human rights, engage in environmental protection, and increase child protection worldwide (Woods et al., 2019). Similarly, the International Olympics Committee (IOC) made claims in their charter that they aim to promote peace and prosperity by preserving human dignity through the platform of sport.

Following Smith and Westerbeek's (2007) push for more sport management scholars to examine the relationship between sport and CSR, Babiak and Wolfe (2009) developed a study that explored the various reasons why sport organizations engaged in CSR activities. In addition to ST, scholars would also lean on Carroll's (1999) framework of CSR (See Table 1). Essentially, this framework consists of four elements: "economics (the basic responsibility to make a profit and, thus, be viable), legal (the duty to obey the law), ethical (responsibility to act in a manner consistent with societal expectations), and discretionary (activities that go beyond societal expectations)" (Carroll, 1999, p. 718).

Therefore, Babiak and Wolfe (2009) were compelled to discover how CSR is diffused among several professional sport organizations, including the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Hockey League (NHL), and National Basketball Association (NBA). The authors collected data via press releases, website information, newsletters, and unstructured interviews with eight sport executives across the various sport leagues. The results indicated several internal and external

factors that influenced the need for these organizations to engage in CSR. For example, many of the executives explained that societal pressures, legal requirements, a commitment to organizational goals, and corporate values all influence why CSR initiatives are disseminated. They go on to suggest that future research at the intersection of CSR and sport must consider the various macro, meso, and micro-level factors such as systemic anti-Black racism.

On Race, Equity, and Justice

While traditional organizations have long explored ways in which they can be better for society, sport have primarily been seen as a platform for entertainment purposes. This ideology has also permeated US society as a platform for escaping the real world (Wann, 1995), a positive platform for youth development (Coakley, 2011), and a platform to showcase the love for American pride (Knoester et al., 2021). In recent years, race and racial inequities have prompted these organizations to engage in social responsibility initiatives to satisfy stakeholder concerns. For example, sport organizations such as the NBA and NFL have received considerable backlash for having predominantly African American athletes but not having many coaches, administrators, or owners of the same racial and ethnic backgrounds (Braddock II, 1989). The NFL worked to eradicate this issue by establishing the Rooney Rule in 2003 (DuBois, 2016). Named after longtime Pittsburgh Steelers owner Dan Rooney, the rule required teams to interview at least one minority candidate for head coaching and/or senior administrative position vacancies. Rather than instituting a hiring quota, the rule only applied to interviewing protocols.

Since its inception, the rule has been criticized as a disingenuous public relations ploy because African American coaches and executives struggle to secure these coveted leadership positions. The criticism became so daunting that in 2020, the league enacted 2020 Resolution JC-2A, which rewarded teams who spent time on developing minority candidates for future head coaching and/or administrative roles with additional draft picks once another team hires that candidate. (King, 2020). This resolution prompted other sport organizations to create similar protocols.

For example, the West Coast Conference (WCC) in intercollegiate athletics enacted the “The Russell Rule” in the same year. Named after NBA Hall-Of-Fame player, coach, and activist, Bill Russell, the rule established that all member institutions must include a minority candidate in their final rounds of interviews for any head or assistant coach, athletic director, or senior administrator position within their athletics department (Faraudo, 2020). Even organizations outside of sport have developed variations of the rule to support workplace diversity.

Sport management scholars have scrutinized such resolutions by major sport organizations recently. For example, The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports (TIDES) releases an annual report card evaluating the racial and gender hiring, retention, and promotion practices of various professional sport leagues in the U.S. Led by its director, Dr. Richard Lapchick, the most recent report shows some improvement for people of color regarding head coaching and administrative roles, but not a strong score for gender hiring practices (Lapchick, 2022).

For example, The Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) leadership report card scored racial hiring practices as a B- while gender hiring practices received an F. According to Lapchick, the results of the FBS leadership report card are the lowest among major US sport, including the NBA, MLB, WNBA, NFL, and MLS. Also, the report shows poor racial and gender hiring ratings for team owners. At the time of this writing, only one African American head coach remained in the NFL, two minority owners within the NFL, three minority owners within the NBA, and one minority owner of an MLB team (Hinton, 2021). Often, the term minority lumps together all non-White individuals into one group without acknowledging the disparities of not categorizing. For example, while there are several non-White and/or non-male owners across various US-based professional sport, Michael Jordan remains the only Black person to own a professional sport franchise. The continued lack of diversity within leadership positions across

various professional and intercollegiate sport organizations supports the notion that CSR functions as publicity stunts for these entities rather than as tangible efforts of societal change through sport.

Various social movements have risen in the last decade to combat social injustice. In particular, #BlackLivesMatter (BLM) would be the catalyst for a radical movement regarding racial reconciliation in the U.S. In 2012, Florida teen Trayvon Martin was gunned down by neighborhood watch person George Zimmerman. One year, Zimmerman was acquitted of all charges. This would spark national outcry among critics who expressed this was one more instance of injustice in a litany of shootings involving the death of unarmed Black men and boys. This outcry prompted activists to express their concerns via Twitter by posting messages accompanied by the BLM hashtag. As this slogan gained traction, the originators of the BLM hashtag, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, gained national attention. So much so that the social media gesture transformed into an international organization that eventually developed affiliates across numerous countries. The sport world would join in the effort to call out leaders, law enforcement, and other organizations to take the matter of racism and police brutality seriously. One athlete's gesture would test the very fabric of the American ideal.

On August 16, 2016, then San Francisco 49er quarterback, Colin Kaepernick, sat during the playing of the national anthem in the team's preseason game against the Green Bay Packers in protest of racism and police brutality that had run rampant in recent years (Anderson, 2020). He would eventually take a knee instead of sitting to respect members of the U.S. armed forces. Initially, his protest drew the ire of police unions and critics of the BLM movement as they said his gesture was ill-informed and lacked respect for law enforcement. His gesture would also upset President Donald J. Trump, who suggested that fans and non-fans of the NFL should boycott the game if Kaepernick is not punished. However, Kaepernick would receive support from teammates and eventually athletes from across the world. By 2017, Kaepernick was no longer a member of the 49ers and remained an unsigned player. As a result, athletes, civil rights activists, and others accused the NFL of engaging in unethical practices by preventing him from securing employment opportunities within the league. That same year, Kaepernick and former teammate Eric Reid filed a collusion grievance against the NFL. By 2019, Kaepernick and Reid would settle their grievance with the NFL with a confidential settlement. However, Kaepernick remained unsigned while Reid signed with another NFL team. During this time, Kaepernick, who had previously led the 49ers to a Super Bowl, was known as a polarizing figure at the center of the national crisis centered on racial injustice and police brutality. Kaepernick would explain why he started the protest because he believed the professional sport's platform was too important and influential not to use it as a tool to fight against societal injustices. Furthermore, he believed through his gesture that he could bring awareness to a country still dealing with and systematically perpetuating racism.

As mentioned, his stance against racial injustice would prompt other NFL, NBA, Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), collegiate, high school, and global athletes to call upon their leaders to eradicate racial and social injustices. In addition, his push for racial equality also prompted sport apparel companies such as Nike and Under Armour to issue statements regarding racial injustices. Not coincidentally, Kaepernick would become the face of a Nike commercial that ended with him saying, "believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything" (Jennings, 2018).

The year 2020 saw the world reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic. But, it was also the year that sparked an athlete activism reckoning which prompted sport organizations to engage in tangible social responsibility efforts. Issues of pay inequity, police brutality, mental health, voter suppression, and policy reform were among some of the focal points on the athletes' agenda (Leppard, 2022). Sport organizations began to recognize they could no longer remain neutral in matters important to their players. For example, NFL commissioner, Roger Goodell, was prompted to release a statement following the murder of George Floyd, admitting the NFL was wrong when they did not listen to players and fans who called for concerted actions to redress racial injustices. During the NBA bubble season and playoffs, players prompted league officials to allow for BLM banners to be displayed on the court after players threatened

to forfeit games following the police shooting of Jacob Blake. Former WNBA player Renee Montgomery would gain national attention after she called out Atlanta Dream co-owner, then-Senator Kelly Loeffler after she denounced the WNBA for supporting the BLM movement (Booker, 2021). Shortly thereafter, Loeffler sold the team to Montgomery and other investors, which made Montgomery the first retired WNBA player to become an owner and executive of a team. Montgomery also led change against voter suppression during the presidential election.

While sport organizations have been impelled to engage in various social justice causes, many still wonder whether these efforts are positive drivers for true social reform or CSR-washing efforts (a term that refers to how organizations profit from insincere claims of CSR) (Pope & Waeraas, 2016). Consequently, scholars have exerted a considerable amount of effort on developing ways in which they can assess the effectiveness of sport CSR initiatives. The next section highlights this emerging literature.

Examinations of the Effectiveness of CSR in Sport

Much of the literature regarding the intersection of sport and CSR emerged to better understand cause-related marketing initiatives that sport organizations established to be a force for social good (Bradish & Cronin, 2009). For example, MLB noticed a decline in the African American fan base and those who played the game during the late 1980s (Barra, 2017). As a result, they established the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program in 1989 to increase interest in the game among inner-city youth and provide educational opportunities. In 2006, MLB established its social responsibility by establishing the Urban Youth Academy (UYA). Through this arm, MLB sought to educate and enhance the quality of life of individuals that live in urban communities across the U.S. Despite the positive public relations derived from these efforts, Anderson and Martin (2019) discovered the leagues' use of CSR to develop a relationship with the African American community is still lacking. The reason is that while these initiatives are meant to increase the number of African Americans playing the game, only around 10% of team rosters feature these players (Jones, 2021).

In another study, Walker et al. (2010) examined e-newsletters of four professional sport leagues (NFL, NBA, MLB, and NHL) to determine the types of CSR initiatives shared with their respective fan bases. After analyzing 818 newsletters, the results yielded five ways sport organizations communicate their initiatives. The most dominant occurrence in the newsletter was monetary charitable events (e.g., raffles, prizes, auctions). The next most frequent occurrence was non-monetary charitable events (e.g., food drives, toy drives, holiday drives). Volunteerism and community outreach were the third and fourth most frequent occurrences (e.g., youth sports camps). Finally, social awareness initiatives (e.g., diversity awareness initiatives, breast cancer awareness) and community appreciation awareness events (e.g., health, mental/physical abuse) were the least frequent occurrences. Lastly, they suggested most sport fans preferred more frequent disbursements of information (as opposed to an annual release of CSR initiatives) and more collaborations with stakeholders to determine which initiatives would be the most beneficial for target groups (Walker, Kent, & Vincent, 2010).

Considering the abundance of literature that has surfaced regarding the intersection of CSR and sport over the last two decades, Montazeri et al. (2017) explained that there is a need to quantify the impact of these efforts. Moreover, they surmised that effective measurements within the context of sport could assist practitioners with understanding fan loyalty, consumer behavior, reputation management, and community development dynamics. To determine this, the authors gathered data from over 600 attendees at an Iranian Premiere League game to develop and validate a measurement of CSR in sport. Results from their study showed five specific items that are relevant to the tangible efforts of CSR and sport: a) economic, b) philanthropic efforts, c) ethical, d) legal, and e) environmental. Additionally, this study showcased the necessity for sport organizations to develop stronger ties to their constituents as they seek to create better communities. Lastly, they explained sport practitioners could use the five-category tool to assess the impact of their CSR initiatives and improve future efforts.

As the study of CSR and sport has expanded, Hwang (2019) recognized the lack of research on how CSR is studied within college athletics. College sports have distinctions from professional sport organizations due to the emphasis on education and life skills. Along the same lines, Hwang (2019) outlined the following distinctiveness of intercollegiate sport fans from professional sport spectators:

College sports fans have different perspectives from professional sports fans because they have a special interest in educational issues such as Title IX in college athletics and academic success for student-athletes. (p. 35)

Considering this distinction, Hwang (2019) examined college students' perceptions of an athletic department's CSR initiatives to determine their effectiveness on several factors. In total, 276 students from several Division 1 (D1) universities in the Midwestern US region completed a survey for this study. Results showed that CSR perceptions significantly influenced fans' intentions to support athletic departments. Next, CSR perceptions influenced student identification with the athletic department. Consequently, students' identification with the athletic department influenced their intention to attend games. Fan identification levels were also contingent upon their perceived effectiveness of CSR strategies. It was also discovered that the more likely a fan cares about CSR initiatives, the more likely they would attend games or events sponsored by the athletic department. Thus, this study showed if CSR initiatives are well received by fans, then these efforts will have a positive impact on fan loyalty.

While most of the literature involving CSR and sport has focused on large-scale mega-events, a lack of literature discusses how CSR initiatives featured through small or medium-sized events impact local citizens. Sanchez-Saez et al. (2020) surveyed individuals who attended the event "La Ruta de las fortalezas" or Route of the Fortresses in Cartagena (Spain) to develop and test a survey instrument involving perceptions of small to medium-sized sporting events. The authors offered the following explanation for their site selection:

For integrating different socially responsible actions into its organizational programs, such as the route of the event that runs through the city's main heritage sites, the hosting of a university congress, a race adapted for disabled participants, the hosting of environmental waste collection days, and the restoration of historical paths. (Sanchez-Saez et al., 2020, p. 2)

The authors then analyzed data collected from 516 citizens from four urban neighborhoods in the city of Cartagena, where the event is held annually. The results verified and confirmed the validity and reliability of the measurement on three levels of CSR perception: a) sustainable sport activity (e.g., sport for all, local tourists, etc.), b) social cohesion (e.g., development of local trade, promotion of cultural activities), and c) well-being (e.g., health and safety protocols for the local community).

Sport organizations have also focused on environmental safety initiatives that aid in improving the communities in which they are involved. For example, the NHL Green campaign was established to promote more sustainable business practices by teaming up with partners to lower emissions, conserve water, reduce waste, and provide various safety measures. On a team level, the Los Angeles Clippers (LAC) of the NBA and Aspiration teamed up to build a sustainable sport arena. Aspiration is a financial services organization that invests client savings into globally sustainable organizations. With this partnership, LAC boasts the Intuit Dome will become "the world's first climate-positive arena" (Young, 2021, para. 5).

The partnership between sport and environmental organizations should not be considered an oddity. As Smith and Westerbeek (2007) explained, sport have an opportunity to aid global communities in various health and safety initiatives. This is why it comes as no surprise that non-sport affiliated organizations such as the Green Sport Alliance, Sport, and Sustainability International, Beyond Sport, and the Aspen Institute's Sport and Society program have convened government officials, academics, sport

executives, and athletes to develop solutions for the world's most pressing global issues through the platform of sport. In recognizing this, McCullough, Orr, and Watanabe (2020) explained the significant shift towards environmental sustainability among sport organizations when they said: "...the existing methods within the sport sector for measuring and monitoring direct environmental impacts for experiential products fall short of assessing the full scope of impact" (p. 393). The authors also posited that sport practitioners need a way to assess environmental initiatives properly. As a result, the authors presented the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and Direct Impact and Externalities (DeEI) framework as a possible solution to assessing environmental impact.

Under these frameworks, sport scholars and practitioners would have a tangible resource to examine direct impacts (i.e., ticket purchases, event production and consumption, design and construction of venues) along with externalities (i.e., outside venues, tourists) effects on environmental safety. While specifically being a conceptualization, this framework seeks to join the leadership and energy and environmental design (LEED) as a valuable and tangible assessment tool to examine environmental safety across the life cycle of an event (Obata et al., 2019).

Much of the recent literature regarding CSR and sport in US-based professional sport has focused on meso-level outcomes such as organizational sustainability and reputation management). Since several stakeholders (i.e., fans, local government, and society at large) are usually involved in some way with sporting mega-events, Mamo et al. (2021) examined how sport fan perceptions of professional sport organization CSR initiatives enhanced social outcomes. Social outcomes in this instance were defined as the overall well-being of individuals who live close to major professional sport organizations. The authors disseminated an online survey to determine what NBA CSR initiatives mostly influenced social outcomes using six pillars of CSR closely associated with sport organizations: a) philanthropy, b) community relations, c) environmental management and sustainability, d) diversity and equity, e) labor relations, and f) corporate governance (Babiak & Wolfe, 2013)(See Table 2).

First, sport governance (the accountability and transparency of these organizations to their stakeholders) showed the most significant effect on social outcomes. Second, environmental management and sustainability significantly predicted fans' perceptions of social outcomes. Third, while philanthropic initiatives were positively related to perceived social outcomes, they did not have as much significance as environmental management, sustainability, or sport governance. Lastly, CSR initiatives seemed to have no impact on perceived social outcomes regarding community relations, labor relations, and diversity and equity concerns. Therefore, continued work must be done to understand how impactful these initiatives are as driving forces for micro-level social outcomes.

Status of CSR and Sport

Over the last 70 years, scholars have called for organizations to engage in more socially responsible business practices (Acquier et al., 2011). However, Banks et al. (2016) explained how social responsibility is often too focused on the business's bottom line rather than the needs of the stakeholders they serve. For example, When Rio Di Janeiro won the Olympic bid for the 2016 games, the local government promised upgrades to facilities and shelters for the homeless population. However, after the games concluded, many of those facilities became dilapidated, while others were abandoned. More so, the country has an increased crime rate and an increased homeless population. The result of these Olympic Games called into question the necessity of the Olympics, particularly concerning the IOC's mission to improve communities (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

Still, while sport has been primarily outfitted as a hub for entertainment, these organizations have also been charged with being more socially responsible. For example, MLB Commissioner, Rob Manfred, seeks to utilize the game to promote diversity and inclusion (Hagan, 2015). For example, in 2014, MLB named Billy Bean as its first Ambassador for Inclusion. Bean, the only openly gay MLB player current

or former, works to create a fair and equitable workplace throughout the sport (Ennis, 2019). In addition, the International Olympics Committee (IOC), the governing body of the Olympic Games, prides itself on engaging in environmental safety and sustainability (Geeraert & Gauthier, 2016). For example, the 2022 Olympic Games in Beijing became the first games that were fully powered by green energy (Chaolan, 2021). As former South African President Nelson Mandela suggested, "Sport has the power to change the world" (Edwards, 2013, para. 1).

Given this, it is imperative to understand the magnitude of sport CSR initiatives relative to the connections of local governance, community development, and its importance in providing agency to citizens in which these initiatives are purposed (Trendaviova et al., 2017). Further, Walzel, Robertson, & Anagnostopoulos (2018) described the current phase of sport organizations in regards to their CSR efforts: "...seem to no longer be about whether or not to engage in CSR, but rather on how to strategically and operationally plan, implement, monitor, and control CSR, as well as demonstrate its impact on the organization and society" (p. 519). As mentioned, CSR has gone through several iterations since its inception. Additionally, scholars have used various theoretical frameworks outside of sport to examine its effects on societal outcomes. However, no true theoretical framework exclusively explores the intersection of CSR and sport. While there have been models and measurements established to test levels of CSR, no true theoretical framework exists to guide such assessments properly. The preponderance of scholarship at the intersection of CSR and sport in the global context deserves further exploration under established theoretical constructs.

CSR as an Anti-Racism Model in Sport

One of the more glaring issues in today's global society is the pervasiveness of racism; in working to combat this social ill, scholars and activists operated under the guise of what is now known as anti-racism. While the fight against racism began centuries ago, anti-racism became popular during the latter parts of the Civil Rights movement (Aptheker, 1975). For this chapter, anti-racism can be defined as the process of illuminating and opposing all forms of racism by changing policies and behaviors that consistently perpetuate racism (Cherry, 2021).

The concept of anti-racism has permeated the global conversation on eradicating racism. Anti-racism has now become the focus of organizations seeking to eradicate various racial disparities (e.g., diversity inequality, pay inequity, community development issues, gentrification; Ladhani et al., 2020). In addition, social movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) have pushed organizations to consider adding an anti-racist agenda to their bottom line. Considering the push for sport organizations to be more socially responsible, it would make sense to consider an intersection of anti-racism and sport.

There have been several high-profile racially inspired incidents within sport. For example, former radio host, Don Imus, sparked national controversy in 2007 when he described members of the Rutgers University basketball as nappy-headed hos (Wright, 2019). In addition, former LA Clippers owner, Donald Sterling, was recorded berating his girlfriend for taking photos with African American men and bringing them to Clippers games (Yglesias, 2015). More recently, former Miami Dolphins head coach and current Pittsburgh Steelers assistant coach, Brian Flores, sued the NFL for discriminatory hiring practices stemming from the Rooney Rule's criticisms (Lev, 2022).

Given these examples, the necessity for anti-racism in sport model would be crucial for advancing sport as an agent for social good. As anti-racism's overall notion is to develop policies to eradicate racism, sport organizations must continue to develop policies that positively affect their stakeholders. Typically, stakeholders are considered the employees, local communities, local governments, stakeholders, and others who are affected by the decisions, ethical or otherwise, of organizational managers (Jimenez et al., 2021). Collectively, these stakeholders shape how sport organizations can help society in a global context.

As mentioned in the introduction, the UNOSDP was started in 2001 to harness sport's power to engage in social change. In 2017, the UNOSDP was officially closed, but its mission and vision were absorbed into the UN's larger goals for building a more sustainable future for all. Entitled the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the UN tapped Wilfried Lemke to oversee sport's role within the overall focus of the UN's strategic plan. Throughout his work, Lemke identified six of the overall seventeen SDGs as a way to harness sport's ability to create positive social change. However, although he specified six of the seventeen goals, Lemke (2016) expressed the following caution:

Sport, however, still faces many challenges to the fulfillment of its true potential. Too often, we have seen examples of intolerance, racism, hatred, and violence during sporting events. Sports organizations, managers, players, and fans must do all they can to combat these ills and fully harness the positive power of sport. (para. 19)

In recent years, CSR has remained one of the most examined aspects of sport and society. However, another burgeoning field may cause some confusion in its focus of inquiry. Sport-for development (SfD) research has found an avenue of examination among sport scholars within the last two decades. SfD has been defined as "the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialization of children, youths, and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering inter-cultural exchange and conflict resolution" (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011, p. 311).

Research in SFD has become so popular that scholars created the *Journal of Sport for Development* (Richards et al., 2013) to examine this burgeoning phenomenon. However, CSR, particularly in the context of sport, shares a similar mission. While SfD focuses more exclusively on public policy and social reform globally, many argue that much of the extant literature on CSR and sport share similar qualities. Therefore, future directions should examine whether CSR and SfD should continue to be differentiated or merged into one holistic category for examining the relationship between sport and society.

Moreover, over the last decade, social movements such as BLM and mental health awareness have permeated the sport media landscape. These social movements have pushed the government, organizations, and other entities to take seriously the needs of individuals negatively affected by these social determinants. Taken together, athletes have been so influential under these determinants that they have galvanized major brands to engage in activism. Unfortunately, criticisms towards the aspect of brands engaging in activism have been rampant as these organizations have been criticized for associating themselves with athlete activism just to market their products. But, what makes brand activism significant is that the act of solidarity sheds light on social causes that may not have reached a mainstream audience. Future work should explore whether and to what extent perceptions of CSR-washing are rampant within the context of sport.

Sport organizations have made strides in recognizing they can no longer take a hands-off approach to recognize and eradicate social injustices. As racism and other social injustices continue to permeate the media landscape, sport organizations must consider the ramifications of reactionary CSR practices versus tangible strategies embedded in their bottom-line agenda. What has certainly helped the latest instances of CSR within sport organizations is the return of power to the individual athlete. Now more than ever, several high-profile athletes have partnered with sport organizations and other none-sport related organizations (i.e., civil rights agencies, nonprofit organizations) to push forward their agenda for a more just society. While there is still a long way to go for racial reconciliation, in the spirit of the late President Mandela, the co-authors of this book and I argue that sport will remain a viable avenue for evaluating and implementing CSR initiatives.

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