8-2024

Brought What I Needed to Succeed: Community Cultural Wealth in the Persistence Experiences of Former Division II Black Women Basketball Players Who Graduated from Predominantly White Institutions

Tomiko T. Smalls
tsmalls@clemson.edu

BROUGHT WHAT I NEEDED TO SUCCEED: COMMUNITY CULTURAL
WEALTH IN THE PERSISTENCE EXPERIENCES OF
FORMER DIVISION II BLACK WOMEN BASKETBALL PLAYERS
WHO GRADUATED FROM PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy.
Educational and Organizational Leadership Development

by
Tomiko Tarnise Smalls
August 2024

Accepted by:
Dr. Natasha N. Croom, Committee Chair
Dr. Michelle L. Boettcher
Dr. Tomika L. Ferguson
Dr. Michael Godfrey

ABSTRACT

Limited research exists to examine the persistence experiences of Black women student-athletes who graduated from predominantly White institutions and to explore their experiences at institutions with Division II membership. This purpose of this study was to examine factors related to the positive graduation outcomes of Black women student-athletes who graduated from predominantly White institutions. The research question was: How did former Division II Black women basketball players engage community cultural wealth to persist to graduation at predominantly White institutions? Five former Division II basketball players who graduated from predominantly White institutions located in the southeastern region of the United Stated took part in this study. Descriptive-interpretive qualitative research was the methodology utilized in this study. Using community cultural wealth as the theoretical and analytical framework (Yosso, 2005), the study supported claims that, in the absence of sufficient institutional resources and support, Black women student-athletes activate multiple forms of cultural capital to overcome barriers to their academic success at PWIs.

DEDICATION

This mighty accomplishment is dedicated to my parents, Patricia and Joyful, who as young parents unselfishly placed me in the home of my grandparents, Naomi and James Cannady. To my grandparents, Naomi, Ruth, and James, the dedication of this work accomplished your goal of training me to be resilient, authentic, full of faith in God, and confident in my ability to succeed. By their lineage to each of you, this dedication extends to my aunts (Claudia, Cindy, Carolyn and Ethel by marriage) and uncles (Ronnie, Alvin, Taylor, Sylvester, John, Billy Ray, Jessie, Tommy, Eddie, Charles, and Paul), who befriended, supported, and cared for me as a little sister throughout my lifetime. Above all, this accomplishment is dedicated to my "Baby Paw," Réven Smalls Widener. You are my muse–my greatest gift!

I called each of your names here to record and proclaim there would be no Dr. Tomiko T. Smalls without the help of God and the lifetime support from each of you! Thanks for believing with me that all things are possible through faith and perseverance!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank God for honoring me with the opportunity to share my story and those of the extraordinary women who participated in our study. My doctorate is the perfect example of God's love, grace, and mercy. I would also like to thank and acknowledge the love and support of others who have supported and encouraged me in my pursuit of becoming Dr. T.T. Smalls (Thanks for the name, GG).

Thank you, Réven Smalls Widener. You have shown amazing fortitude, support, love, and care throughout this process. Thank you for also for sharing your gift of editing my work and honoring my words. This has all been an uphill journey for us, but by the Grace of God, we made it! I love you, Baby Paw!

Thank you, Dr. Natasha Croom. My words are insufficient to express how honored I was to have you as my Dissertation Committee Chair. You changed my life! I am forever grateful for your wisdom, knowledge, patience, constructive feedback, and willingness to guide me through this process. You epitomize the mentor-advocate-sponsor triad, and I was blessed to witness your firsthand brilliance. This journey shifted in the right direction with you as my advisor.

Thank you, committee members, Dr. Mike Godfrey, Dr. Michelle Boettcher, and Dr. Tomika Ferguson. Each of you brought the skills, knowledge, and constructive feedback I needed to complete this journey. Thank you for taking time to share this experience with me. I appreciated your support.

Mom and Uncle Al, thanks for the times you shifted your schedules to be with GG so I could work on my dissertation. I appreciate love you!

Thank you, My Winnie Women (Francine, Doris, Ethel, Liz, Opal, Victoria, DeeDee, Tonya, Trina, Tamra, Angelus, Melissa, Kelsie, Cherrie, LaTonya, Rhonda, Naomi, Marlia, Alkeisha, Réven), The Guys (Tony, David, Richard), and my Bethlehem Church Family. Your prayers did not fall on deaf ears. I appreciate your love and support!

Thank you, Aunt Ethel. Your editing skills, like Réven's, were especially helpful as I finalized my dissertation!

And to the five amazing women who participated in *our* study, thank you for your time and allowing me to share your persistence stories. When they ask any of us how we made it as Black women who graduated from predominately White institutions, we can say with pride, "We brought what we needed to succeed in college."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents (Continued) Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

STUDY OVERVIEW

This project is the result of my internal dialogue on the individual success attributes associated with my friends' and my positive graduation outcomes as Black women who attended a predominantly White institution (PWI) with Division I (DI) membership. Though limited in scope, the project expanded thoughts on our experiences to focus on those of former Black women basketball players who experienced the same graduation outcome but attended PWIs with Division II (DII) membership. More specifically, the study sought to explore how the former basketball players, like my friends who piloted this study, engaged multiple forms of capital to graduate from their respective instructions. Starting with the literature summary that follows, the subsequent sections of the chapter provide context related to the significance of this study.

Study Background

Almost 400 years have spanned since Harvard, the first higher education institution, was established to exclusively educate White men—not White women or men and women of color (Rudolph, 1991). Marked by a period of enslavement in the U.S., Harvard's establishment happened over 200 years before the first Black woman reportedly attended Oberlin, a predominantly white institution (PWI), from 1842-1843 (Harper et al., 2009; Hoffman, n.d.b.; Rudolph, 1991). Also, institutional records show the enrollment of Black students at Oberlin was never more than 5% of the student population (Waite, 2001). In the limited records of their initial experiences, scholars found Black women students were positioned on a campus with a fluctuating racial

1

climate (Baumann, 2010; Bigglestone, 1971; Horton, 1985; Waite, 2001). These scholars also determined Black women students simultaneously experienced issues of racism and institutional practices that centered sexism. Like their White women counterparts, Black women students endured restrictions placed on how they dressed but additionally their sport engagement and development. Although the late 1890s saw an emergence of basketball as a collegiate sport for women by the 1890s, Horger (1996) found the sport to remain a curricular-based sport for women at Oberlin. Records to show Oberlin's graduates between 1844-1908 reported 70 Black women were among the first 4,694 students to earn degrees or certificates from the institution. The positive graduation outcome for Black women students who earned a degree from Oberlin occurred 19 years after the first Black woman enrolled at the institution and more than 20 years after the institution opened admissions to women students (Banks, 2009; Hoffman, n.d.a.). The earliest recorded history of Black women basketball players at PWIs is unfounded.

The turn of the 20th century proposed to increase college access for Black student-athletes at PWIs through the implementation of federal legislation. The relevant legislation addressed issues of segregation with the passage of *Brown v. Board of Education* [hereafter *Brown*] (U.S. Courts, n.d.) and inequitable sport opportunities for girls and women with passage of the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 [hereafter Title IX] (USDE, 2021). Scholars recognize that both legislative actions—exclusive of each other—were ineffective in their intent to create increased sport opportunities for Black women athletes at PWIs (Matthewson, 2012; Thuene, 2019). Evans (1998), Prickett et al. (2012), and Theune (2019) asserted that Title IX

simultaneously created greater chances for White women to play college sports though the premise of the law was to increase higher education opportunities for all women student-athletes. To offer a post-*Brown* and Title IX perspective, non-continuous enrollment data showed an increase in the number of Black college students from 1964 to 2020 (USDC, 1973, 2020). The latter revealed the enrollment rate for Black women students (8 percent) was slightly higher than that of their Black men peers (5.8 percent) but significantly lower than their White men (31.5 percent) and women peers (39.7 percent). Regarding their sport participation, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) statistics continue to show high numbers of Black women student-athletes in sports such as basketball, track and field, and cross country—mainstream sports that are accessible in Black communities (Evans, 1998; NCAA, 2022a; Prickett et al., 2012).

Limited research exists that explores the experiences of Black women student athletes. Additionally, almost all the existing research examines this student athlete population at the DI level. This presents a gap in the research that examines the experiences of student-athletes at the DII level. The scholarship model and operating budgets for DII institutions offer perspectives on factors that influence the persistence of DII athletes. DII athletes participate in sports at more than 300 institutions governed by the NCAA (NCAA, 2023). Bass et al. (2015), Eckenrod and Nam (2021), and Weiss and Robinson (2013) determined that in comparison to DI institutions, DII institutions operate with lower budgets and offer a partial scholarship model for their student-athletes. Bass et al. (2015) and Nite (2021) explained that DII institutions operate with lower budgets for recruitment, travel, facilities, coaches, and resources, the latter being previously

associated with student attrition (Cooper et al., 2017; Cooper et al., 2016; Nite, 2012; Weiss & Robinson, 2013). Respective of graduation rates for DII Black women student-athletes, NCAA summary reports show patterns to resemble enrollment trends that show Black women student-athletes graduate at rates higher than their men counterparts, but lower than their White women and men counterparts (NCAA, 2023c). Collectively, these ideals suggest the necessity to investigate factors relevant to the success outcomes of Black women basketball players who persist to graduation at PWIs. Understanding factors associated with their persistence to graduation success offers implications for improved practices in higher education and research aimed at improving Black women athletes' college experience.

In contrast to retention, or institutional efforts to maintain student enrollment or minimize attrition, persistence points to the individual effort of students to overcome challenges to achieve academic success through graduation. This review is for the sole purpose of examining the components of traditional models that are relevant to understanding persistence. Previously, scholars used longitudinal models to explain how the ability of individuals to negotiate interactions within campus systems relates to their persistence decisions (Bean, 1985; Tinto, 1975, 1993, 1998). Also relevant to those models are ideals that individuals enter college with pre-entry attributes that are relevant to their persistence. Museus and Quaye (2009) and Tierney (1999) offered perspectives on cultural and intercultural-based models that promote an exchange between the individual and institution to interact within a cultural-based system. Bean (1985), Museus and Quaye (2009), Tierney (1999), and Tinto (1975, 1993, 1998) found that student

interactions function to assist students with gaining a sense of belonging on campus that eventually leads to their decision to continue their academic pursuit. This study suggests a persistence framework that centers the communal knowledge or attributes of community cultural wealth (CCW) that Black women student-athletes activate to thrive and persist at PWIs, regardless of encountered challenges.

CCW was the theoretical and analytical framework selected to guide this project (Yosso, 2005). In alignment with Yosso (2005), a critical lens was used to explore how Black women student-athletes' persistence experiences and engagement of CCW were influenced by multiple systems of oppression that traditionally permeate PWIs. In its use of critical race theory (CRT), CCW critiques arguments that cultural capital is only ascribed to students from elite and middle-class families (Bourdieu, 1986). With an underpinning of critical race feminism thought (CRF), the use of CCW points specifically to the experiences of Black women student-athletes. CRF also recognizes the intersectionality and anti-essentialism in their experience. Furthermore, CCW disrupts claims that students of color enter education systems as disadvantaged or lacking academic prowess because of their histories, social locations, backgrounds, and race. Additionally, scholars recognized the value of experiential knowledge and communal knowledge that minority students bring to education and social settings (Acevedo & Solorzano, 2021; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Tierney, 1999). In its anti-deficit pinning, CCW offered an alternative perspective on how Black women student-athletes' cultural capital and communal knowledge enable them to enact agency in the absence of institutional agents and resources to support them at PWIs.

Statement of the Problem

Despite information showing Black women students' enrollment at postsecondary institutions for almost 200 years, limited research exists to examine the persistence experiences of Black women who attend and graduate from predominantly White institutions. Equally concerning is the scarcity of research to record their experiences as collegiate athletes at institutions with DII membership.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the voices of five former DII Black women basketball players who persisted to graduation at three different DII institutions. One goal was to determine how much the women engaged CCW (Yosso, 2005) or multiple forms of cultural capital to overcome challenges and resist barriers to their persistence. Given the historical context of higher education to perpetuate masculine hegemony beliefs, and literature to support claims of multiple systems of oppression embedded in higher education culture at PWIs, this project also sought to examine how those aspects of the campus climate and culture influenced the women's engagement of CCW. Lastly, a goal was to determine the extent to which the women sought and utilized apparent campus resources to achieve their academic outcomes.

<div align="center">

Research Question

</div>

The following research question guides this study: How did former Division II Black women basketball players engage community cultural wealth to persist to graduation at predominantly White institutions?

Research Design Overview

The research paradigm and analytical framework for this project positioned the study within a critical paradigm that centers the oppressive systems of sexism, racism, and classism influencing the experiences of Black women. This critical perspective encompasses historical realism ontology and black feminist epistemology, which are essential for understanding my persistence experience and those of the participants in this study. The theoretical and analytical framework, CCW paired with CRF, provides an interpretive lens to collect, analyze, interpret, and summarize the study data.

Research Paradigm

According to Glesne (2016), researchers must determine the philosophical and theoretical standpoints that inform their scholarship. She further explained the importance of the researcher acknowledging the ontological and epistemological viewpoints that undergird her study. In this project, the analytical framework and methodology are positioned within a critical paradigm to gain perspectives on how historical, structural, and cultural factors shaped the persistence experiences of the former Black women student-athletes in the study. Furthermore, critical perspectives associated with CRF and CCW allow for a deeper exploration of how the study participants persist at PWIs while simultaneously navigating multiple oppressive systems and playing a DII sport.

Ontology

Ontology refers to one's belief systems about reality and how the world is structured (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Glesne, 2016). Central to a critical paradigm and relevant to this study is the pinning of historical realism ontology. Historical realism

ontology focuses on the idea that individuals' realities are developed over time and shaped by multiple factors (i.e., social, political, economic, ethnic, etc.) related to their social locations (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Consequently, the contention in this research was the combination of historical realism ontology and the critical theory paradigm of CRF shaped the study participants' and my persistence narratives. Additionally, because of our parallel identities, the participants' and my shared ontology established a foundation for trust and created a basis for understanding and interpreting the data from the participants' interviews.

Black Feminist Epistemology

Like ontology, an individual's epistemological beliefs are how multiple systems of influence shape knowledge. Few (2007) offered an ecological perspective to explain the importance of researchers examining individual, immediate, and larger cultural environments to unearth the knowledge base of their participants. In this study, black feminist epistemology informed the participants' and my beliefs about the knowledge acquisition. More importantly, the epistemological stance centered the experiences of Black women within an Afrocentric worldview (Collins, 2000) recognizing their lived experiences as a source of resistance to barriers and adding value to their knowledge claim. Moreover, a Black feminist epistemology provided a foundation for examining how Black women student-athletes activate agency, in the form of CCW, in their endeavors to persist in continuous situations like those described at PWIs.

Methodology

Descriptive-interpretive qualitative research (DI-QR) was the interpretive analysis process used to determine how former Black women basketball players described factors related to their persistence at PWIs. In similitude to other qualitative research approaches (e.g., grounded theory, empirical phenomenology, hermeneutic-interpretive, thematic analysis, etc.), DI-QR uses an interpretive lens to describe, categorize, and summarize the participants' experiences (Elliott & Timulak, 2005, 2021; Timulak & Elliott, 2019). The study supposed that, in describing their experiences, participants would illuminate their engagement of cultural capital to persist at PWIs. The data analysis process comprised four modes of a continuous data analysis process which included pre-analysis, transcript analysis, categorizing information, and interrogating findings (Elliot &Timulak, 2021). Member checking, reflective journaling, and continuous data analysis were used to maintain the integrity (i.e., trustworthiness, authenticity, and rigor) of the study (Padgett, 2012).

Participant Selection

The project used purposeful sampling (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Padgett, 2012; Ramsook, 2018) to recruit study participants who were former Black women basketball players who graduated from PWIs with DII membership. In this process, the recruitment sources included my personal and professional networks and social media outlets. The selection criterion for study participants included: former basketball player and graduates from a PWI with DII sport participation, self-identified as (Black/African American), and

gender identity (woman). Snowball sampling and participant referral were used to recruit

additional participants to reach the maximum of five participants (Padgett, 2012).

Data Collection

The primary data source for this study included participants' descriptions of their

persistence experiences in two 90-minute semi-structured interviews—a modification of

Seidman's (2006) process was used. The interviews included open-ended questions

derived from a pilot study of former students (i.e., athletes, non-athletes, men, women,

Black, White) who attended and graduated from PWIs with DI sport membership. The

development of the final interview protocol included questions that solicited descriptions

of experiences likely to show study participants' CCW engagement.

Each interview was conducted individually, using Zoom as the platform for

recording and transcribing verbal data about each participant's experiences. As part of the

pre-analysis process, immediately following each interview, I engaged in reflective

journaling to record clarifying questions for participants, engage in priori coding, and

ensure my biases did not interfere with the accurate recording of participant information.

Afterwards, I began preparing the data for analysis by editing transcripts, and reviewing

them multiple times to create pseudonyms, remove any identifiers, and edit speech

nonfluencies (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Elliot & Timulak, 2021).

Data Analysis

Yosso (2005)'s CCW provided an anti-deficit lens to describe the persistence

experiences of the former Black women student-athletes in this study. As a result, the

data analysis process included determining whether the six CCW attributes (e.g.,

aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, resistant) were illuminated in their responses to the interview protocol. Also, CRF was used as a basis to compare the participants' descriptions of their experiences and to provide a framework for understanding how racism, classism, and sexism influenced their persistence and engagement of CCW (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Few, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Simien et al., 2019). Moreover, CRF provided a perspective for understanding how the attributes of CCW developed in the participants' home communities contributed to their success outcomes in college. With consideration given to each of these factors, the participants' data was entered in NVivo, a data analysis software, using priori coding for CCW attributes to create thematic transcripts. The thematic transcripts were reviewed for each of the ascribed codes of CCW to determine the information's accuracy; decide whether the participants answered the research question; summarize the findings and frame the discussion.

Integrity, Trustworthiness, and Authenticity

Elliott and Timulak (2021) stated that the researcher bears the burden of proof to demonstrate ethical balance in their work. Similarly, Collins (2000) asserted that scholars subscribe to accountability ethics in their work. Padgett (2012) admonished researchers to manage subjectivity through reflectivity or systematic self-awareness. Multiple measures were employed to minimize ethics issues and to certify the rigor, authenticity, and trustworthiness of this project. First, the DI-QR model warranted the need for a continuous analysis process that fosters engagement with participants. In alignment with Guba (1981), I subscribed to collecting thick descriptive or intensively detailed data and

maintaining documentation in ways that were dependable, confirmable, credible, and transferable. Also, as described thoroughly in chapter three, I employed strategies to evaluate the authenticity of my work and to co-construct meaning with participants as well as empower them to serve as agents for change.

Significance of Study

The most significant aspect of this project is in three intersecting areas, the study advances the literature on factors that influence and impact the persistence experiences of DII Black women student-athletes at PWIs. First, although Black women students have been present on predominantly White campuses for almost 200 years, limited research exists to describe how their college experiences impact their graduation outcome. Secondly, though there has been an increase in empirical research on the college experiences of Black women athletes over the last two decades, the research numbers are minimal compared to studies on their Black men counterparts. Lastly, this study offers perspectives on the less explored experiences of student-athletes who participate in sports at institutions with DII membership. The literature synthesis for this project also provides a foundation to explore how Black women student-athletes activated attributes of CCW to overcome challenges and barriers to their academic success. Overall, the project gives a voice to experiences of former DII Black women athletes; documents their stories; explores the effectiveness of institutional efforts to support their unique, diverse needs; and celebrates their accomplishments as graduates from their respective PWIs.

Organization of Dissertation

This chapter provided an overview of the study and research design for this project. Additionally, the research question and problem statement were presented to establish a rationale for investigating factors that impact the college experiences and success outcomes of Black women athletes at PWIs. Chapter two provides a literature synthesis to explore the historical and contemporary postsecondary experiences of Black women athletes and non-athletes, gives an overview of DII support structures, briefly describes persistence models, and presents the theoretical framework for this project. Chapter three positions my experiences within the research and explains the research design for this project. Chapter four includes the study findings, and chapter five presents the discussion, implications, and study conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter two provides a literature review relevant to understanding social, cultural, and historical factors that shaped how former DII Black women basketball players engaged CCW (Yosso, 2005) to persist to graduation at PWIs. Although research on Black women college students has grown, gaps exist in research examining factors related to their persistence and academic success at PWIs (Bernhard, 2014; Bruening, 2005; Carter-Francique, 2014; Simien et al., 2019; Twale & Korn, 2009). For instance, Twale and Korn (2009) reviewed over 200 articles on student-athletes spanning 1970 to 2008 and found there was an increase in articles on the experiences of women athletes after the passage of Title IX provided women with greater opportunities to play collegiate sports. Their synthesis also showed academic performance and issues regarding multi-discrimination were the most popular research topics published during the period. Also, Bruening (2005) determined the stories of Black women students were silenced in research, focusing on their single-axis identities as Black or women. Bernhard (2014) found, though research has grown to center Black men student-athletes and women student-athletes in general, limited scholarship exists to focus on student-athletes who are Black and women. In addition, Simien et al. (2019) indicated limited research exists to examine Black women athletes' experiences as college or professional athletes. Also, they suggested illuminating the differentials in the experiences of Black women athletes in comparison to other sport participants necessitates the interrogation of literature "with an eye attentive to race-gendered experiences" (p. 410). In accordance with previous

scholarship, this review and the accompanied study supposes to employ a critical lens to address the gap in research to describe factors related to the academic success of former Black women student-athletes.

In the absence of empirical research, this critique examines the broader influence of American society on the persistence experiences of Black women student-athletes. In accordance, the 19th and 20th centuries are highlighted as pivotal points for exploring Black women's higher education experiences during the Antebellum, Reconstruction, and Civil Rights periods in the United States (Baumann, 2010; Bigglestone, 1971; Brown & Davis, 2001; Graham, 1978; Jackson-Coppin, 1913; Perkins, 2015; Rudolph, 1990; Slater, 1994; Terrell, 2005; Wilson, 1990). Coherently, these periods reveal how multiple oppressive systems—such as racism, sexism, and classism—shaped the persistence experiences of Black women college students and their ability to leverage collegiate sport participation for social mobility assumed by a college degree. To explore these factors and further explain why CCW and the undergirding of CRF were selected to guide this study, the literature (a) provides a historical context to explore the higher education experiences and sport participation of Black women; (b) examines factors related to the postsecondary experiences of contemporary Black women student-athletes; (c) offers a perspective on academic support in DII programs; (d) briefly discusses the frameworks of persistence models; and (e) describes the anti-deficit underpinnings of CCW, the theoretical framework to guide the partnered study.

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, key elements that influence the persistence of Black women student-athletes and non-athletes include:

- cognitive (e.g., GPA, academic preparation, grades, aptitude tests) and non-cognitive (e.g., family background, education histories, sport skills, cultural capital) variables (Allen, 1992; Bower & Martin, 1999; Carter-Francique et al., 2013; Cooper et al., 2016; Hyatt, 2003; Sellers et al. 1997; Yosso, 2005)

- social and cultural factors (Allen, 1992; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998; Wrinkle-Wagner, 2015)

- institutional climate and culture (Allen, 1992; Carter-Francique et al., 2013; Smedley et al., 1993)

Additionally, there is an exploration of macro, micro, and meso levels' impacts on influences such as policies, student-athlete eligibility, participation requirements, and social locations on postsecondary education opportunities for Black women student-athletes (Meyer, 1990; NCAA, 2023; Smedley et al., 1993; U.S. Courts, n.d.; USDE, 2021). Briefly, the synthesis also examines the attributes of traditional persistence models (Bean, 1985; Tinto, 1975, 1988, 1993) and offers cultural perspectives (Museus & Quaye, 2009; Tierney, 1999) to determine the relevance of those models and theories to understand the persistence experiences of Black women student-athletes. Lastly, the literature suggests CRF (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Few, 2007) to be the lens for examining CCW (Yosso, 2005) in the asset-based framework to illuminate the success outcomes of former DII Black women student-athletes who graduated from PWIs.

Overall, the literature supports claims that in the less recorded histories and herstories of Black women college students, limited documents exist to account for their

persistence experiences as collegiate athletes who graduated from PWIs. Therefore, in accordance with the goal of this inquiry, the initial review (a) illuminates the earliest challenges associated with Black women's pursuit of higher education, (b) recognizes the marginalization of their unique persistence experiences in literature that focuses on their single-axis identities as Black or women students, and (c) acknowledges factors relevant to their exclusion from early sports histories at PWIs (Fairchild, 1883; Graham, 1978; Horger, 1996; Jackson-Coppin, 1913; Perkins, 2015). The supposition is not to minimize the multifaceted intersectionality and anti-essentialism of Black women but to provide an overview of how societal views, alongside two of their single-axis identities, shaped their early postsecondary experiences inside and outside of sports. Conclusively, the initial experiences of Black women college students also establish a basis to examine their enrollment patterns and graduation outcomes at PWIs. To provide a historical and centralized perspective, the first section positions the experiences of Black women students at Oberlin College—hereafter referred to as Oberlin—the first known co-educational PWI to admit Black and women students (Bigglestone, 1971; Fletcher, 1943, Harper et al., 2009; Horton, 1985, Graham, 1978; Jackson-Coppin, 1913; Perkins, 2015; Terrell, 2005). In alignment with contemporary ideals, the literature focuses on how societal norms, campus racial climate, institutional culture, compositional diversity, and policies influenced the persistence of America's first Black women college students at a PWI. Even though the review supposes to examine those factors most relevant to their education and sport experiences at PWIs, the collegiate basketball history of Black women athletes is drawn from the scant literature on their histories at historically black

17

colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the early 1900s (Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Hines, 2018; Liberti, 2003; Sack & Staurowsky, 1988).

A Historical Context of Black Women College Students

Prior to the mid-1830s, there was an unfounded presence of Black and women students in America's colleges and universities. Scholars determined the earliest postsecondary history of the group occurred at select colleges (e.g., Amherst College, Oberlin, Middlebury College) located in the northernmost part of the United States (Bigglestone, 1971; Brown & Davis, 2001; Graham, 1978; Harper et al., 2009; Slater, 1994; Waite, 2001; Wilson, 1990). Rudolph (1991) resolved that the matriculation of Black and women students to Oberlin occurred almost 2 centuries after the 1636 establishment of Harvard, the first American college and one that only educated White men students. Although Black women gained access to higher education as early as 1837, Sarah J. Watson Barnett was the first one to attend Oberlin from 1842-1843 (Hoffman, n.d.b.). Comparatively, the actual postsecondary timeline for Black women college students shows their initial experiences to occur over 200 years after White men, almost 20 years after the first Black man graduated from college, and a year after the first White women graduated from college (Harper et al., 2009; JBHE, n.d.; Hoffman, n.d.b.; Rudolph, 1991). Moreover, the graduation milestone for America's first Black woman happened in 1850, a little less than 15 years after the group gained access to college in 1837 (Baumann, 2010; Hoffman, n.d.b.).

The delayed access and entry to postsecondary education opportunities for Black women students is indicative of hegemonic masculine beliefs that placed less value on

their educability because of their marginalized identities related to race and sex. In respect, Ryu and Thompson (2018) asserted "Higher education was originally designed by and for white upper-class individuals" and thereby emphasized "ways in which education is racialized and resources are disproportionately available to people of racial and economic privilege" (p. 348). Positioned with membership in two marginalized groups, Black women students encountered political, social, and cultural challenges that prohibited or hindered their college transition and limited their sport participation. For example, Cooper (2017), Horton (1985), and Rudolph (1991) revealed the postponement of Black women students' higher education experiences was due to ascribed beliefs that women lacked the intellectual faculties to reason at high levels and thereby were not worth training; those beliefs were in alignment with thoughts about their White women peers. Brown and Davis (2001), Haynes (2006), Johnson (1938), and Wilson (1990) supposed that their hindered experiences were due to skepticism about the mental capacity and education limits of Black people. Also, Cooper (2017) found men who opposed the higher education of Black women believed academic advancement interfered with their potential for marriage and training as women (e.g., wife, mother, homemaker, silent influence, quietness). Perkins (2015) argued "as African American men gained civil rights denied to women, this impacted the men's and women's attitudes about African American women's higher education" (p. 721). Also, Howard-Hamilton (2003) concluded Black women—regardless of their status as slaves—were considered less than human, and academic advancement was not intended for them. Coherently, these ideals provide a rationale to further investigate historical and contemporary factors related to

postsecondary access, persistence, and graduation outcomes of Black women college students.

Early Enrollment Trends and Graduation Outcomes

Concerning campus diversity, Waite (2001) indicated Black students never comprised more than 5% of Oberlin's total student population. Oberlin (1969) showed between 1833 and 1908, over 35,500 students enrolled in the preparatory and college courses at Oberlin. Over a similar period from 1835 to 1900, Baumann (2002) revealed Oberlin admitted over 830 Black students. Furthermore, graduation data for the same period revealed 2,215 women were among the first 4,694 students to graduate from Oberlin (Oberlin, 1969). According to Oberlin College and Conservatory (OCC) archived reports, 70 Black women graduated from Oberlin with certificates or degrees from 1850-1908 (Hoffman, n.d.a.). Collectively, the data shows college attendance for Black women and men students was lower than their White peers, and Black women (70) graduated at rates lower than their White men (2,479), White women (2,215), and Black men (91) peers. Rather than negate the importance of recognizing initial patterns of low graduation rates among Black college students, the subsequent literature presumes to illuminate the conditions under which the first Black women college students engaged CCW to persist to graduation at Oberlin. Most importantly, it highlights their positive graduation outcome and shows—despite the multiple systems of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, and classism) that posed barriers to their social mobility—Black women students still earned higher education credentials from a PWI.

Though barely recognized in literature, the lightly noted experiences of two former students identified among Oberlin's first Black women graduates provide a framework to understand situations that likely warranted their deployment of CCW to persist to graduation. Hoffman (n.d.a.) reported Oberlin's earliest Black women graduates were:

- Lucy Ann Stanton, first to earn a graduation certificate from Oberlin in 1850;

- Mary Jane Patterson, first to earn a bachelor's degree in 1862; and

- Fannie M. Jackson, or Fannie Jackson-Coppin, second to earn a bachelor's degree (1865).

According to the admissions timelines for Black and women students, the graduation milestone for Stanton, Patterson, and Jackson occurred a little over a decade after women were first admitted to the institution in 1837, 8 years after the first Black woman enrolled at Oberlin (1942), and 9 years after the first three White women students graduated from Oberlin in 1841 (Banks, 2009; Bigglestone, 1971; Graham, 1978; Harper et al., 2009; Jackson-Coppin, 1913; Hoffman, n.d.b.; Perkins, 2015; Rudolph, 1991). The subsequent section delineates how Oberlin's racial climate and culture, policies, and practices influenced and impacted the persistence of America's earliest Black women college students during the enrollment periods of Stanton, Patterson, and Jackson-Coppin.

Early Postsecondary Experiences of Black College Students

The introductory years to postsecondary education for Black women students saw no deliberate efforts by Oberlin to recruit or enact policies to support Black and women

students (Fairchild, 1883; Fletcher, 1943; Horton, 1985). Horton (1985) asserted that the initial plans to admit Black students to Oberlin were opposed by individuals who held sexual stereotypes of (a) unfounded sexual fears related to racial integration at a coeducational institution and (b) beliefs that the inclusion of Black students would diminish the educational traditions of the institution. As a former Oberlin administrator, Fairchild (1883) maintained that despite the institutional goal to create education opportunities for colored students, Oberlin "was not a colored school that was proposed, but a school where colored students should have equal privileges with others" (p. 112). Included in those privileges were opportunities for Black students, like their White peers, to participate in manual labor or work studies to assist with defraying institutional expenses (Fairchild, 1883). Likewise, students who lacked requisite college skills were provided preparatory courses to enhance their readiness to take advanced college courses (Baumann, 2010; Fairchild, 1883; Fletcher, 1943). Fairchild (1883) also suggested there were no institutional actions taken to encourage race relations among students. Therefore, the onus of responsibility resided with the students to develop and maintain harmonious interracial relationships inside and outside the classroom. In respect, Fairchild (1883) found the earliest classroom experiences of Black [men] students to include one colored student in a class with no assigned seating and with White peers who could opt to whether they would sit near him (Fairchild, 1883). In contrast, Fairchild also suggested that irrespective of the views White students held about slavery and colored people, at Oberlin; they gain a sense of friendship and advocacy for their Black peers. Similarly,

Horton (1985) and Waite (2001) proposed Oberlin's first Black students to experience a period of racial tolerance and activism.

Horton (1985) described the Antebellum period, though highlighted primarily for its emphasis on activism, as a time when Black and White students demonstrated campus congruency, activism, and provided education services in Black communities. As an example, Sealey-Ruiz (2012) reported, "Anna Julia Cooper, who was older than [Mary] Patterson while they attended Oberlin and would be considered a reentry student today, fervently spoke and wrote about racial and gender equity and the importance of education for Black women" (p. 99). Also, in his discussion of Mary Sheldon Vincent, a former Oberlin student and White woman abolitionist, Baumann (2010) briefly highlighted her relationship with Lucy A. Stanton, the institution's first Black woman graduate. To advance Vincent's stance on racial ideologies ascribed to Black students, Baumann (2010) wrote,

> She [Vincent] rejected the racial stereotypes inscribed in wider society, separated out the disabilities belonging to race and class (comparable to the nineteenth-century term *caste*), and encouraged education as a way to improve the lot of Black Americans. (p. 45)

Furthermore, Baumann (2010) indicated Vincent credentialed the positive academic outcome of Black students at Oberlin and identified Stanton as a friend and fellow Black activist. Horton (1985) indicated Stanton was elected president of a campus association and served as a member of the literary society in addition to demonstrating activism with other Black and White students. Horton (1985) further revealed Stanton and other Black

students participated in a full range of social and educational activities on campus. To offer personal perspective on the period, Fannie Jackson-Coppin (1913), a former slave and the second Black woman to earn a bachelor's degree from Oberlin, shared,

> I never rose to recite in my classes at Oberlin but I felt that I had the honor of the whole African race upon my shoulders. I felt that, should I fail, it would be ascribed to the fact that I was colored. (p. 15)

Alternatively, she shared,

> I was elected class poet for the Class Day exercises and have the kindest remembrance of the dear ones who were my classmates. I never can forget the courtesies of the three Wright brothers; of Professor Pond, of Dr. Lucien C. Warner, of Doctor Kincaid, the Chamberland girls, and others, who seemed determined that I should carry away from Oberlin nothing but most pleasant memories of my life there. (p. 15)

Regarding faculty, Jackson-Coppin expressed they (a) fostered her development as a pre-service teacher, (b) provided her with boarding after she became ill while living on campus, and (c) advocated for her initial hire for a position in Philadelphia after she graduated from Oberlin. In addition, she recalled positive classroom and pre-service training experiences related to her college persistence. Likewise, Jackson-Coppin recognized the continuous presence and support of her aunt, who she said, "went to work at six dollars a month, saved one hundred and twenty-five dollars and bought little Frances [Fannie]" (p. xvii) from slavery in the District of Columbia where she was born. Likewise, she acknowledged the benefits she gained from interacting with professors and

families within Oberlin's surrounding community to influence her experience and subsequent success after graduation.

In alignment with societal norms, the post-Civil War years to the turn of the 20th century saw a shift in Oberlin's campus culture and racial climate from activism and advocacy to overt racism and segregation (Baumann, 2010; Horton, 1985). In accordance with the initial efforts to respond to changes associated with the admittance of Black and women students, no sustainable measures were successfully implemented to restore the perceived status of harmony at Oberlin (Horton, 1985). Bigglestone (1971) asserted under Fairchild's leadership, the reconstruction years at Oberlin witnessed a retraction from the initial interest and liberal stance on equal access to higher education for Black students. Also, Baumann (2010) insisted the administration was less supportive of interracial matters and individual efforts to combat racism were less noted. Bigglestone (1971) concluded "working and fighting for freedom for a slave was not the same as defending them against widespread discriminatory practices" (p. 198). Baumann (2010) and Horton (1985) indicated that in response to increased racial tension, Oberlin's leader, at the time, ultimately co-signed the creation of separate facilities and organizations for Black and White students.

In respect to students, Horton (1985) asserted, "the world crept in" (p. 489) and Black students at Oberlin witnessed racial insults and proclamations of supremacy by their White student peers. Baumann (2010) insisted that as many White students abandoned Oberlin's legacy of racial tolerance, Black students encountered

discriminatory practices that influenced their social, academic, and athletic experiences at Oberlin. Specific to the experience of Black women students, Horton (1985) wrote:

> By the early 1880s white residents of Ladies Hall were complaining about the traditional dining arrangements which allowed integrated seating during meals. In response to growing white student pressure, tables were set aside for black women in the fall of 1882. (p. 489)

In addition to their encounters with open expressions of racial prejudice with peers, Horton (1985) exposed the reactions of faculty who opposed the institutional practice that allowed Black and White students to become roommates. Though not associated with the names of specific students, Horton (1985) reported Black students openly condemned the overt expressions of racism by their White student peers and advocated for themselves and against racism within the community and on campus. Baumann (2010), Bigglestone (1971), and Horton (1985) also revealed acts of resistance by Black students included the group's establishment of campus organizations and social outlets to (a) foster their academic development, (b) expand their social networks, and (c) share their talents irrespective of institutional support. Also, the period observed the emergence of Black churches as spiritual centers and the nexus for social, political, and economic advancement and development in Black communities (Waite, 2001). Though not specifically defined as cultural capital at this point in the review, the earliest experiences of Black women college students show they engaged multiple attributes of CCW to achieve a positive graduation outcome at the first PWI to accept them under racism-focused conditions.

Early Postsecondary Sport Experiences of Women Students

Scholars who investigated the early sport histories of Black student-athletes found they were less recorded, and in the 1900s "it was not uncommon for White Americans to believe that Blacks were not only inferior intellectually but also physically and athletically" (Smith et al., 2014, p. 222). Coakley (2017) and Smith et al. (2014) also acknowledged racial ideologies supported claims that as Black sport participants became dominant athletes, thoughts emerged to refute their intellectual prowess. However, gaining insight into factors that shaped the sport participation and eventual collegiate basketball experiences of the nation's first Black women student-athletes warrants attention to their position as women college students. Respectively, the focus hereafter centers their early experiences and sport participation at Oberlin (Baumann, 2010; Fairchild, 1883; Fletcher, 1943; Horger, 1996) and briefly highlights their collegiate basketball history at HBCUs (Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Liberti, 2003, 2014; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). Different from their Black men and White women peers, the dual marginalization of Black women students poised their earliest college experiences at the intersection of racism and sexism. Therefore, examining the early sport participation and collegiate sport activity by Black women students at a PWI requires an exploration of their experiences as the first women students at Oberlin. Like the initial transition of the first Black college men students, Fletcher (1943) determined no initial efforts were made to accommodate the immediate needs of women students admitted to the institution. He contended although Oberlin was committed to educating women, the greatest calling of the subgroup was to serve as mothers---keeping in mind their homes should not suffer

because of the women's desires to obtain academic advancement. In respect, the noted institutional adjustments to the enrollment of women students included separate housing, dining facilities, and organization establishments for women and men students (Baumann, 2010; Fairchild, 1883; Fletcher, 1943). Fairchild (1883) also described eventual adjustments to include the hiring of a lady principal to serve as the guardian for women students and the addition of a ladies' course to govern how women students were trained. Fletcher (1943) also indicated women were held to a dress code, restricted from speaking before mixed audiences that included men and women, and expected to be subject to men.

The physical education curriculum for women students at Oberlin mirrored that of other postsecondary institutions and aligned with societal norms that stressed womanhood and restricted sport activities for women students (Bell, 2007; Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Hines, 2018; Liberti, 2003; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). For instance, Bell (2007), Grundy and Shackelford (2005), Liberti (2003), and Sack and Staurowsky (1998) reported the earliest sport activities for women students were curriculum-based and informal, noncompetitive, rule-less, recreational, or intramural activities that were not strenuous but suitable for women's physical development. As examples, Liberti (2003) and Grundy and Shackelford (2005) identified the less strenuous physical activities in their curriculum to include sports such as badminton, archery, and tennis. Sack and Staurowsky (1998) additionally determined instead of physically demanding activities, women students' physical education courses focused on "parenthood training, and posture inspections as well as the reporting and regulating of diet, weight, sleep

habits, dress, exercise behavior, and menstrual cycles" (pp. 55-56). Reportedly, in addition to a curriculum with sport limitations, Sack and Staurowsky (1998) indicated women students wore multiple layers of clothing that restricted their movement during physical activity. They also determined physiology and hygiene were aspects of women's physical education courses but rarely included in the curriculum for men students. Beyond those presented in their physical education curriculum, the initial collegiate sport opportunities for the first Black women students are not noted in the early history of the institution. However, Baumann (2010) described Black men students to encounter discriminatory practices during team selection processes and while participating on Oberlin's intercollegiate men's teams. The remainder of this section focuses on the emergence of basketball for all women students and opportunities for Black women students to play on intercollegiate basketball teams.

In progression, the latter part of the 19th century saw the emergence of basketball as an addition to the physical education curriculum for women students at postsecondary institutions (Horger, 1996; Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). Reportedly, basketball was added to the physical education curriculum for women students at Oberlin in 1896—6 years before the sport was added to the curriculum for men students at the institution (Horger, 1996). Horger (1996) also determined for women students, basketball was a non-competitive outdoor activity that provided them with a sport experience comparable to football and baseball for men students at Oberlin. Conversely, unlike the evolution of basketball as one of Oberlin's top intercollegiate sports for men, it remained an intramural sport that limited women students to play

within the confines of Oberlin's campus and among women spectators only (Horger, 1996).

In contrast, broader opportunities existed for women students to play collegiate basketball outside of Oberlin; however, restrictions were placed on the prospects for Black women to compete on intercollegiate teams. Flowers (2007), Grundy and Shackelford (2005), Liberti (2003), and Sack and Staurowsky (1988) ascertained the first intercollegiate women's basketball game occurred between two PWIs with all-White women student-athletes in 1896, the same year basketball became part of the curriculum at Oberlin. Those scholars also acknowledged the game, between Sanford University and the University of California at Berkeley, took place 44 years after the first recorded event for men athletes. Relative to the accompanying study, the polarization of the first intercollegiate women's basketball competition exposes the delay in opportunities for Black women students to emerge as collegiate basketball players at PWIs. Furthermore, this acknowledgment confirms the exclusion of Black women student-athletes from a significant milestone in women's collegiate sport history and likewise, substantiates the need to narrowly examine their basketball experiences at HBCUs.

The brevity of this section supposes not to minimize perspectives on the experiences of Black women student-athletes who attended HBCUs. Instead, the literature (a) recognizes their early experiences as collegiate athletes, (b) illuminates social and cultural factors that influenced their sport participation, and (c) confirms their postsecondary experiences to be unique in comparison to their non-athlete peers. Presented in connection with the literature here, the recognition of HBCUs is significant

to the timeline in the sport history of Black women students. Their basketball experiences at HBCUs offer a comparative perspective on their unproven sport histories at Oberlin. In slight alignment with the introduction of basketball as a women's sport, the period witnessed the passage of the 1890 Morrill Act, which increased higher education opportunities for Black students and thereby opportunities for Black women students to play basketball at established HBCUs (Brown & Davis, 2001; Davis, 1938; Lee, 1963; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Wenglinsky, 1996; Wilson, 1990). In limited accounts, scholars recognized mixed messages regarding the sport participation of Black women basketball players. For instance, Grundy and Shackelford (2005) and Liberti (2003) alluded that although the athleticism of Black women basketball players was hailed within their communities, administrators and community members expressed concerns over whether their athleticism and rigorous movements made the student-athletes less womanlike. Also, different from the publicized coverage of the first intercollegiate women's basketball game, the sport histories of Black women basketball players had mostly Black press media coverage and less mainstream outlet coverage (Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Liberti 2003, 2014). Additionally, Liberti (2003, 2014) noticed although Black women basketball players eventually gained coverage in White media press, their femininity, physical structures, and perceived "masculine traits" gained more attention compared to their basketball talent, skills, and abilities. In addition, Grundy and Shackelford (2005) and Liberti (2003, 2014) exposed Jim Crow laws to restrict the location of intercollegiate basketball competitions for Black women student-athletes who played at HBCUs. They also revealed the mid-1940s as witnessing the reduction of

women's basketball to intramural play-day events or complete removal from college campuses (Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Liberti, 2003). In combination, this literature posed to illuminate how social, cultural, and historical factors shaped the persistence experiences and sport participation of America's first Black women college students. In consequence, the review also posits that an examination of the persistence experiences of Black women student-athletes along one of the group's single-axis identities renders their experiences silenced, omitted, or invisible in America's postsecondary history.

Increased Sport Opportunities for Black Women Athletes at PWIs

Relevant to bridging ideals on past and contemporary experiences of Black women student-athletes were the decisions of 1954 and 1955 *Brown v. Board of Education*—hereafter, *Brown* and *Brown II*—and the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972—hereafter, Title IX (U.S. Courts, n.d.; USDE, 2021). Though neither aimed to address higher education or sports, the magnitudes of their implications were expanded as such. Proposed to create greater access to PWIs for Black women students, the 1954 *Brown* decision deemed racially segregated schools unconstitutional and prohibited the establishment of "separate, but equal" school facilities for Black and White students (López & Burciaga, 2014; U.S. Courts, n.d.). With a single focus on racism and inequitable access to higher education, *Brown* addressed one issue progressively factoring into the experiences of Black women college students. Also, with no specific reference to sports, Title IX states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal

financial assistance" (USDE, 2021). Like the single-axis focus of *Brown*, the application

and effectiveness of Title IX aimed to thwart sex-based discrimination practices in

education and therefore to increase sport opportunities for Black women student-athletes

(Theune, 2019). To further explain the impact of these legislative actions on the sport

participation of Black women students-athletes at PWIs, the following are discussed: (a)

delayed implementation of *Brown* 1954 and Title IX, (b) collegiate sport opportunities

for Black women, and (c) a critical perspective on the effectiveness of *Brown* and Title

IX, exclusively.

Scholars recognized several factors postponed implementation of each and

resulted in further delays for Black women athletes gaining access to collegiate sports at

PWIs though the previous legislations were signed into law as early as 1954. For

example, Harper et al. (2009), López and Burciaga (2014), and U.S. Courts (n.d.) found

that in their infancy, *Brown* and *Brown II* lacked specific guidelines to ensure lower

courts created and expedited desegregation plans. Brown (2001) contended even though

the passage of *Brown* was supposed to grant immediate access to education institutions at

all levels, desegregation mandates did not reach higher education until President Lyndon

B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Additionally, Harper et al. (2009)

conceived it was the later affirmative action policies that "dramatically increased

educational opportunities for African Americans, particularly at PWIs" (p. 400).

Regarding Title IX, Bass et al. (2015), Bechtel (2022), Coakley (2017), Grundy and

Shackleford (2005), Newnham (2022), and Sack and Staurowsky (1998) identified (a)

debates and lawsuits that critiqued the impact of Title IX on men sports; (b) ambiguity in

the language and confusion about the interpretation of the law; and (c) extended

timelines for institutions to facilitate and enact compliance as factors that thwarted the

enforcement of the law until 1981. Subsequent years saw a transfer of women's sport

governance from the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) to the

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Bass et al., 2015; Bechtel, 2022;

Grundy & Shackelford, 2005). Ferguson (2015) and Sack and Staurowsky (1998)

indicated the shift of women's athletics from AIAW to NCAA proposed to elevate the

level of collegiate women's athletics to that of men. However, the change also witnessed

control of women's athletics shift from women to men and with fewer women in

decision-making positions within the organizational structure (Sack & Staurowsky,

1998). Sack and Staurowsky (1998) accordingly stated,

> Symbolically, the demise of the AIAW signaled the fact that despite the
>
> increasing numbers of female collegiate athletes, the male-dominated decision-
>
> making machinery within the intercollegiate athletic community and higher
>
> education had not been altered to any great degree and continues in the 1990s to
>
> remain relatively unchanged.

Furthermore, the transfer of governance saw a shift in policies that (a) focused on the

"unique needs, experiences, and characteristics" (Holland, 1974, p. 24) and well-being of

individual women student-athletes and (b) provided specifically-detailed emphasis on

coaches' treatment and development of intercollegiate women athletes.

In the vein of examining increased collegiate sport opportunities for Black women

students, the 2023 NCAA report, showed across NCAA membership institutions beyond

the 1981-1982 school year, the number of collegiate sports for women student-athletes increased from 20 to 29 (NCAA, 2023b). The report aligned with traditional patterns to show the greatest number of women athletes participated in outdoor track (31,475), soccer (29,959), indoor track (29,391), softball (21,646), volleyball (18,569), basketball (16,668), and cross country (14,621). Of those seven sports, Evans (1998) found track and field, cross country, and basketball to be considered mainstream sports largely accessible to all women athletes. Bernhard (2014), Bower and Martin (1999), Evans (1998), Prickett et al. (2012), and Theune (2019) also determined those three sports to have the highest concentration of Black women participants. Additionally, Evans (1998), Prickett et al. (2012), and Theune (2019) recognized Black women student-athletes were almost nonexistent in sports such as golf, tennis, hockey, rugby, equestrian, and lacrosse. Coakley (2017) ascribed the disparity of participants in some sports to factor social class or socioeconomics that favored above-average income households. Coakley (2017) suggested, "These income and wealth gaps will influence who has opportunities to develop elite sport skills, receive athletic scholarships, and play sports at elite levels" (p. 270). In totality, these factors leave to question the effectiveness of *Brown* and Title IX to fulfill the purpose of increasing access and sport opportunities for Black women student-athletes at PWIs.

Exclusively, *Brown* and Title IX addressed different spheres of discrimination imposed on Black women student-athletes and therefore masked the impact of multiple discrimination on their experiences. More than their single-axis intentions, the intersections of *Brown* and Title IX offered increased higher education opportunities for

35

Black women student-athletes. To this point, Mathewson (2012) and Theune (2019) argued while *Brown* gave Black women students access to PWIs, Title IX created opportunities for them to advance to college as student-athletes. Mathewson (2012) concluded without *Brown*, Title IX would have been more advantageous to increasing collegiate sport opportunities for White women student-athletes. Also, Theune (2019) contended in addition to creating increased opportunities, the intersection of *Brown* and Title IX surfaced the hierarchical system of athletics that perpetuated masculine hegemony in sports. Theune (2019) added, "Brown was trying to eliminate racial segregation but Title IX actually reifies 'separate but equal' when it comes to sex" (p. 5). In addition, Theune (2019) determined though greater sports opportunities for women were created by Title IX, without *Brown*, the law fell short of resolving issues that continue to limit the sport participation of Black women student-athletes. More pointedly, Evans (1998), Prickett et al. (2012), and Theune (2019) discerned that with a central focus on gender, Title IX increased the collegiate sport participation of women athletes and at the same time created greater opportunities for White women student-athletes. They asserted most Black girls and women were positioned in social locations that limited their access to sports and likewise limited their chances to take advantage of scholarships available through sports.

In alignment with the details regarding the earliest Black women students to enroll at postsecondary institutions, the next section highlights enrollment trends supposed to show the impact of *Brown* and Title IX on fulfilling the intended purposes to increase higher education access and sport opportunities for Black women student-

athletes. Thereafter, a biographical sketch of Luisa Harris emphasizes the impact of

Brown and Title IX and simultaneously provides a contemporary story of a former DII

Black woman basketball player to introduce the remaining sections of literature for this

review.

Post Brown and Title IX Enrollment Trends

The presentation of this data supposes not to ignore the presence of Hispanic and

Asian women and men students identified in the later enrollment data for college students

but to establish a correlation with past and present data on the enrollment of Black

women students in higher education. The first recorded post-Brown enrollment data

showed from 1964 to 1972 the college enrollment of Black students increased by 211%

(USDC, 1973). At the time, 727,000 Black students represented approximately 9% of the

total college population of 8.3 million students under 35 years old and enrolled as full-

time undergraduates at 4-year colleges (USDC, 1972, 1973). Comparatively, the 1976

U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census report revealed "[c]ollege

enrollment of Black students under 35 reached 1.1 million in 1976" (USDC, 1977, p. 1).

Compared to the entire college student population, the Black student ratio increased from

4.6% in 1966 to 10.7% in 1976. As a continuation of previous trends, USDC (2020)

reported the enrollment of Black students increased to over 1.2 million in 2020. This

report also revealed 724,000 Black women students represented a little over 8% of the

total student population of almost 8.7 million, in comparison to their Black men (5.8%),

White women (39.7%), and White men (31.5%) peers (USDC, 2020). In conjunction, this

enrollment trend data depicts an increase in the overall enrollment of Black women in

college. However, because earlier records identified the group along their single-axis identities, the opportunity to confirm their actual growth is slim. The data to show graduation rates for Black women student-athletes is further delineated in the literature for the section on DII Black women student-athletes to make comparisons with early enrollment and graduation outcomes.

To bridge the gap in literature specifically to describe the experiences of former DII Black women basketball players who graduated from a PWI, a slim review to portray the college experience of Lusia Harris is shared next. Specifically, literature to support the herstory of Lusia Harris (hereafter also called Lucy) illuminated factors that link past and contemporary sport opportunities for Black women basketball players to *Brown*, Title IX, the collective literature for this review, and the partnered research project (Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Proudfoot, 2021). Also, in alignment with CCW, quotes from Lucy's interview are briefly discussed to show (a) she leveraged her basketball talent to gain access to college and (b) how she developed and engaged forms of cultural capital to persist to graduation at a PWI.

Lusia Harris's DII Experience at the Intersection of Brown and Title XI

In June 2022, the United States commemorated the 50th anniversary of Title IX legislation through digital and print media that traced the law from its infancy to implementation (Newnham, 2022; Porter, 2022; SI, 2022). A four-part documentary on Title IX and the commemorative issue of *Sports Illustrated*, *37 Words,* retold the stories of women who described the impact and implications of Title IX in college (Newnham, 2022; Porter, 2022; SI, 2022). The celebration of Title IX offered an initial perspective on

the contemporary experiences of a former DII Black woman basketball player who persisted to graduation at a PWI. A year prior to the celebration in *The Queen of Basketball*, Lucy illuminated her experience of transitioning to college as the "next to the last" of 11 children who grew up in a two-parent home located within a small predominantly Black community in Mississippi (Proudfoot, 2021). Lucy explained one of her aspirations was to play basketball like the professional men athletes she watched on television during her childhood, and playing in college offered the highest level of opportunities for women. Relevant to her pre-collegiate sport development, Lucy remembered playing with other children in her yard, joining the school team, and seeking to prove her basketball skills. She shared, "I became a member of the team, but I didn't know how to play. I had to learn how to play defense, offense(s), pivot. I didn't develop a shot, it just came natural."

Lucy also expressed at the cusp of Title IX she gained the opportunity to play basketball at Delta State, a PWI with DII membership. In Proudfoot (2021), the former student-athlete also described the impact of Title IX to mean "whatever you provide for the men, you have to provide for the women also." For Lucy, Title XI opened the door for Delta State to start a women's basketball program and she became one of the first DII Black women basketball players to join a predominantly White collegiate basketball team at a PWI. In reference to her initial plans to attend a historically Black university, Lucy stated, "I had made up my mind that I was going to go to Alcorn. It's a Black school. But they didn't have a women's basketball program, so I changed my mind." Relating to literature for the previous section, Lucy's decision to attend Delta State also highlights,

despite passage of Title IX legislation, there was not an immediate opportunity for Black women students to play basketball at a postsecondary institution (e.g., HBCU, PWIs). Though limited in scope, Lucy's college experience factored her ability to play basketball at the highest levels of competition (e.g., National Championships, Olympics) while simultaneously balancing academic and sport commitments to persist to graduation (Beck, 2022; Davis, 2021, Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Proudfoot, 2021). Regarding the team dynamics she shared, "Being the only Black on the team, I had to adjust to that. I wasn't really close to anybody on the team. But once we got on that floor, you couldn't tell" (Proudfoot, 2021). In accordance with Matthewson (2012) and Theune (2019), Lucy's story exemplified the necessity to pair *Brown* and Title IX to create the prospect for a Black woman student-athlete to play collegiate basketball and graduate from a PWI with a B.S. degree in 1977 (Davis, 2021).

Contemporary Experiences of Black Women Student-Athletes

Even though recent years have seen an increase in research on the experiences of Black women student-athletes, the paucity of literature on their postsecondary experiences is indicative of societal norms that continue to silence their narratives and render their experiences almost invisible at PWIs. Scholars continue to recognize marginalization in their postsecondary education experiences despite 2 centuries since the initial presence of Black women students at PWIs (Carter-Francique et al, 2015; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998). In consequence, Carter-Francique (2018) asserted, "academic persistence, athletic excellence and continued marginalization based on their race, gender, social class and other identities make these women prime students worthy

of an environment that fosters a sense of belonging for their overall success and well-being" (p. 59). Additionally, Bruening (2005) recognized anti-essentialism in Black women athletes' experiences and noticed limited research exists to examine their experiences within and outside their sport. Furthermore, Bruening (2005) insisted the experiences of Black women athletes are unique in comparison to White women and Black men—the two student subgroups in which their experiences are sometimes positioned. Respectively, Winkle-Wagner (2015) suggested, "Important insights are lacking regarding how African American women's experiences in higher education may be uniquely racialized and gendered, due to the vast majority of the studies specific to African American college students grouping both sexes together" (p. 172). She also alluded that the gaps or blind spots associated with their college experiences likely suggest factors such as mistreatment that could influence the persistence and eventual graduation outcomes of Black women students. As a basis to understand the unique experiences of Black women athletes, their characteristics are first examined within a normative or universal perception of student-athletes.

Student-Athletes in General

Comeaux et al. (2011) and Kissinger and Miller (2009) similarly found college athletes are presumed to matriculate to college with the same expectations and stressors as their non-athlete peers. Comeaux et al. (2011) suggested that irrespective of their revenue and non-revenue status, "student-athletes transition into college feeling optimistic about their desired academic goals" (p. 46). Likewise, in comparison to nonrevenue student-athletes, they found revenue student-athletes enter college with lower

GPAs and from environments with limited resources to enhance their preparedness for college. Also, Hewitt (2009) and Parham (1993) recognized societal pressure to excel in sports and pre-enrollment recruitment processes to confound the stressors experienced by the group. Accordingly, Post and Kelly (2018) stated,

> The cultural and psychological experience of the student-athlete can be distinguished from that of the general collegiate population. Special demands are placed on student-athletes for balancing both academic and sport-related priorities and forming interpersonal relationships while managing the physical demands of training. (p. 243)

Kissinger and Miller (2009), Stephen and Higgins (2009), and Wolcott and Gore-Mann (2009) acknowledged student-athletes have distinct academic, social, physical, and emotional challenges only relevant to their subgroup and warranting differentiated support for their well-being. Also, Post and Kelly (2018) suggested the combination of academic and sport demands, training, and stereotypes about the athletic culture of an institution places extensive demands on an athlete's psychological resources. In consequence, growing concerns over the well-being of student-athletes, their mental health issues, and the challenges associated with their experiences have prompted research to examine factors that influence their persistence and college transition (Beauchemin, 2014; Comeaux & Harrison, 2007; Kissinger and Miller, 2009; Ryan et al., 2008; Sudano et al., 2017). These factors advance the notion that because of their sport commitment, student-athletes experience college significantly differ from their non-athlete peers.

Compared to their non-athlete peers possessing positioned experiences within institutional social and academic systems, student-athletes have persistence experiences that also necessitate their engagement and interactions within institutional sport systems. Comeaux and Harrison (2011) cited sport participation, physical exhaustion, and mental fatigue as specific examples of challenges encountered by student-athletes and irrelevant to the experiences of their non-athlete counterparts. Correspondingly, Watson and Kissinger (2007) suggested management of academic and athletic demands, social and interpersonal relationships, and issues associated with injuries as other challenges experienced solely by student-athletes. Also, Carter Francique et al. (2013) determined that irrespective of the sport, student-athletes spend significant time attending to sport-related activities such as practicing, traveling, competing, and training. They also found athletic demands to cause student-athletes to feel isolated from the student body and to factor their academic performance. In addition, Comeaux and Harrison (2011) recognized peer relationships outside of sports to have a positive impact on goals and development of student-athletes. Carter-Francique et al. (2013) and Comeaux and Harrison (2011) suggested those interactions with individuals outside athletics are vital to student-athletes' development of their non-sport identities.

Notwithstanding their personal attributes and cognitive factors, student-athletes are situated as a campus subpopulation, who like their non-athlete peers, may enter college as (a) traditional or nontraditional students, (b) first-generation college students, and (c) students who have varying academic abilities, disabilities, and education histories (Gohn & Albin, 2006; Hyatt, 2003). Clark and Trow (1966), Gohn and Albin (2006), and

43

Kissinger and Miller (2009) indicated that like their non-athlete peers, student-athletes reside in university housing, engage in sports and extracurricular activities, and participate in campus organizations and events. Clark and Trow (1966) and Gohn and Albin (2006) recognized the group participated in honors programs, Greek-lettered organizations (e.g., fraternities, sororities), and minority student subgroups. Additionally, Clark and Trow (1966) and Flowers (2007) recognized student-athletes are situated within an expansive social network or subculture that garners alumni support, generates revenue and recognition for the institution, and demonstrates their loyalty through sport participation. Respectfully, Kissinger and Miller (2009) argued the need to further examine student-athletes' experiences outside of athletics. They explained the issue as "a limited awareness of the resiliency needed by student-athletes to effectively navigate the normal developmental event associated with the college experience in conjunction with the unique challenges inherent in the student-athlete experience" (p. 3). Also, Comeaux and Harrison (2011) cautioned that failure to understand the unique experiences of student-athletes can have significant implications for how they are supported. Therefore, a normative perspective of college students omits factors that likely influence the college persistence and graduation outcomes of college athletes whose intersectionality may also include membership in marginalized student-athlete subgroups.

Black Women Student-Athlete Attributes

Carter-Francique et al. (2015), Carter-Francique and Richardson (2015), and Tierney (1999) suggested the adoption of a monolithic standpoint to examine Black women students' experiences fails to account for intersectionality, anti-essentialism, or

other social, historical, and cultural factors that individually inform their perceptions,

actions, and reactions to persist in college. Furthermore, Few-Demo (2014) argued a

monolithic Black woman embodying the experiences of all Black men and women

"across social classes, national origin, sexuality, or time" (p. 172) is nonexistent.

Therefore, the contention is the use of monolithic and normative perspectives to describe

student-athletes' experiences as universal and normal silences the stories of Black women

student-athletes and fosters a continuous pattern to omit details of their postsecondary

history. In alignment with earlier research, the unique experiences and resiliency of Black

women student-athletes are now examined and further establish a basis to use an asset-

based framework to explore their persistence experiences at PWIs. The synthesis for the

remainder of this section acknowledges cognitive and noncognitive attributes ascribed to

Black women student-athletes.

Academic Preparation and Cognitive Attributes

Previous scholars recognized individual attributes of communal knowledge,

academic preparation, and socialization skills among cognitive and non-cognitive

characteristics to influence the persistence of Black student-athletes and non-athletes

(Bowers & Martin, 1999; Cooper et al., 2016; Harmon et al., 2012; Scot et al., 2008;

Sellers et al., 1997). In respect, Bowers and Martin (1999), Cooper et al. (2016), and

Sellers et al. (1997) determined Black student-athletes enter college with pre-collegiate

characteristics such as coming from lower socioeconomic statuses (SES), lower high

school grade point averages (GPAs), and low college entrance exam scores that put them

at risk of not demonstrating academic success. Sellers et al. (1997) indicated Black

student-athletes entered college with poorer educational backgrounds than their White student-athlete peers. However, they also recognized despite their poorer college preparation, Black women student-athletes performed adequately considering the time demands associated with their sport. Foster (2003) stated Black female athletes entered college with varying academic levels (e.g., poor to advanced) and social skills (e.g., inappropriate to well-developed).

Cooper et al. (2016) also found Black women student-athletes to hold strong beliefs about academic abilities, and those who experienced academic success attributed their academic outcome to personal drive and academic preparedness. Harmon et al. (2012) proposed Black women and White women student-athletes entered college demonstrating greater academic aptitude in comparison to their men counterparts. They also alluded that to manage their academic progress, Black women athletes took additional courses during their off-season. Correspondingly, Scott et al. (2008) reported on average, women student-athletes experienced greater academic success in the off-season in comparison to their in-season academic performance. Moreover, Cooper et al. (2016) explained that, concerning their demanding schedule, Black women student-athletes recognized the importance of establishing priorities, being disciplined with study habits, engaging with others, and communicating with professors to be relevant aspects of their college experiences. In conjunction, these aspects of the review recognize multiplicity in the academic preparedness of Black women student-athletes who enter college and, simultaneously, illuminate resiliency, determination, and the ability to recognize and utilize sources of support in their academic pursuit while there.

Agency and Noncognitive Attributes

　　　　Dissimilar from the normative views of student-athletes presented in the previous section, the literature for this section recognizes innate characteristics (e.g., cultural capital) possessed by Black women students and found to influence their persistence at PWIs. Most importantly, the examples briefly highlight forms of cultural capital Black women athletes engage to thrive (e.g., academically, socially) and survive (e.g., multiple-oppressive experiences, barriers, challenges) in college. Carter-Francique (2015), Harry (2023), and Ofoegbu et al. (2021) postulated though Black athletes enter academic settings labeled at risk, they bring from their home communities a wealth of communal knowledge and cultural capital relevant to their persistence and academic success in college. Cooper et al. (2017) and Ofoegbu et al. (2021) discerned Black athletes identified their families to influence their career choices and to provide emotional and financial support, and encouragement before, during, and after college. Harry (2003) and Ofoegbu et al. (2021) proposed environmental factors (e.g., family, community, sport experiences) shape the development and deployment of noncognitive individual success attributes (e.g., cultural capital) acquired by Black athletes. Cooper et al. (2016) and Ofoegbu et al. (2021) recognized Black student-athletes enter college with aspirations to navigate life beyond playing sports. In respect, Ofoegbu et al. (2021) and Simiyu (2012) explained Black athletes enter college intending to graduate and leveraging their athleticism to earn scholarships to pay for their education and social mobility. Also, Cooper et al. (2016) suggested in contrast to beliefs that sports are emphasized moreover education in Black families, the Black women athletes in their study indicated academic

success was their focus for college. Cooper et al. (2017) also found Black women student-athletes stated their career goals positively impacted their academic performance and educational experiences. Similarly, Harry (2023) suggested when Black student-athletes remain focused on achieving their athletic or academic goals, regardless of the challenges, they engage aspirational capital and resiliency to achieve success.

Additionally, Rosales and Person (2003) acknowledged that because religious or faith-based systems are embedded in Black communities, Black women students bring practices and traditions with them to survive college. Cooper and Jackson (2012) also suggested Black women relied on their spirituality to engage psychological resistance to negative messages and to foster their development of positive identities. Respectfully, Carter and Richardson (2015) maintained Black women's characteristics assume a broader range of agency, family commitment, and assertiveness because of their struggles, challenges, and experiences within multi-oppressive systems. In consequence, their agency is likely the basis of cultural stereotypes that label Black women students as independent, emotionally strong, aggressive, not needing much guidance, and capable of attending to their own needs (Moses, 1989; Rosales & Person, 2003). Cohesively, the synthesis for this subsection simultaneously recognizes intersectionality and anti-essentialism in Black women student-athletes who experience the phenomena of persisting to graduation at PWIs.

Persistence Experiences as Black Women Student-Athletes

Before now, this synthesis used a historical context to describe how multiple oppressive systems influenced the initial experiences of Black women students who

attended a PWI (Baumann, 2010; Fairchild, 1838, Fletcher, 1943; Mathewson, 2012).

Also, *Brown* and Title IX were critiqued to determine the effectiveness of both legislative

actions to increase college access and sport participation at PWIs for Black women

students-athletes like Lusia Harris (Davis, 2021; Evans, 1998; Prickett et al., 2012;

Proudfoot, 2021; Theune, 2019; U.S. Courts, n.d.; USDE, 2021). Then, the review

described normative views of student-athletes in conjunction with attributes significant to

Black women student-athletes' enactment of agency to persist to graduation at PWIs

(Bernhard, 2014; Carter-Francique, 2015; Carter & Richardson, 2015; Cooper et al.,

2016, 2017; Foster, 2008; Rosales & Person, 2003; Sellers et al., 1997; Wei et al., 2011).

In direct alignment with the partnered project for this review, the remaining sections of

this review draw context from the previous ones to describe factors relevant to

contemporary Black women student-athletes' engagement of cultural capital to persist to

graduation at PWIs. To highlight the conditions and situations under which Black women

student-athletes engage CCW to persist to graduation at PWIs, (a) compositional

diversity, (b) institutional climate and culture, and (c) academic culture of athletics are

examined.

Compositional Diversity

First, compositional diversity (e.g., Black students, faculty, staff) and its impacts

on Black women athletes' interactions within institutional social and academic systems

are explored as persistence factors. Concerning how their interactions within institutional

social and academic systems foster their persistence, Foster (2003) indicated in addition

to varying academic levels (e.g. poor to advance), Black women athletes also enter

college with inappropriate to well-developed social skills. Porter and Dean (2015) suggested African American women enter college desiring to reestablish supportive associations with other African American women like those maternal or familial relationships shaped their homes. However, over the years, continued patterns of low college enrollment for Black women students, especially at PWIs, propose to lessen opportunities for Black women student-athletes to engage in meaningful relationships with other Black women (e.g. students, faculty, and staff). Those interactions with other Black women are supposed to (a) enhance the identity development of Black women student-athletes, (b) offer emotional support, and (c) establish a sense of belonging on campus. In research, scholars determined the incongruency in compositional diversity for staff, faculty, students, and athletic personnel at PWIs poses challenges for Black women athlete and non-athlete students (Bernhard, 2014; Person et al., 2001; Rosales & Person, 2003). In familiarity with the earliest experiences of Black college students, Bernhard (2014) found at PWIs with significant underrepresentation of Black students, the Black women students contended with being the only Black face in class or other campus facilities. Additionally, Bernhard (2014) reported Black student-athletes felt campus life at PWIs was geared toward the interests of their White student peers, and Black students needed a particular type of personality to "survive the statistics" of underrepresentation on campus. Also, Bernhard (2014) determined Black women student-athletes expressed concerns about a lack of emphasis on their need for personal care (e.g., salon) and religious worship, and they felt isolated on campuses with low Black student enrollment. Furthermore, Bernhard (2014) suggested a critical mass of Black students influences the

academic success of Black women, and on campuses with incongruency, little to no sense of community existed to shape their identity development. Congruently, these ideals offer a rationale to also explore the psychological impact of compositional diversity on Black women athletes' campus experience.

The early history of Black women students at PWIs revealed how societal norms that centered racism and sexism influenced and impacted their experiences; however, implications for the psychological impact of those experiences are not found. In the research on contemporary experiences of the group, scholars recognized Black women student-athletes experience stress, anxiety, alienation, and isolation at PWIs (Bernhard, 2014; Cooper et al., 2016; Foster, 2008; Rosales & Person, 2003; Sellers et al., 1997; Wei et al., 2011). Correspondingly, McClain and Perry (2017) and Rosales and Person (2003) indicated that Black women students struggled with feelings of alienation in college in addition to contending with faculty, staff, and other students who lacked sensitivity and understanding about their culture. Ferguson (2015) stated, "The small population of Black female student-athletes at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) increases the likelihood that they feel devalued and isolated from other undergraduate students" (p. 9).

Coakley (2021) suggested feelings of isolation by Black student-athletes were especially intensified when they came from low-income backgrounds compared to those of White peers who came from upper-middle-income backgrounds. To elaborate, Coakley (2021) identified the following six factors to intensify feelings of isolation experienced by Black athletes: (1) racial and athletic stereotypes that impede social interactions relevant to their academic success; (2) time commitments to sports that make

it difficult for them to experience campus life; (3) lack of culturally responsive campus activities that represent their interest; (4) campus life experiences that are not congruent or appealing; (5) White students feeling uncomfortable to interact with Black students because of their upbringing and beliefs; and (6) sport related stereotypes by peers who think athletes have it easy. In support, Cooper et al. (2017) stated "Black female college athletes have concurrently experienced social isolation, negative psychological outcomes, and perpetual encounters with discriminatory treatment (race- and sex-related) particularly at historically White institutions (HWI)" (p. 130). Also, Carter (2008) reported Black women athletes faced challenges associated with (a) managing multiple identities based on their athletic status, race, and gender, (b) perceived intellectual inferiority, and (c) their minority status on campus at PWIs. Additionally, Rosales and Person (2003) revealed Black women who attended institutions that failed to provide relevant collective agents or support services and resources to help them reach their full potential experienced feelings of isolation.

In addition, Bernhard (2014), Foster (2008), and Sellers et al., (1997) discovered Black athletes attributed their sport related stress and pressure to the lack of diverse coaching staffs, changes in the racial dynamics of the team, and the desire to further develop their non-athlete identities. Coakley, (2021), Moses (1989), and Wei et al. (2011) suggested campus climate and culture (e.g., racial tension, segregated groups in class); assumptions made about the academic ability of minority students (e.g., low expectations or peers' beliefs about quotas); and lack of socialization opportunities (e.g., lack of diversity among faculty and student populations) contribute to minority stress. To

compare, Jackson (1998) reported Black women experienced stress more than their Black men and White women peers. Likewise, Moses (1989) acknowledged how the treatment of Black women, in comparison to their Black men, White women, and White men peers caused them to experience isolation, invisibility, and hostility in college. These descriptions of the psychological impact on the experiences of Black women students (athletes, non-athletes) pose greater concerns and questions regarding their persistence and graduation success. Also, they provide a foundation to explore the impact of campus climate and culture on their educational experiences at PWIs and how those experiences influence the development and graduation outcome of the student-athlete subgroup.

Institutional Climate and Culture

Institutional climate and culture are now examined to determine how these aspects of college life influence Black women athletes' interactions within academic and social settings at PWIs. Here, culture and climate are related to the institutions' established practices to retain students by fostering an equity-minded, inclusive campus environment that supports their holistic development. These practices—as evidenced in (a) faculty-student interactions to facilitate academic and social development; (b) intentional actions by the institution to enact inclusive practices and policies; (c) availability of culturally relevant institutional agents (e.g., collective, individual), resources, and support systems; and (d) established socialization processes to promote the holistic development and social network expansion—depict how the institution responds to the diverse needs of Black women student-athletes and other marginalized student subpopulations. To summarize these factors, Oseguera et al. (2018) described campus

climate to include the attitudes, behaviors, standards, and practices of the employees and students of the institution. McClain and Perry (2017) also explored the institutional legacy of inclusion or exclusion, compositional diversity, psychological climate, behavioral climate, and structural diversity as factors related to institutional retention efforts. With respect to these factors, they described the institution's racial climate as a significant influence on the experiences of minority students as they matriculate, persist, and graduate at PWIs.

Oseguera et al. (2018) determined that, across NCAA Divisions, campus climate was important to the academic outcomes of all student-athletes. They also discovered a positive campus climate contributed to students' social adjustment and interpersonal skills in addition to academic performance. Additionally, these scholars recognized the adverse effect of negative campus climate on academic outcomes, particularly for marginalized groups such as women and students of color—the two subgroups within which Black women are positioned. Specific to Black men and women athletes, Oseguera et al. (2018) found athletes' positive perceptions of themselves in conjunction with institutional climate led to greater academic success among the group. Similarly, Carter-Francique et al. (2015), Comeaux and Harrison (2011), Cooper et al. (2016), and Cooper et al. (2017) recognized a positive correlation between student-athletes' academic success and interactions with faculty and staff.

Bernhard (2014) and Carter-Francique et al. (2017) also determined college culture, the lack of individual and collective institutional agents, and institution social systems influenced the experiences of Black women athletes. Cooper (2013) described

the following features of institutional culture as relevant to Black students' development

of positive academic and psychological outcomes: (a) an inclusive mission statement that

fosters the holistic development of students; (b) culturally relevant curricula, artifacts,

and practices; (c) quality educational opportunities for all students and irrespective of

their pre-college backgrounds; and (d) a critical mass of Black students, staff, faculty and

administrators to foster their sense of belonging and college experiences. Cooper (2013)

also explained these features as more prevalent in HBCUs, stating,

> Contrary to many Division I PWIs, the Division II HBCU in this study promoted
>
> a culturally relevant mission statement designed to address the unique challenges
>
> facing the African American community and cultivated an educational
>
> environment where Black male student athletes felt supported and nurtured. (p.
>
> 320)

To offer comparative thoughts about the experiences of Black women student-athletes,

Carter-Francique and Richardson (2015) and Harmon et al. (2012) found in contrast to

their experiences at PWIs, the culture at HBCUs included Black women athletes playing

sports in nurturing environments that also promoted leadership, pride, and development

within and outside their sport. Also, Carter-Francique and Richardson (2015) suggested

institutions foster the development of Black women athletes by seeking their input on

activities that interest them and are relevant to their identity development outside

athletics. In alignment with historical accounts of their experiences, Bernhard (2014),

Carter (2008), Person et al. (2001), and Sellers et al. (1997) also cited racism and sexism

to influence and impact the experiences of Black women at PWIs. In addition, Cooper et

al. (2016) and Harmon et al. (2012) found Black women student-athletes to also experience dual discrimination or felt falsely stereotyped in classes where faculty and peers underestimated their academic prowess because they were Black and athletes. Simiyu (2012) defined the intersectionality of being Black, an athlete, and a woman to be a double dose of tragedy for Black women student-athletes.

Carter-Francique et al. (2015) and Harmon et al. (2012) indicated though the participants in their studies described positive interactions with faculty, those who cited negative interactions (a) felt they were hated by faculty, (b) faculty were not responsive to their needs, or (c) faculty sometimes placed unrealistic expectations on the deadlines for the athletes to submit or complete missed assignments. As a DII example, Parsons (2013) suggested in comparison, student-athletes reported a greater percentage of professors gave them a hard time or refused to make accommodations for their sport commitments. Likewise, Parsons (2013) found student-athletes revealed positive and negative reactions to how they were stereotyped and treated by professors irrespective of race. Common to negative stereotypes about their academic prowess, Simiyu (2012) found Black student-athletes received lower grades, encountered accusations of cheating, and experienced pushback from faculty when they asked for accommodations due to sport commitments. Simiyu (2012) supposed those types of factors described to influence African American athletes' academic performance and persistence decisions. To gain additional insights into the experience of Black women students and factors relevant to their persistence, the final review for this section examines how athletic culture, and sport participation influence the persistence of Black women student-athletes.

Academic Culture in Athletics

Interactions within institutional sport systems are a necessity for student-athletes and likewise are relevant to their persistence. In alignment, aspects of athletic culture surrounding academic support (e.g., on-campus support and services) and sport participation (e.g., time commitment) are described in relation to Black women student-athletes' holistic development. The *general academic principles* established by the NCAA, which subject membership institutions [thereby their athletic departments] to establish an academic culture that promotes student-athletes' positive academic outcomes in their progression towards earning a degree (NCAA, 2023), are foundational to this review. Also, Eckenrod and Nam (2021) and Hyatt (2003) explained in addition to student-athletes' academic mandates, the NCAA encourages institutions to establish advising programs to support student-athletes in their endeavor to graduate. Congruently, Knight Commission [hereafter referred to as Knight] (1999), stipulated collegiate athletic programs must establish structures to guide and assist student-athletes with positive graduation outcomes. Cooper (2013) suggested the culture around academic success in athletics has a significant impact on the holistic development of Black student-athletes. In addition, Cooper (2013) described formative athletic cultures to factor institutional beliefs, goals, and practices to provide a nurturing environment that (a) centers inclusivity, (b) enables student-athletes to feel a sense of belonging, and (c) fosters their positive academic and psychological development through holistic experiences and positive relationships. Weatherly and Chen (2019) stated, "Institutional culture is important in terms of emphasizing the holistic development of student-athletes. Coaches,

student affairs educators, and faculty members need to understand the challenges student-athletes have in balancing athletics and academics." (p 535). Hereafter, this synthesis examines academic and social support; perceptions of support; impact of sport commitment; and coping mechanisms to describe how the athletic culture fosters the holistic development of Black women athletes.

Carter-Francique et al. (2013), Cooper et al. (2016, 2017), and Foster (2003) found on-campus support beneficial to Black college athletes included athletics academic support, athletic team, academic faculty and staff, coaches, non-athlete friends, and teammates. The types of support offered by these individuals were found to include—but were not limited to—assisting with schedules and locating resources, offering guidance on mandated study halls and course selections, and providing tutorial services or strategies to study and complete assignments (Carter-Francique et al., 2013; Cooper et al., 2016; and Hyatt, 2003). Carter-Francique et al. (2013) determined their participants did not identify faculty or academic peers as support providers although these types of informational and instructional support were most relevant to Black student-athletes' navigation of institutional systems. In addition, Harry (2023) and Rubin and Moses (2017) identified other institutional agents (e.g., tutors, advisors) played significant roles in helping student-athletes navigate factors related to higher education and collegiate athletics. In his research, Foster (2003) reported, "Black student athletes were taught to rely on the athletic department structure for everything from coaching and training to housing, dining hall arrangements, class scheduling, tutoring, academic advising, and personal and professional development" (p. 303) despite their academic and social

preparedness. Kramer (2023) indicated DII athletes thought the availability of academic support services influenced their decisions during recruitment. Harmon et al. (2012) also revealed Black women athletes found incongruencies in the actual types of support they received in college in comparison to the offerings presented during recruitment. Additionally, Kamusoko and Pemberton (2013) explained DII student-athletes felt advisors sometimes made errors because they were assigned large numbers of athletes to serve. In addition, Weatherly and Chen (2019) proposed advisors should attend to helping student-athletes focus on coursework and major choices related to their career goals, moreover attending to their athletic eligibility status. Other scholars found athletes thought their academic advisors and coaches were supportive, cared about them, and reinforced academic priorities (Cooper et al., 2017; Cooper et al., 2016). Collectively, this information highlights various types of services offered by institutions and simultaneously exposes (a) possible disadvantages to student-athletes whose services are filtered through and directed by their coaches and (b) leaves to question the types of services available to student-athletes who may need additional support to persist in college.

Hyatt (2003) suggested if the "no pass no play" philosophy of the NCAA, strict eligibility requirements, and academic advisement were sufficient influencers on the persistence of student-athletes, those factors would have a greater impact on graduation outcomes. In support, he cited non-cognitive variables such as loss of sport eligibility, individual beliefs and motivation, attitude and commitment of individual students, and perceptions of the campus community to also influence student-athletes' persistence.

Foster (2003) found though women athletes achieved academic and athletic success, Black women athletes' experiences were influenced by ascribed racial stereotypes (e.g., immature, academically deficient, sexually overactive). Foster (2003) also discovered unlike those of their White women counterparts, undesired actions (e.g., bad grades, misbehavior outside sports) and complaints by Black women athletes were mediated by threats to revoke their scholarship. Ferguson (2015) suggested coaches play a significant role in cultivating a supportive environment for Black female student-athletes. Harmon et al. (2012) described Black women athletes as sometimes experiencing a lack of care, support, and trusting relationships with coaches and found they were perceived to have negative academic capabilities by their coaches, teammates, and staff. Bruening et al. (2005) reported Black women basketball players encountered coaches who failed to provide them with quality experiences absent of physical and mental mistreatment, negative reinforcement, and a lack of opportunities for success. They also revealed Black women athletes felt they had limited access to facilities, were made to feel secondary to their men peers in some facilities, and thought the athletic program lacked representation of Black women personnel and athletes. Ferguson (2015) supposed the absence of Black female role models in athletics to impact the future aspirations and socialization for Black women student-athletes.

Eckenrod and Nam (2021) and Scot et al. (2008) determined demands to maintain high performance in the classroom and in their sport may lead to academic and psychological challenges for student-athletes. Bowers and Martin (1999) also recognized, in accompaniment with challenges they experienced with academic and social

adjustments at PWIs, sport pressures impact the psychological well-being of Black women student-athletes. Regarding sport pressure, Smith et al. (2008) reported student-athletes contribute over 6 daily hours to sport related activities, in addition to the time they spend in classes, studying or testing, and completing assignments. Also, Cooper et al. (2017), Eckenrod and Nam (2021), and Smith et al. (2014) described student-athletes as maintaining an intensive schedule that includes sport related activities such as workouts, team meetings, film review, travel, and practice. Harmon et al. (2012) determined Black women athletes felt the time demands associated with their sport participation were detrimental to their opportunities for social interactions and academic development outside of athletics. Alternatively, Cooper et al. (2016, 2017) and Meyer (1990) indicated women student-athletes felt their participation in college athletics helped them attain an education and few thought their sport participation negatively impacted their academic performance.

In research, scholars have acknowledged passive and actionable responses by Black athletes to overcome challenges associated with athletic and institutional culture. In response to negative stereotypes, Ferguson (2015) asserted women athletes use self-handicapping and disidentification with athletics as coping strategies. However, Ofoegbu et al. (2021) found false stereotyping caused a Black athlete in their study to deploy resistant capital by evoking intentional movements and communications to show he "did not fit the stereotypical images that were projected on him" at a PWI (p. 33). Harmon et al. (2012) and Meyer (1990) reported Black women athletes found solace in the positive relationships they established with teammates. The scholars also determined relationships

with their teammates contributed to the success of Black women athletes. Meyer (1990) further explained positive relationships among teammates offered social, emotional, and academic support for women athletes. Bimper (2016) and Carter and Hart (2010) found mentors provided Black student-athletes with psychological support, offered guidance on navigating institutional academic and sport systems, and helped foster their development of social skills. Foster (2003) asserted, to contend with controlling athletic environments, Black student-athletes also engaged minor forms of resistance. Carter-Francique and Hawkins (2011) found coping strategies for Black women athletes to also include talking with others, aspects of spirituality, context awareness, and personal consciousness.

Interactions within institutional academic, social, and sport systems warrant significant time and attention by student-athletes to meet competing demands relevant to their persistence. Astin (1984) suggested time as a resource to achieve academic success outcomes and further stated the extent to which students achieve academic success is contingent on the physical and psychological time and energy they devote to achieving their desired outcome. For Black women student-athletes, the competing demands for their time while interacting within institutional systems summons a greater sense of agency to overcome challenges or barriers that may impact them psychologically or influence their persistence at PWIs. Aligned with the partnered study, a review of DII athletics structures follows.

Division II Black Women Student-Athletes

This review proposes to highlight factors related to the academic outcomes of student-athletes who attend more than 300 NCAA institutions with DII membership

(NCAA, 2024a). Regarding student-athletes, the most current equity in athletics data showed during the 2022-2023 school year, more than 4.3 million women athletes were represented among 7.9 million student-athletes who participated in all divisions of collegiate athletics (USDE, 2023). These numbers included over 3.4 million women student-athletes at NCAA membership institutions and 571,613 of 986,258 student-athletes (~58%) who played at NCAA DII institutions. Comparatively, USDE (2015) showed approximately 3.4 million student-athletes at NCAA membership institutions. At institutions with DII membership, 648,712 women athletes represented 56.4% of the overall student-athlete population of almost 1.1 million. Although the data does not include demographics for DII women student-athletes, the number of DII women athletes representing their membership institutions warrants the need to examine factors related to the research question associated with this review.

Consistent with literature on past and contemporary experiences of Black women student-athletes at PWIs, limited research exists to explore the experiences of student-athletes who participate in sports at PWIs with DII membership. To achieve the goal of this review, the literature briefly (a) describes factors related to the holistic development of DII student-athletes (Kramer, 2023; Weatherly & Chen, 2019), and (b) discusses how DII athletic department support and resources have been found to impact the persistence of student-athletes (Bass et al., 2015; Eckenrod & Nam, 2021; NCAA, 2024, Weiss & Robinson, 2013).Eckenrod and Nam (2021) found in comparison to DI student-athletes who must maintain a 2.3 GPA, DII student-athletes must maintain a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale to be eligible for competition. Also, Kramer (2023) suggested student-athletes

selected DII institutions based on their degree programs and the career opportunities their degrees present after graduation. Nite (2012) recognized actual graduation rates indicating information contrary to the NCAA's assessment of academic success rates reporting higher academic outcomes for student-athletes in comparison to their non-athlete peers. In 2014, under the banner of *Make It Yours*, DII rebranded its membership institutions as home-friendly environments where student-athletes are encouraged to personalize their college experiences (NCAA, 2024a). Aspects of the rebranding suggest student-athletes' holistic development is fostered through (a) engagement in activities within and outside athletics; (b) involvement in the campus community as active participants within institutional social and academic systems; and (c) the establishment of networks with caring members (e.g., coaches, administration, faculty) who support their academic goals (NCAA, 2024a). Weatherly and Chen (2019) proposed these aspects focus on student-athletes balancing campus life and athletics to meet career readiness standards while simultaneously competing at high levels, athletically.

As previously highlighted and irrespective of budgets, institutions governed by the NCAA are required to provide student-athletes with skills and resources to develop academically and professionally (Eckenrod & Nam, 2021; Knight, 1999). However, athletic departments can meet the minimum requirements of Article 14 (NCAA, 2023a) and still experience shortfalls to assist student-athletes with positive graduation outcomes (Nite, 2012; Weiss & Robinson, 2013). Nite (2021) determined DII athletic programs operate with smaller budgets and limited resources in comparison to DI programs. According to Bass et al. (2015), the lower budgets for DII institutions were attributed to

64

lower operating costs associated with recruitment, travel, facilities, and coaches. Also, Nite (2012) identified three ways limited athletic department resources contributed to the academic challenges experienced by student-athletes. Specifically, Nite (2012) found when an athletic budget lacked sufficient funds it was a challenge to implement academic programs, establish facilities, and sufficiently employ personnel to enhance the academic development of student-athletes. Kramer (2023) posited, "It should be noted that many Division II athletic departments either don't have any athletic-specific academic support resources, or are limited in what they offer." (p. 77).

Like the review for the previous section, Nite (2012) and Weiss and Robinson (2013) identified academics, financial aid, and student-athlete support as issues that influenced student-athletes' persistence decisions. Weiss and Robinson (2013) found that among the academic issues eventually influencing the departure of student-athletes from PWIs were those including (a) mismatches between institutional programs and their own interests, (b) unsatisfactory classes, (c) unsatisfactory instructors and advisors, and (d) poor academic performances. Other issues Weiss and Robinson (2013) cited to influence departure decisions for these student-athletes included financial problems and the low academic competencies of the student-athletes. The financial implications included student-athletes needing to get jobs to defray college expenses, delays in paying tuition, and external factors pertaining to family issues or health matters. Weiss and Robinson (2013) further suggested, in addition to entering college significantly underprepared, student-athletes were overwhelmed by their dual roles as students and athletes. Additionally, student-athletes expressed concerns over low faculty engagement—even

though the classes were smaller. Nite (2012) and Weiss and Robinson (2013) also noticed inactive student-athletes indicated they were dissatisfied with the support provided by the athletic department.

Though limited in scope, the described factors related to the financial structure and academic support in DII athletics offer plausible explanations for why recent aggregate data on the academic success rate for DII student-athletes shows their overall graduation rate remained at 76% (Heath & Myers, 2023). Comparatively, Heath and Myers (2023) reported the overall academic success rate for Division III (DIII) student-athletes was 88% and the graduation success rate for DI student-athletes was 90% for the same period. Also, NCAA (2023c) reported trends in federal graduation rates for scholarship student-athletes from 2003 to 2023 showed scholarship athletes graduated at rates higher than their non-athlete counterparts for each reporting period year. The graduation rate for student-athletes showed an increase from 52% in 2003 to 58% in 2023. Furthermore, the report showed the graduation rate for Black student-athletes was lower than their White student-athlete and non-athlete peers. Additionally, women student-athletes graduated at rates higher than their men athlete and non-athlete peers.

In 2023, 1,093 DII Black women basketball players at PWIs constituted 15.3% of the Black women athletes in their division and 0.2% of the overall student-athlete population across all division sports participants (NCAA, 2024b). The DII graduation trends reported the four-class graduation rate for DII Black women athletes was 58% (NCAA, 2023c). The supposition is that quantitative data fails to provide sufficient information to examine why Black women basketball student-athletes continue to

graduate at rates lower than their athlete and non-athlete peers. In contrast to the factors that ascribe to deficit perspectives on the outcome of Black women athletes, the qualitative inquiry associated with this review serves to illuminate factors necessary to describe influencers on the success outcomes of former DII Black women basketball players who graduated from PWIs.

Persistence in Higher Education

In this inquiry, persistence is described as the efforts by the student-athlete to engage in multidimensional interactions to overcome challenges and achieve academic success through graduation. Therefore, the pursuit of literature for this section proposes to highlight aspects of traditional departure models (Bean 1985; Tinto, 1975, 1993, 1998) and a cultural-based approach (Museus & Quaye, 2009; Tierney, 1999) to support the use of an asset-based framework of CCW (Yosso, 2005) to guide the partnered research project. Tinto (1975, 1993, 1998) provided a base for which sports and cultural aspects can be applied to show a framework for Black women student-athletes' persistence. Previously, Comeaux and Harrison's (2011) conceptual model for college student-athlete academic success expanded Tinto's (1975, 1993, 1998) model to address: sport commitment, educational expectations, campus climate issues, and academic engagement as influencers of student-athletes' academic success. Regarding cultural perspectives, Museus and Quaye (2009) and Tierney (1999) suggested Tinto's (1975, 1993, 1998) student integration model offers normative perspectives and ignores the impact of cultural differences on college transitions and interactions that foster students' persistence. For instance, Tierney (1999) contended that Tinto's model overlooks

students' cultural backgrounds and suggests assimilation to the dominant culture of PWIs as the basis for their successful academic and social integration to persist in college. In support of using cultural frameworks, he found a positive correlation between the affirmation of minority students' identities and their academic success. Also, Tierney proposed postsecondary institutions should make concerted efforts to affirm the cultural identities of minority students to increase their college success outcomes. Museus and Quaye (2009) suggested emphasis on persistence should shift from "existing culturally biased frameworks for examining student departure and adopt new perspectives for studying persistence that apply to more diverse college student populations" (p. 69). In consequence, the suggested asset-based framework for the partnered study combines CCW with the relevant attributes of traditional models. The belief is traditional models of departure (Bean, 1985; Tinto, 1998) overlook how campus culture, racial climate, compositional diversity, sport participation, athletic culture, and individual attributes collectively factor the experiences of Black women student-athletes. The aspects of traditional models that fit with the proposed framework are shared next.

In short, Tinto (1975, 1993, 1998) used a longitudinal model to explore how an individual's pre-collegiate attributes, intentions, goals and commitments, and integration and interactions within institutional systems factor their decision to leave college. To this point, Tinto (1975, 1993, 1998) claimed individuals transition to college with pre-entry attributes associated with their family background, skills and abilities, and previous education histories that inform their persistence experiences. He also determined, in relation to their academic performance, an individual's pre-entry attributes have a direct

68

impact on their decision to depart from college. Tinto also found these same attributes to influence the goals and commitment of individuals and therefore, indirectly impact their decision to leave college. Also embedded within the context of Tinto's (1998) departure theory are beliefs that students' persistence to graduation is directly related to their collective social, cultural, and academic backgrounds. Most relevant to the accompanying research inquiry are his claims that an individual's intentions and goal commitments, along with their integration and interactions within institutional social and academic systems as persistence factors.

In similitude with Tinto (1975) and using a psychological approach, Bean (1985) explored how academic, social-psychological, and environmental factors influenced socialization processes and thereby the dropout decision of students. In agreement with Tinto (1975, 1993, 1998), Bean (1985) suggested individuals with higher-level education goals like graduation are more likely to stay in college. Furthermore, Bean (1985) asserted that although the two models seem to differ theoretically and the language and structure are different, some of the overall meanings behind the content are the same. For instance, both models describe how at various stages of their college progression, students decide whether to depart from college (Bean, 1985; Tinto, 1998). Also, both share the common view that personal interactions within institutional systems determine the level at which an individual gains a sense of belonging, presumes institutional fit, and intends to maintain membership (Bean, 1985; Cabrera et al., 1992; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Tierney, 1999; Tinto, 1975). In conjunction, Bean (1985) and Tinto (1975, 1993, 1998) proposed the individual characteristics of the student and the degree to which she

or he engage academically and socially within the college environment are factors relevant to their academic success. Additionally, Bean (1985) and Tinto (1975, 1998) suggested students must acclimate to the campus environment and forge new relationships to gain a sense of community to experience institutional fit. In respect, Bean (1985) explained individuals who are more attached to outside influencers tend to experience problems with institutional socialization processes associated with institutional fit. Also, Tinto (1998) indicated external communities may have a direct or indirect impact on students' departure decision. Instead of a refutation of claims associated with traditional models (Bean, 1985; Tinto, 1998) the assumption is those models suggest a normative perspective on individuals' college experiences and therefore define students as a monolithic campus population. Most relevant, the models highlight the importance of goals and intentions for a graduation outcome to positively impact an individual's departure decision. Essential to each models' features are environmental factors and interactions within institutional systems to influence or impact students' college experiences.

As highlighted in this section and other parts of this chapter, the impact and influence of interactions within institutional academic and social systems factor greatly into a student's decision to persist to graduation (Bean, 1985; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Kuh & Love, 2000; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Tierney, 1999; Tinto, 1975, 1998). Furthermore, participation in college athletics adds another level of commitment which may stifle or enhance Black women student-athletes' ability to negotiate interactions within an institution's academic and social systems to achieve academic success (Bowers

& Martin, 1999; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Cooper et al., 2016; Sellers et al., 1997).

Therefore, the presumption is a framework with an undergirding of CRF perspective is

necessary to explore Black women student-athletes' experiences, using an anti-deficit

lens. Few (2007) recognized that CRF departs from blanket essentialization for all

minorities and instead acknowledges the multiple locations, identities, and experiences of

all women. In agreement, Kusbner and Morrow (2003) stated "a critical feminist

perspective is proposed as a view that encompasses a focus on gender as well as other

sources of social and cultural inequity and an emphasis on transformative potential" (p.

31). Therefore, the suggestion is to use a cultural-based framework that illuminates Black

women student-athletes' individual attributes of CCW as factors to explain how they

thrive in college, despite their academic preparedness and amidst experiences that pose

barriers to their persistence. Respectfully, the asset-based framework for this project

considers the past and contemporary histories of Black women college athletes and non-

athletes at PWIs and recognizes how the group activates attributes of CCW to persist to

graduation. The next section provides an overview of CCW as the theoretical framework

and concludes with the asset-based framework that guides the partnered study.

Community Cultural Wealth

CCW is the theoretical and analytical framework used to explore and interpret

how former Black women basketball players described their persistence experiences at

PWIs. The pinning of CCW in this respect deviates from its original intent to center the

experiences of Latinx students and expands its use to explore the communal knowledge

of former student-athletes whose persistence experiences may have been shaped by

multiple systems of oppression. In alignment, Cooper et al. (2016), Harry (2023), and

Museus and Quaye (2009) recognized CCW to center communal knowledge and

experiential knowledge as factors that influence minority students' persistence at PWIs.

Like Yosso (2005), those scholars used CRT as a framework to critique Bordieuan claims

that cultural capital was privileged or accessible to students from elite and middle-class

families (Bourdieu, 1986). Specifically, Bourdieu (1986) supposed education to function

as a reproduction of status groups and described capital as a transferable asset that creates

opportunities for social mobility. Yosso (2005) explained Bourdieu's thoughts were

likely the basis for the reproduction of a hierarchical society and ableist ideologies that

substantiate why students of color have academic and social outcomes that are

significantly lower than White students. She also argued that CCW disrupts Bourdieu's

claims that based on their background, race, and societal location, students of color enter

educational settings as "disadvantaged," "at risk," or lacking required academic

competencies (Yosso, 2005). Also, Banks (2009), Tierney (1999) and Yosso (2005)

acknowledged how Black students' cultural capital or communal knowledge establishes

attributes of agency or CCW that enable them to persist at PWIs. Harry (2023) also

identified CCW as a strength that Black student-athletes bring to college and recognized

systematic and structural barriers in higher education that promote student-athletes'

deployment of CCW. Similarly, Cooper et al. (2016) acknowledged CCW in the

experiences of Black women student-athletes' academic success outcomes.

CCW challenges deficit narratives about the skills Black students bring to

education environments and instead offers an anti-deficit perspective that supports

cultural attributes which enable students of color to overcome barriers to their academic success (Yosso, 2005). CCW contends students of color possess six forms of cultural capital—aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital—that add value to the experiential knowledge they bring to educational and social settings (Yosso, 2005). Supportively, scholars previously used CCW to examine resources and challenges that affect college students' graduation rates and to explain how CCW can be employed to overcome racism (Acevedo & Solorzano, 2023; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017). For instance, Kouyoumdjian et al. (2017) utilized CCW to identify sources of support and barriers to the educational success of first- and second- generation Latinx college students. Also, Acevedo and Solorzano (2023) proposed CCW as a "protective strategy when encountering racism" in college (p. 1471). Furthermore, the latter suggested there are developmental and deployment-based aspects of CCW which allow students to respond to invalidating experiences in educational settings. In concert, the current examples and those previously shared acknowledge that conditions at postsecondary institutions warrant the engagement of CCW by students of color to achieve academic success at PWIs.

Additionally, CCW operationalizes CRT to examine and challenge the way race and racism impact social structures and education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Yosso, 2005). Previously, Ladson-Billings (1998) credentialed CRT as an "important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction of oppressive structure and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power" (p. 9). In the partnered project, the supposition is CRF recognizes how CCW can be applied

to examine how Black women student-athletes activate cultural capital to persist at PWIs. CRF provides a perspective to examine the lived experiences of Black women student-athletes as members of marginalized groups within and outside their dual-axis identity and sports (Carter-Francique et al., 2017; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Cooper et al., 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Simien et al., 2019). Likewise, the research associated with this review subscribes to the belief that voice or historical experiential knowledge, intersectionality, and anti-essentialism are the tenets of CRT that are most applicable to this study (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Therefore, by focusing on these tenets, I intend to illuminate the voices of former Black women student-athletes in the project. Furthermore, with its CRF underpinning CCW disrupts Bourdieu's (1986) claims that an individual's acquisition and accumulation of cultural capital is bound by biological limitations and the positioning of individuals within society (i.e., classism). Instead, it recognizes how, despite the multiple systems of oppression that halted and influenced the initial postsecondary experiences of Black women students as college student-athletes and non-athletes, those students continued to persist to graduation. Furthermore, CCW with its CRF foundation recognizes that by nature of an Afrocentric worldview (Collins, 1990, 2000), Black women student-athletes acquire communal knowledge and CCW from their home communities, which they deploy to persist to graduation despite the culture and climate at PWIs. Most importantly, CRF in concert with CCW, recognizes the challenges former Black women college students (athletes and non-athletes) overcame to achieve their graduation outcomes at PWIs and gives voice to their experiences.

To further explain how CCW guides this research inquiry and the data analysis process, Figure 1 shows the asset-based persistence framework used to centralize CCW in this study. The framework provides a visual depiction to show Black women student-athletes' development and deployment of CCW to persist to gradation at PWIs.

Figure 1

Asset-Based Persistence Framework for Black Women Student-Athletes
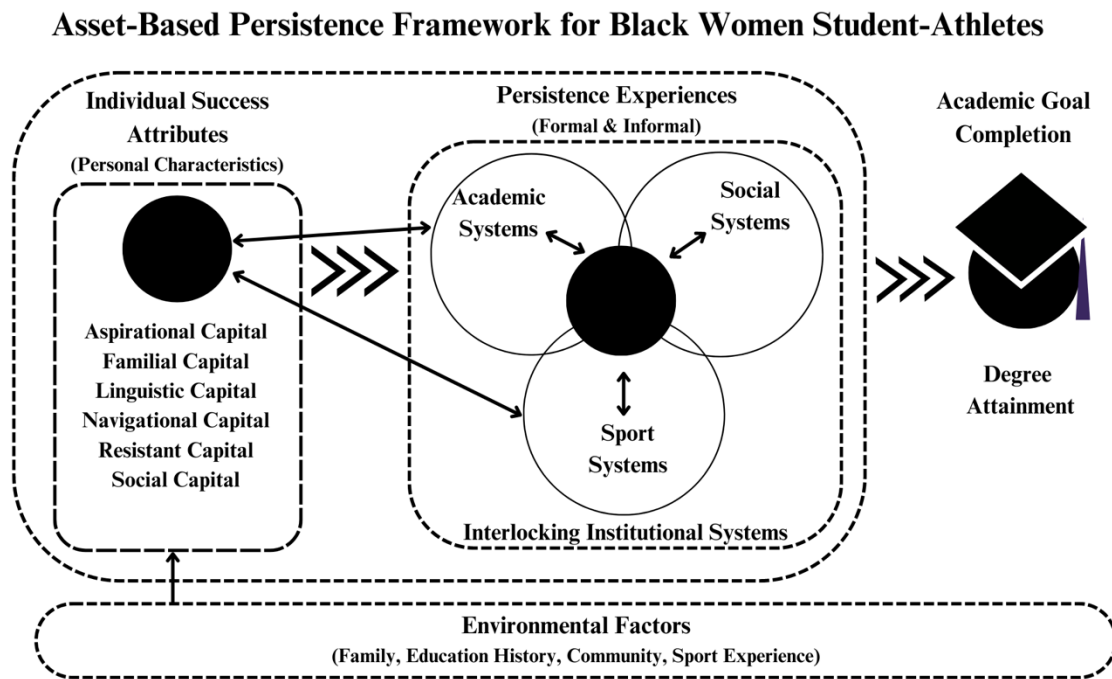
Note. This figure depicts the development and engagement of CCW to influence persistence.

The figure also illuminates four primary factors related to the graduation success of the Black women athletes and shows the correlation of those attributes to traditional models proposed by Bean (1985) and Tinto (1998). In respect, environmental factors, academic systems, and social systems are the attributes of traditional models also identified as key aspects of the asset-based framework in Figure 1. Environmental factors (e.g., family, education history, community, sport experiences) are positioned at the base of the framework and show factors relevant to Black women student-athletes' cultural capital

development in their home communities. With respect to the base, environmental factors are also recognized to continuously influence Black women athletes' development and engagement of success attributes throughout college. Positioned above the environmental factors are the six individual success attributes, or cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), Black women student-athletes bring to college and engage within institutional systems to persist to graduation. The figure then illustrates how Black women student-athletes' experiences are situated within institutional social, academic, and sport systems that compete for their time and attention. Important to the partnered study and in slight deviation from Bean (1985) and Tinto (1998), Figure 1 establishes institutional academic, sport, and social systems as interlocking systems to show the dynamic process of interactions which may require Black women student-athletes' engagement of CCW to graduate from college. Additionally, the triple arrows represent Black women athletes' CCW engagement to transition to, persist, and graduate from college. Lastly, Figure 1 shows academic goal completion as the result of Black women athletes' successful engagements of CCW within the three institutional systems.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of key literature to examine factors related to the persistence experiences of former Black women basketball players who attended PWIs and introduced the asset-based framework that guides the partnered study. The literature focused on the following areas related to their persistence: (a) a historical context of Black women's experiences and sport participation at PWIs; (b) legislation aimed at increasing sport participation for Black women student-athletes at PWIs; (c)

influences on the higher education experiences of contemporary Black women athletes and non-athletes; (d) contextual factors related to DII athletics; (e) persistence models; and (f) critical perspectives that support the use of CCW (Yosso, 2005) as an asset-based framework for this study. The next chapter focuses on the research design for this project.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter three describes the research design for this study, which encompasses the following research question: How did former Division II Black women basketball players engage community cultural wealth to persist to graduation at predominantly White institutions? The chapter also includes my extensive positionality statement; an explanation of the research paradigm that informs the project; and a description of the qualitative approach and analytical framework of CCW used to analyze and synthesize the findings. I used CRF to centralize intersectionality, cultural constructs, and social factors that shaped the persistence experiences of former Black women basketball players who graduated from their respective higher education institutions. I proposed that CCW offers an anti-deficit analysis, while descriptive-interpretive qualitative research (DI-QR) provides a multidimensional process for interpreting and analyzing the verbalized information gathered from participants. Therefore, in combination with CCW as an analytical framework, I employed DI-QR to analyze the linguistic data collected for the study.

Descriptive in nature, the question that guides this project is framed as a "discovery oriented" question. According to Elliot and Timulak (2021), discovery-based questions are those that "seek to uncover the range and varieties of a particular phenomenon (kind of experience or observable action), including its source and how it unfolds over time" (p. 16). Additionally, these types of open-ended questions provide "rich insight into human behavior" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 106) and uncover insider

views on a phenomenon. Consequently, the study participants' responses to the interview protocol resulted in answers to the overarching research question and illuminated the collective and individual persistence factors that influenced their graduation outcomes.

Researcher's Positionality Statement

In chapter two, I provided an overview of how scholars previously used Bourdieu's (1986) forms of capital and Tinto's departure model (Tinto, 1975, 1993) to describe factors related to students' access, success, and persistence in higher education. Also, I illuminated how CCW (Yosso, 2005) challenges normative views that fail to consider how ideological, structural, and cultural inequities likely impact the decision of Black women students, both athletes and non-athletes, to persist at PWIs. Additionally, I explored the sociohistorical norms that shaped the postsecondary education opportunities and experiences of Black girls and women over time (López & Burciaga, 2014; U.S. Courts, n.d., USDE, n.d.). Though lengthy, the subsequent sections of my positionality statement show an alignment with these perspectives and explore how environmental factors (e.g., background, family, education), college experiences (e.g., social and academic interactions), and individual attributes (e.g., intent, goals, commitments, skills, talents, CCW, will) influenced my persistence at a PWI with Division I membership. In regards, Tinto (1975) stated,

> Of those characteristics of individuals shown to be related to the dropout, the more important pertain to the characteristics of his family, the characteristics of the individual himself, his educational experiences prior to college entry, and his expectations concerning future educational attainments. (p. 99)

Next, I situate my experiences in the literature review for chapter two as a way to support the claims associated with this study.

Scholars previously offered deficit perspectives on how an individual's family background and social location influenced her/his education outcomes. For example, Bourdieu (1986) introduced cultural capital as a form of developmental resources, material goods, and knowledge acquisition that enabled individuals to gain access to scholastic resources and education opportunities. Likewise, Bourdieu indicated that high academic achievement and college access are privileged to individuals based on their social class and transferable economic-based cultural and social capital. Rather than advance assumptions about college access, Tinto (1975) used a departure model to explain how an individual's family background, skills and abilities, and prior schooling influence their decision to leave college (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Moreover, the departure model provides a framework to understand how students' individual attributes influence their interactions with individual and collective agents within the institution and factor into their decision to depart from college (Tinto, 1993). My research position offers an in-depth counternarrative to claims that link economic and cultural capital to college access and further normative views of factors that influence students' persistence in higher education. In essence, my story presents an asset-based perspective on communal knowledge or cultural capital activated by Black women students to persist at PWIs.

Thereby, I approach this research as a Black woman and former high school scholar-athlete whose individual attributes were shaped within a small, rural, predominantly Black South Carolinian community. After the unsuccessful marriage of

my *teenage parents*, I grew up in the home of my maternal grandparents where I had limited access to social networking opportunities outside my community. Although my grandparents owned our home and other properties throughout the county, their income level classified us as a low-income household. I grew up without financial resources to enhance my academic and social development, but I graduated from McCormick High School with the second highest overall grade point average (GPA). Moreover, without any concept of attendance costs or college affordability, in 1987, I became the first member of my immediate family to enroll in a postsecondary institution.

I matriculated to Clemson University with a student population of approximately 14,000 students (~ 4.61% Black) after attending a high school with fewer than 500 students (over 95% Black). Despite numerous challenges (i.e., financial, academic, social, psychological, emotional, cultural), I persisted to graduation in 1991 and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education. Subsequently, I earned Master of Education (Elementary Education), Master of Science (Athletic Leadership), and Education Specialist (Educational Leadership) degrees and enjoyed a rewarding career in education. To further disrupt normative claims of cultural capital, in the next sections I share how my development of cultural capital was shaped by my pre-collegiate experiences and environmental factors.

Family Background

In contrast to Bourdieu's (1986) views on cultural and social capital, my social class and lack of economic-based capital neither limited my access to college nor defined my level of academic achievement and success. Relative to the departure model (Tinto,

1975, 1998), the quality relationship I experienced with my family and their expectations for my college outcome significantly influenced my persistence at Clemson University. However, my family lacked financial resources and established patterns of intergenerational mobility associated with college persistence. My family background includes members with incomplete primary or secondary education histories and women returning to earn their high school diploma or GED as older adults. For example, my mother, grandfather, and both of my grandmothers dropped out of school at either the primary or secondary level. While my mother experienced an incomplete secondary education, my maternal grandmother [Grandma Naomi] earned her high school diploma at age 44, and my paternal grandmother [Ma Ruth] earned her GED when she was 54 years old. My maternal grandfather [Grandaddy James] had a fourth-grade education; however, he was a U.S. Army veteran who owned his own construction company. My father received his diploma after being drafted by the U.S. Army during his senior year of high school. With consideration given to their education histories and that of their children, my parents and grandparents influenced my aspiration to graduate from college.

Also, wherein my family lacked traditional normative cultural capital, they were formative in my development of communal knowledge and cultural capital attributes to succeed in life and to resist challenges or barriers to my success. More specifically, my family provided me with the skills, knowledge, abilities, and social connections to survive and resist the forms of oppression I experienced throughout my lifetime. Relevant to my college persistence experiences, Grandma Naomi and Ma Ruth trained me to cook and prepare balanced meals, clean house, wash clothes, sew, and bake. Grandma Naomi

and Granddaddy James made sure my maternal cousins and I actively engaged in church activities, developed a relationship with the Lord (faith, prayer), and learned to speak, sing, and act before public audiences.

My grandparents also fostered my development as a self-confident, driven individual who believed "with God I could do anything." Furthermore, they ingrained in me the belief that our community and its members were an extension of our family and "it takes a whole village to raise a child." Therefore, my church family, neighbors, parents, and overall community played an important role in making sure I maintained the core values (e.g., honesty, integrity, faith, trust, love, compassion) taught by my grandparents, and they were essential members of my social network.

Other deposits into my communal knowledge and cultural capital attributes included the leadership development my cousins and I gained through engagement in community service activities and by interacting with individuals outside our home. To prepare us for encounters with individuals from diverse backgrounds we were taught "you should treat others the way you want to be treated – regardless of their skin color and how they treat you." The *golden rule* standard was expected when we attended service-oriented summer camps like 4-H Camp and Soil and Water Conservation Camp or participated in the 4-H Club and Girl Scouts as well as when I attended the Clemson Career Workshop with two of my high school classmates. Cordial behavior was also expected when we traveled to church conventions with Grandma Naomi, went to amusement parks (e.g., Six Flags, Carowinds) with my uncles, and spent summers traveling to Washington, DC with my mom. Each of these experiences were relevant to

my understanding of how to navigate situations outside my small home community and without the direct oversight of my grandparents–a skill that became essential to my college persistence.

Pre-College Education Experiences and Sport Development

The historical context of oppressive systems within my native community established the basis for determining how structural, cultural, and ideological inequities shaped my academic and sport development. McCormick County resides in the westernmost part of South Carolina. Despite successes, the district's students continue to demonstrate low performance on normative or state assessments overall (SDE, n.d.). I contend the status of the school's current education system is a residual of the previously low emphasis on deliberate actions to educate Black children within the community. As an example, despite federal mandates to enact deliberate efforts to desegregate schools between 1954-55 (López & Burciaga, 2014; U.S. Courts, n.d.), McCormick County School District delayed compliance until 1970 (Jenks, 1994).

To offer perspective on the post-integration condition of the school system, the district was deemed impaired by the time I graduated from McCormick High School in 1987. Impaired school districts were those where the students demonstrated continuous patterns of low performance on national (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills [CTBS], Scholastic Aptitude Test [SAT]) and state (Basic Skills Assessment Program [BSAP]) normative assessments. Although I excelled academically in elementary through high school, graduated at the top of my high school class, and was among the top Black South Carolina high school students selected to participate in the Clemson Career Workshop, I

84

was no exception to students who exhibited low performance on normative assessments. As a result of my constant struggles with anxiety during these tests, my assessment results inversely represented my school performance and scholastic aptitude.

Also, like their delayed response to comply with the desegregation laws, McCormick enacted no immediate actions to the development of women or girl scholar-athletes after the passage of Title IX Education Amendments of 1972 (USDE, 2021). Although organized recreation activities (football, baseball) existed for boys in our community, there were no organized community sports for girls during the 1970s to early 1980s. Consequently, I received informal sport training in the yards of my grandparents or neighbors, alongside my cousins and other boys and girls in my neighborhood.

Eventually my aunts (Aunt Ethel, Aunt Bubba) taught me the skills needed to become successful at playing slow-pitch softball and basketball—with the latter being where I found my passion. Aunt Bubba's summer drills on how to dribble and shoot a basketball were significant to my selection on the middle and high school basketball teams and, eventually, to my gaining a sense of belonging in college. I played basketball for 2 years on the middle school team and 3 years prior to my senior year in high school. As a result, my option to play in college was limited to the possibility of trying out as a walk-on. I decided against the idea. In concert, my pre-collegiate experiences prepared me with the communal knowledge and sense of agency to enact resistance to societal norms that placed barriers to my success due to structural, cultural, and ideological inequities (i.e., racism, sexism, classism). More specifically my experiential knowledge allowed me to gain cultural capital attributes such as social, navigational, aspirational,

resistant, and familial capital that were paramount to my graduation outcome at Clemson University.

Persistence Experiences

Tinto (1987, 1993) indicated that the correlation between "social fit" or a "sense of belonging" and a student's decision to persist in college depends heavily on the individual attributes of the student. He also suggested short term fluctuations in financial support and economic shifts may cause an individual to leave an institution or to seek other sources of income to persist in higher education. Albeit I do not refute claims made by Tinto (1987, 1993), I illuminate my necessity to deploy attributes of CCW [hereafter also referred to as agency] to negotiate interactions within Clemson University's social and academic systems. Furthermore, I highlight the need to do so in the absence of individual agents (e.g., mentors, faculty of color, culturally responsive faculty, academic peers) and collective agents (resources and programs specifically for Black women first-generation students) at Clemson University.

Limited Financial Resources

As a first-generation college student, I entered Clemson University with no direction from my family or relevant guidance from secondary school personnel. To cover the cost of college, I received need-based grants, Pell grants, college work study, and student loans—despite the likelihood that I could have qualified to transfer funds from my grandfather's or father's GI Bill. *No one presented the GI Bill as an option to fund college.* As a result of my family's financial situation, I arrived on campus with ten tops, five bottoms, one pair of shoes, one pair of boots, and limited funds. Despite

sometimes feeling hurt over my financial situation, I never let anyone on campus or at home know about my economic challenges. Instead, I drew from my experiences of accompanying Granddaddy James during his financial transactions and watching Grandma Naomi and Ma Ruth "cut corners" or manage household spending. Accordingly, I opted not to include a meal plan as an optional tuition fee and cooked my meals instead. The exclusion of the meal plan was a semester cost savings of over $1,500.00 my family could not afford to pay, and that my financial aid package did not cover. Through the financial aid office, I also applied for $300 emergency loans to cover my book costs. I used tuition refunds, and money I earned from work study and my two other jobs to repay the emergency loans. Additionally, I supplemented my income by making garment repairs and sewing formal gowns and pageant dresses for my friends. Although my family lacked financial resources, they provided me with the means to enact forms of CCW to support my goal of a college degree. With the activation of aspirational capital as the foundation for my persistence, I used my talents to:

- generate income (familial, resistant, navigational, social capital)
- network within institutional systems (familial, social, navigational, capital); and
- enact a financial stability plan (navigational, resistant, familial, and social capital) to remain in college.

Academic Systems

As I previously indicated, in my earliest existence on campus, I was among 341 Black women (2.5% of the total student population) included within 640 Black students

(almost 5% of the student population) and the total population of 13,865 students on campus (Clemson, 2010). Equal to the disproportionately underrepresented Black students on campus were the very few faculty of color and students of color in the classes I encountered in the 4.5 years I was there, which includes my pre-service teacher program.

To offer perspective, over the span of time at Clemson University, I enrolled in over 50 courses and encountered two faculty of color across four academic disciplines (engineering, business, industrial education, and early childhood education)–with only one in the School of Education. In my education courses, the racial demographics of my classes included myself and occasionally one other Black woman student among White women students. While I cannot recall instances of overt racism, I do recall feeling alienated and isolated from my peers and others in my degree program.

As an example, although I was sometimes assigned to cooperative groups for class projects, I was never selected by my peers to join their groups. As a result, I often completed group assignments as individual projects. Except for my senior year, my peers rarely offered to allow me to ride with them during *required* clinical field placements or they declined my request to accompany them. In those instances, I borrowed my friends' cars to complete my required *off-campus* practicum experiences. In accordance with the theoretical and analytical framework for this study, I simultaneously enacted familial, social, and navigational capital to meet the academic requirements for my courses.

In addition to integration issues with my academic peers, I viewed some faculty interactions as problematic. For instance, during the *only* one-on-one session I attended as

an undergraduate, I was made to feel inferior and sensed the faculty member's tension and frustration with me not relating to his method of knowledge transfer. Consequently, I never asked for faculty assistance again, refused to ask questions in class, and spent the remainder of my undergraduate years navigating my own path to degree completion. Similar to the previous example, my subsequent actions warranted my need to employ navigational, social, aspirational, and resistant capital to access resources to support my academic goals.

In another occurrence, I faced inequitable treatment at the conclusion of my final clinical field experiences. I successfully completed all assignments at the highest level, turned in all projects on time, met attendance requirements, and received excellent ratings on each of my performance assessments. However, during my final evaluation conference my campus supervisor stated, "We [campus supervisor and cooperative teacher] decided that we are going to give you a 'C' because you did not ask us questions." The statement still shocks me and the "C," *which I did not earn but was given*, had a tremendous impact on the GPA and the self-efficacy I worked hard to rebuild after a very tough freshman year. Despite the perceived negative assessment of my performance, this course marked the culmination of my undergraduate persistence experiences and demonstrated my fortitude in persisting through challenging situations with my spiritual beliefs, prayers, and employment of agency to complete degree requirements at a PWI.

Social Systems

The social aspects of my college experience included being able to develop

relationships outside of the School of Education—where my peer and faculty interactions were less relevant to my persistence. My childhood experiences at camps, workshops, and time outside of my home community factored greatly in my ability to forge the types of relationships that created my sense of belonging at Clemson. I found friendships among members of traditionally Black sororities and fraternities on campus, in the gospel choir, within friendship networks/sister circles, and while playing sports. As a result, my friends became extended family members with whom I am still acquainted.

Most relevant to my persistence were the relationships I developed through sport participation, and later with other Black women students who shared my spiritual, social, and aspirational beliefs. In relation to the previous, because of my skillset, I was recruited by my lab partner/tutor to play co-ed basketball and softball. Likewise, members of the collegiate men's teams (football, basketball) asked me to play pick-up basketball games with them when our schedules permitted. Relevant to my persistence, the guys made me a part of their family (sister-friend); invited me and my roommate to watch the Thursday night line-up (*The Cosby Show*, *A Different World*) with them; and often called or stopped by our room to make sure my roommate and I were okay.

Lastly, I established a sense of belonging at a local sister church near Clemson's campus. My attendance at church services was important to my continuous development of social and spiritual capital to overcome challenges in college. Also, my church attendance made me feel less homesick, and the church members embraced me as family. In concert, the latter and previous interactions with individuals outside my program, greatly influenced my sense of belonging in college. Relevant to my academic

development, the interactions within those social networks enabled me to spend more time on or near campus instead of going home – thereby increasing my study time and significantly improving my GPA after my freshman year. Interactions within these social systems also enabled me to employ and replenish attributes of navigational, social, and resistant capital associated with my persistence.

Positionality Reflection

Without my degree aspirations, family support, aptitude to navigate through my financial challenges, and ability to forge relationships, my experiences within the academic systems at Clemson University would have discouraged me from persisting to graduation. My experiences demonstrated that college claims of inclusivity are thwarted when Black women students feel isolated and alienated in classrooms where they are seemingly excluded from learning experiences, and faculty are ill-equipped to assess and meet their needs. Consequently, I supposed former Black women basketball players activated agency or personal attributes of cultural capital to persist at predominantly White institutions. Through our conversations, I sought to learn more about the extent to which study participants felt responsible for enacting agency to navigate institutional systems (e.g., academic, social, sport) to persist to graduation and support their social, emotional, financial, and mental health needs. More specifically, I engaged in dialogue with study participants to illuminate how they deployed CCW to persist at their respective Division II institutions amidst coping with the added responsibilities and challenges associated with their dualistic roles as students and athletes.

I further the latter thought in my discussion of the research paradigm, analytical framework, and methodology that guided this study.

Research Paradigm

Glesne (2016) stated, "Part of your duty as a researcher is to figure out what philosophical and theoretical perspectives inform the kind of work you choose to do" (p. 5). Glesne added it is important for the researcher to establish a research paradigm that encompasses the epistemological and ontological stances that will be employed during the investigation of knowledge. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), paradigms are "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (p. 105). Lochmiller and Lester (2017) furthered the understanding of paradigm with the following definition:

> A research paradigm can be thought of as a way of thinking about and making
> sense of the world. This way of thinking is centered around a shared set of
> assumptions about how the world works and how we, as practitioner-scholars, can
> go about studying the world. (p. 11)

Creswell and Clark (2018) cited a similar meaning but selected to use the term *worldview* instead of paradigm to define shared beliefs of researchers. Likewise, Smith and Caddick (2012) explained that the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions shape and inform their research process. Collectively, these thoughts informed my decision to position the methodology within a critical theory framework or a critical paradigm. In addition to shaping my beliefs about the study, a critical theory paradigm (i.e., CRF)

enabled me to relate to and understand the viewpoints shared by participants.

Situated within a critical theory paradigm, I positioned the methodology for this study to reside in an epistemological camp that points to social inequalities (Padgett, 2012) and supports the assumption that the construction of an individual's reality is based on their social and cultural positions (Creswell & Clark, 2018). In her family studies research, Few (2007) postulated that the sociohistorical underpinning of Black feminism and CRF provide a lens for examining the experiences of Black women and their families. Similarly, Glesne (2016) explained how critical theory research seeks to critique and transform traditionally and structurally oppressive conditions. Likewise, I adopted the perspective that by lending this critical lens [CRF] to my analyses, I gave the five Black women participants

> an authoritative voice about their experiences rather than imposed a normative gaze (e.g., Western, White, male, middle-class lens is defined as normal and the standard to compare others; West, 1982) or positivist presumption (e.g., essentialized, uninterrogated notions to identity or difference). (Few, 2007, p. 453)

More specifically, with a critical theory research paradigm, I gained structural and historical insights to transform perceptions related to the academic persistence and graduation success of former Black women student-athletes who played a Division II sport.

Still, it was paramount to recognize how individual attributes, historical context, and social factors influenced how these former Black women basketball players persisted

to graduation while playing a DII sport. The transformative paradigm of critical theory, with its philosophical assumptions (Coakley, 2017; Creswell & Clark, 2018; Glesne, 2016; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Padgett, 2012; Young & Collin, 2004) created opportunities for in-depth explorations of experiences in this project. Kelly (2006) and Padgett (2012) claimed critical theory challenges distorted knowledge claims and inequalities based on factors such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. In sports, the critical theory approach recognizes that "people are positioned differently in social worlds, and they are affected differently by the meaning, purpose, and organization of mainstream sports" (Coakley, 2017, p. 44). This study sought to explore notions of anti-essentialism and how at the intersections of racism, sexism, and classism, the research participants played a collegiate sport and persevered in their degree pursuit at a PWI.

Ontology

In research, Glesne (2016) defined ontology as a word that "is often used to refer to beliefs regarding reality or what kinds of things make up the world" (p. 5). Similarly, Creswell and Clark (2018) wrote, "Ontology refers to the nature of reality (and what is real) that researchers assume when they conduct their inquiries" (p. 37). Central to my perspective for this project is Guba and Lincoln's (1994) association of historical realism ontology with critical theory paradigm and definition of the concept as realities that over time are shaped by social, cultural, political, economic, gender, and ethnic values. Other scholars associated the role of critical theorists with historical realism ontology and further acknowledged that multiple forms of reality of marginalized groups are shaped by ideological, structural, and cultural beliefs and practices embedded in societal norms

(Creswell & Clark, 2018; Glesne, 2016; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Padgett 2012). Likewise, along with a critical theory paradigm, my ontological beliefs embody the idea that reality is shaped by social, historical, and cultural contexts.

As a Black woman with relatable experiences to those illuminated by participants, I contended that the combination of a critical theory paradigm and historical realism ontology framed this project and shaped the participants' persistence narratives. Furthermore, my ontological stance guided processes to unearth stories about the experiences of former DII Black women basketball players who persisted to graduation at PWIs. Like ideas shared in later work of Lincoln and Guba (2000), I sought to "locate the foundations of truth in specific historical, economic, racial, and social infrastructures of oppression, injustice, and marginalization" (p. 177) conveyed by participants. Specifically, I used a DI-QR process to illuminate attributes of CCW employed by former DII Black women student-athletes who earned their degrees from PWIs while playing basketball.

In the next sections, I expound on my epistemological standpoint and why a Black Feminist perspective (BFE) helped me to center the experiences of former Black women basketball players who participated in the project.

Black Feminist Epistemology

Hofer (2002) explained epistemology or epistemological beliefs are the "encounters with new information and in our most sophisticated pursuits of knowledge, we are influenced by the beliefs we hold about knowledge and knowing" (p. 3). Also, Ladson-Billings (2003) suggested the application of CRT as a lens to examine

epistemological perspectives on inequity and social justice issues in education. Additionally, Collins (2000) determined that epistemology illuminates ways that power dynamics shape and rationalize which individuals possess credibility. Furthermore, Few (2007) explained, "to study an individuals' development, a researcher must look not only at the individual [i.e., microsystem] and her immediate environment [i.e., mesosystem] but also at the interaction of the larger cultural environment [i.e., macrosystem]" (p. 460). In concert, these perspectives offer ideas on how social interactions and varying levels of societal influence (i.e., micro-, meso-, macro-) shaped my epistemologies or beliefs about truth and knowledge. In addition, they provided a basis for my collection and analysis of information gained from participants in this study.

As previously stated, a critical theory paradigm guided this study. Also, tenets and constructs of critical race theory that intersect with themes of black feminist thoughts were foundational to the epistemology and theoretical framework that supported the study. From my perspective, elements of black feminist thoughts (e.g., intersectionality; race-gender experiences; Afrocentric world views; black feminist themes, etc.) informed my understanding of data provided by participants and the interpretive analysis process I used to explain it. Likewise, I supposed that black feminist thoughts shaped the descriptions that former Black women basketball players attributed to the social, historical, and cultural factors that influenced their persistence experiences. Therefore, I employed a data analysis process that extracted evidence to demonstrate participants' activation of CCW to aid in their degree pursuit at PWIs. My perspective on the relationship between black feminist epistemology (BFE) and my beliefs about how it

shaped the participants' narratives is discussed next.

In this study, BFE provided a foundation for developing an interpretive framework to examine the socio-cultural attributes that influenced the academic success of former Black women basketball players at PWIs. The participants' degree attainment from PWIs suggested anti-deficit claims regarding the types of social and cultural capital that promote the academic success of Black women students. Moreover, BFE bridged my experiences with those of the participants in this study. The epistemology also established a basis for our co-construction of knowledge and my interpretation of how events and multiple levels of agency (i.e., self, individual, and collective) influenced the participants' persistence.

BFE centers the voice and visibility of Black women, as members of a racially and gendered subordinate group whose acts of resistance challenge dominant group claims that they are incapable of interpreting their own oppression and communicating their own viewpoints (Collins, 1989, 2000). Black feminist standpoint further challenges the dominant narratives that place Black women in the *margins of* or as *outsiders within* the context of their own experiences (Bruening et al., 2005; Collins, 1989; Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Additionally, BFE is centered within black feminist thoughts that assert Black women are empowered and capable of defining and interpreting their own realities based on their lived experiences (Bruening et al., 2005; Collins, 2000; Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Collins (1986, 1989) and Howard-Hamilton (2003) contended BFE centers the themes of black feminist thoughts by (a) providing counternarratives for the stories of Black women told by others; (b) illuminating the unique experiences of Black women

97

while noting comparisons of their experiences; and (c) acknowledging the commonalities that exist among Black women while simultaneously recognizing the intersectionality that shapes their thoughts and interpretation of life events.

BFE is situated within an Afrocentric worldview based on four dimensions: (a) lived experience as a criterion of meaning, (b) the use of dialogue in the assessing knowledge claims, (c) the ethic of caring, and (d) the ethic of personal accountability (Collins, 1989, 2000). Relevant to "lived experience as a criterion of meaning," Collins recognized how wisdom creates a greater sense of knowing that enables Black women to handle or enact resistance to survive experiences of race, gender, and class subordination. Within the perspectives of "the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims" and "the ethic of caring," Collins centralized ideas of how interactions within community empower Black women to access from and with members of their social network, while they simultaneously gain a sense of self and the respect of others. Regarding "the ethic of personal accountability," Collins (2000) emphasized the importance of Black women holding themselves accountable for how their character, values, and ethics support their knowledge claims and establish their credibility.

In reference to sports, Carter-Francique (2014) acknowledged "a black feminist standpoint epistemology centers the experiences of Black women while considering how the nature of their intersectionality (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation) impacts their experiences" (p. 36). In the explanation of how the four dimensions of BFE—also referred to as Afrocentric feminist epistemology—apply to Black female student-athletes, Carter-Francique (2014) explained:

Each of these dimensions addresses aspects of the black female experience, which

allow them to endure, thrive, and overcome in their multi-oppressive reality.

Thus, using personal stories and narratives to validate knowledge: applying

religious based principles for guidance and transfer of wisdom; and, establishing

accountability for the dissemination of information each aid in socialization.

Hence, Afrocentric feminist epistemology encourages ethical behavior and values,

while simultaneously challenging dominant ideologies. (p. 49)

Afrocentric feminist epistemology embraces the idea that "Black societies reflect

elements of a core value system that existed prior to and independently of racial

oppression" (Collins, 1989, p. 755). According to Carter-Francique (2014), research on

Black women student-athletes who anchor their experiences in Afrocentric feminist

epistemology provide information on how they activate agency in their persistence efforts

and offer implications for institutional support. Similarly, the goal of this study was to

gain input from former Black women student-athletes to inform institutional practices.

In the next sections, I describe the methodology and methods used to explore how

the former Division II Black women basketball players in this study engaged CCW to

persist at PWIs.

Methodology

I selected DI-QR, or generic descriptive-interpretive qualitative research (GD-

IQR), as the methodology to guide this study. DI-QR is based on the premise that there

are many "brand names" of qualitative research (e.g., grounded theory, empirical

phenomenology, hermeneutic-interpretive, interpretative phenomenological analysis,

thematic analysis, etc.), and they employ common strategies and procedures to interpret data (Elliott & Timulak, 2005; 2021; Timulak & Elliott, 2019). Also, processes associated with these generic approaches include a variance of describing, summarizing, and categorizing data with an interpretive lens.

In their description of processes associated with DI-QR, Elliot and Timulak (2021) identified the following elements that were also relevant to this project:

- posing open ended, exploratory questions, which then guide the study and begin to define domains of investigation;

- collecting open-ended (nonnumerical) verbally reported experiences to answer these research questions;

- committing to the careful, systematic analysis of all relevant reports and observations;

- coming to a descriptive-interpretive understanding of experiences by carefully representing their meaning;

- organizing these understandings into clusters of similar experiences (categories, themes, codes, etc.);

- being critically aware of and disclosing the researcher's interests (domains of investigation), prior expectations, and organizing conceptual framework (theory) as these have helped understand and organize experiences and categories; and

- integrating categories into some kind of story or model. (p. 5)

Also, the researchers found that regardless of the "brand name," DI-QR or GDI-QR approaches maintain standard processes of grouping parallel text into chunks and then

translating textual factors to convey meaning. I contend that these types of continuous

analysis procedures establish embedded processes to assess the research for rigor and

trustworthiness. Though discussed towards the end of this chapter, in this study,

trustworthiness is viewed as a derivative of validity and defined as "the degree to which

your data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings are presented in a thorough

and verifiable manner" (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017, p. 180). Schwandt et al. (2007)

supposed rigor to be synonymous with trustworthiness and associated with the

quantitative research camp that support positivist standard criteria. In the methods

section, I explain the measures I took to confirm the credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability of participants' data to show evidence of rigor and

trustworthiness in this study (Creswell & Clark; 2018; Guba, 1981; and Padgett, 2012.

Methods

Participant Selection

Research on qualitative methods proposes that researchers aim for depth rather

than breadth of information during the data collection process; therefore, participant

sample sizes ten or less are common (Padgett, 2012). Additionally, Elliot and Timulak

(2021) encouraged researchers to identify contextual relevant details regarding possible

participants. They explained that the contextual details play a significant role in shaping

the findings. In alignment, Mack et al. (2005) suggested recruitment strategies are based

on the data that needs to be collected and the population criteria. In acknowledgment of

this information, I sought to gain longitudinal perspectives from a minimum of five

former Division II Black women basketball players who shared the phenomenon of

playing basketball and persisting to graduation at PWIs.

I used purposeful or purposive sampling to intentionally recruit and select the five former DII Black women student-athletes who participated in this project. (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Padgett, 2012; Ramsook, 2018). As outlined in my IRB, my recruitment method included the dissemination of information to a) provide details on the study, b) initially collect data or garner demographical information on participants, and c) confirm participants' consent to join in the study. I distributed the information through emails, sent texts, held in-person conversations, and made phone calls to members of my personal and professional network. To recruit additional participants, I used snowball sampling or participant referrals of other former Black women student-athletes who met sampling criteria (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017; Padgett, 2012). As indicated in my initial proposal, the sampling criteria also included former Black women basketball players who transferred from other institutional types (e.g., junior colleges, HBCUs, DI or DIII, etc.) to complete their sport eligibility and graduate from a DII institution.

Participants

Five former DII Black women basketball players who entered college with diverse aptitudes, sport experiences, education histories, family backgrounds, and social positions were recruited and participated in this project. At the time of their interviews, the participants' ages ranged from 24-50 years old. Their collective experiences occurred between August 1991–May 2021 at one of three predominantly White institutions with DII membership. These institutions where they studied, played basketball, and graduated were identified as a private, private Christian, or public university and represented three

NCAA DII Conferences positioned in the southeastern part of the United States. Additionally, in brevity, one study participant also illuminated a comparative perspective as a transfer student from a junior college in her home state.

Museus and Quaye (2009) suggested a positive correlation between one's culture of origin and the value placed on graduating with a college degree. Coherently, the participants in this study confirmed the degree to which cultural factors and family values shaped and influenced their aspirations to graduate from college. Herein I provide participant narratives to further delineate how their family background; historical, social and cultural context; education history; and sport experiences shaped their personal development of agency and success drive. Their summations show multiple experiences that shaped the participants' development of individual attributes, communal knowledge, and CCW (e.g., resistant, social, aspirational, linguistic, navigational, and familial capital) significant to their college success. Yosso (2005) explained these attributes are shaped within Communities of Color and utilized by its members to "survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (p. 77).

Participant Narratives

The participants' narratives also highlight factors most relevant to the persistence experiences revealed in chapter four and offer perspectives on the participants' development of individual success attributes of CCW. At the conclusion of each participant narrative, I briefly discuss their cultivation or deployment of CCW as a dynamic process, rather than mutually exclusive processes contextualized within pre-collegiate sport, academic, or social experiences. In the vein of the three institutional

103

systems associated with the participants' higher education experiences, these examples offer contextual factors that shaped the individual attributes of agency responsible for their college persistence and graduation outcomes.

Shay

Shay believed her leadership skills, fighter instincts, and goal to earn a degree in four years were important for her college success. She said her fighter instincts and degree aspirations stemmed from growing up in a Christian home with parents who established expectations for their children to earn a college degree. She explained, "While neither one of them graduated from college, they did have every structure in place to make sure that we could attend. That was an expectation for us to go." Because of her father's influence, Shay entered college in pursuit of a degree in business. As for her academic preparation for college, Shay mentioned the lack of a strong foundation in high school English caused her to struggle with writing in college. Also, she attributed her development of leadership skills to playing basketball. She further revealed that her early sport experiences included playing t-ball, softball, and cheerleading as sports more suitable for girls. Shay indicated not a lot of girls were playing basketball, and her experiences with the sport came from playing with her boy cousins. Consequently, Shay's early formal sport experience involved the lack of requisite foundational basketball skills necessary for her selection to the eighth-grade girls' basketball team. The following year, Shay developed her basketball skills on the ninth grade team and was selected to the varsity in tenth grade. By the time she was in the twelfth-grade, Shay received multiple scholarship offers. In part, Shay's experiences showed how familial

capital shaped her development of a) aspirational capital to earn a college degree and b) resistant capital to excel in a sport that–at the time–only fostered the skill development of boys in her community.

Zia

Zia recognized perseverance, resilience, compassion, and awareness as the personal characteristics that attributed to her graduation outcome. She explained, "in academics and athletics, it's these attributes that pushed me to work hard, put in extra work, not give up when things became incredibly difficult, and excel in these areas". Zia indicated these attributes were shaped in a home environment where her parents involved her and her siblings in numerous activities and set the expectation for them to plan for their post-secondary career. Zia's sport development resulted from playing basketball and volleyball–which included playing Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball and for the middle and high school teams. Zia also expressed she and her siblings gained a sense of Christian values and developed a relationship with God by going to church and having devotion with their parents. Furthermore, she remembered her parents–especially her mom, who was a school guidance counselor–being a strong proponent of education and teaching her not to be afraid to seek help (e.g., emotional, mental, academic, etc.) if needed. As an example, Zia shared that although she earned credit for Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school, she struggled with some aspects of precalculus and geometry content. She stated, "It felt like no matter how much I did on my own to try to understand the material, I just couldn't do it." To further her understanding of both subjects, Zia consulted with her math teachers and sought assistance from her friend's

dad. As she prepared to transition to college, Zia's dad and AAU coaches played integral roles in her collegiate sport recruitment process, and her mom ensured her placement in the honors college at the institution she selected to attend. The assertion is Zia's aspiration for academic excellence propelled her need to activate familial capital and to enact social and navigational capital to access support from her math teachers and a friend's dad.

Jami

Jami identified sympathy and empathy as the personal traits that allowed her to forge relationships pertinent to her persistence. She also recalled various changes in her family dynamics to shape her development of athletic and social skills, along with community cultural capital relevant to her persistence. For instance, when her dad became ill and was placed in a nursing home facility, Jami and her brother temporarily lived with an older sister. Also, her earliest memories of sport experiences positioned Jami as a second grader shooting the basketball at the nursing home facility to connect with her dad. She explained even though her dad was wheelchair bound, her goal was to "make every basket so he could get the rebound and pass it back". She indicated that her basketball skills were further enhanced by playing with her brother and later strengthened when she played on middle school, high school, AAU, and travel basketball teams. Jami stated her biggest takeaway from playing on teams was she learned how to deal with people and work with others. Regarding academics, Jami stated she was an average student who did just enough in school to maintain eligibility to play basketball. She also indicated her family did not push her to go to college, but they supported her decision to

enroll at a post-secondary institution and to be the first person in her family to receive a college degree. Jami's sense of how to use her basketball skills as a vehicle for social mobility was derived from watching the success of peers who earned athletic scholarships to attend college. To this point she stated, "That was my motivation to play basketball the best I could to put myself in a situation where no one could determine my outcome." Her initial college experiences included attending a Junior College in the state where she resided. Afterwards, she transferred to a four-year institution to earn a degree and complete her sport eligibility. Jami's experiences showed how her develop of familial, aspirational, and social capital equipped her with individual attributes to successfully navigate college systems to graduate.

Toni

Toni described herself as "very humble, shy, sheltered" and felt her height was an attribute that stood out for her in college. Her earliest experiences were shaped within a small, close-knit community where she played basketball as the one recreational sport for girls. Toni revealed she was adopted by her paternal grandmother and grew up with strong Christian values that centered reliance on faith in God to succeed in life. As one of the first two family members to attend college, Toni was taught

> No matter the situation, just be you. Don't ruffle feathers. Just stay humble.
> You'll get through it. Your mission is to go play basketball, get your degree, and
> go home. You have to rely on your faith. Go wherever your degree leads you.
> You stay focused. That was always preached… stay focused.

Toni expressed that in retrospect, although she demonstrated high academic performance in primary grades, by eighth grade, her grades dropped tremendously. Her "reality check" came when Toni's poor eighth grade history performance disqualified her from basketball tryouts and warranted her need to participate in summer school. She also shared how different individuals encouraged her to "hit the books" so she could play the next school year. During the subsequent school year, Toni earned the starting center position on the high school girls' basketball team. However, her opportunity to play high school basketball was briefly halted after a sport related injury. She reflected, "But something about tearing my ACL… how I worked hard and how focused I was to get back to a point where I could walk, and run was different than being eliminated from the team a few years prior." Despite her injury, Toni's high school coach was instrumental in helping her to get recruited for a college team. With the support of her family and community members, she entered college in pursuit of a degree in Pre-Law. Toni's experiences evidenced the shaping and enactment of familial and social capital with the encouragement from others and demonstrated Toni's deployment of navigational and social capital to improve her academic performance in summer school. The contention is Toni's experience also depicted her understanding of high school league rules on sport eligibility as a form of linguistic capital.

Myra

Myra determined her most prominent characteristics are her personality and work ethics. To shape her socialization skills, as a child, Myra's mom taught her to initiate interactions with others by introducing herself and presenting herself, authentically. Myra

also praised both her parents for helping her to establish a strong Christian foundation and relationship with the Lord. Myra's school experiences included her transition from public school-in third grade-to a private Christian school that she said, "was pretty much predominantly White". In adherence to Myra's expressed desire to be around people 'similar to' herself and to enhance her athletic development her parents transferred Myra to public school after eighth grade. Because of the transitions to and from private school, Myra received help from her mom and a tutor to bridge academic gaps associated with the changes in curriculum requirements. Myra's socialization through sports resulted from playing basketball, volleyball, softball, and cheerleading. Through her sport participation, she actualized versatility as a new attribute that allowed her to "effectively engage with groups". Also, Myra admitted that when as a ninth-grade student, it was prophesied over her life, or foretold, that she would play college basketball, she "wasn't that good" and girls her age were already skilled at playing. To escalate and elevate her talent development, she trained and traveled to play with teams outside her home community. She recalled participating in large AAU tournaments, sacrificing time with friends, and missing her prom to increase her chances for recruitment. Myra viewed her pursuit of a college degree on full scholarship as an extension of her mom's accomplishment as a first-generation graduate. To explain, she stated, "So just me coming behind her and doing that and just doing what I did. But also having a scholarship to pay for it and not have to graduate and be in debt." With their actions, Myra's parents shaped her development of multiple forms of capital (e.g., familial, navigational, social, aspirational) to seek and access resources to meet her academic goals. Additionally,

Myra's sport experiences highlight her use of familial capital to gain social and navigational capital to hone her basketball skills outside of her home community.

These examples provide a basis to understand how the findings are presented and discussed in chapter four. In the next section, I describe my process to collect the verbalized data I used to explain how the participants engaged CCW to persist in college. I also expound on how I used reflective journaling to organize my thoughts and as a continuous data analysis process.

Data Collection

My primary data collection method included two in-depth interviews, with open-ended questions to ascertain information related to participants' persistence experiences. Scholars who investigate qualitative research surmise that the in-depth process of interviews allows the researcher to gain an understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Padgett, 2012; Seidman, 2006). Additionally, Elliot and Timulak (2021) suggested that researchers use the theoretical framework to develop the interview questions. In accordance, the interview protocol for this project comprised open-ended questions that centered CCW, the theoretical and analytical framework that guided this study. Specifically, the interview protocol included two sets of questions that focused on 1) environmental factors related to participants' initial development of community cultural wealth and 2) ways the former DII Black women basketball players relied on and engaged CCW to persist in college. The questions on the final protocol were predicated by those used in a pilot study. After the first two interviews, I used my reflective journal and notes to determine whether the interview questions sufficiently solicited responses to

support the study. This resulted in my revision of the interview protocol to include a question that prompted participants to share factors that related to their development of CCW attributes that influenced their persistence experiences.

Reflective Journaling

Before I recognized it as a creditable practice, reflective journaling created a "sense-making" space for me to make meaning of my experiences. In my earliest recollections, the words of my journal (e.g., loose leaf papers, napkins, sticky notes) became my linguistic capital–the way I communicated my authentic thoughts, ideas, plans, and the sense-making I applied to my situations. Like my perspective on reflective journaling, Ortlipp (2008) noted reflective practices are increasingly apparent in qualitative research that centers feminist, critical, and poststructuralist paradigm. Furthermore, Ortlipp acknowledged in lieu of controlling the researcher's values through bracketing, self-reflective journals enable researchers to scrutinize their assumptions and reflect on their goals. In accordance, throughout this study, I engaged in reflective journaling to center my thoughts about the goal of this project and understand my positionality. I also used reflective journaling to help process feedback from my committee members and to contemplate ideas, thoughts, and questions to guide discussions with my advisor. Additionally, I employed the practice to document my thoughts on the literature that supported the project. As a part of the continuous analysis process, I engaged reflective journaling to a) help prepare the data for analysis, b) record my thoughts and feelings on the interviews and transcript content, c) identify points of clarity that needed to be communicated with participants, and d) record additional

questions or information to support the project.

Data Collection Protocol Pilot

   Elliot and Timulak (2021) encouraged scholars to pilot the data collection protocol to ensure the questions are not poorly worded or include ambiguously worded content. They further indicated that this preliminary process helps the researcher determine if important information is overlooked or if other areas need to be addressed in the project. In compliance with these suggestions, I developed potential interview questions and piloted the protocol to gather information on the lived experiences of former undergraduates who were my classmates, student-athletes, non-athletes, and friends who attended various DI institutions. Like the data collection process used in this project, I conducted and recorded interviews (one per person), wrote notes, and transcribed interview transcripts. After reading their edited transcripts and my notes multiple times, I determined whether their responses illuminated the existence of the six cultural capital attributes of CCW (Yosso, 2005). After coding each interview independently, I reviewed the collective responses for common themes and quotes relevant to CCW. The results suggested the need to determine how sport and spirituality fit within the framework of CCW to recognize potential responses from participants in this project. I used my notes and reflections on the pilot process to inform and develop the final interview protocol for this project.

Interview Process

   Zoom was selected as the virtual data collection platform to capture video, audio, and written records of verbal data elicited during the study. In alignment with the

framework for the three in-depth interview series postulated by Seidman (2006), I

conducted two in-depth semi-structured interviews with each participant. In the absence

of the third interview, participants were asked to

- reflect on their experiences during both interview sessions,

- further elaborate on the impact of their experiences at the conclusion of
  second interview, and

- respond to a short post-interview survey to share how they were impacted
  by their undergraduate experiences and to offer suggestions for the
  implications section of this study.

The two interviews were scheduled to last at least 90 minutes to allow time for

participants to reconstruct and provide context for their experiences (Seidman, 2006).

However, each interview lasted between 43-97 minutes, and participants' responses

during the two interview sessions provided thick or detailed descriptions of their

persistence experiences (Guba, 1981). The first interview allowed me to establish trust

and rapport with each participant as we shared our life stories (e.g., family, sport, and

education background; college preparation; initial college experiences). Another goal of

the first interview was to gain insight on how participants' pre-collegiate experiences

shaped their initial development of personal attributes and CCW. The second interview

enabled participants to recall specific details on their interactions within institutional

academic, social, and sport systems. The latter also solicited responses to recognize how

experiences related to academic eligibility, collegiate sport participation, institution

agents, socialization, sense of belonging, academic support, coach-team relationships,

mentorship, and faculty support influenced participants' engagement of CCW to persist in college. Both interviews included embedded questions that encouraged participants to reflect on the relevance and personal impact of their persistence experiences.

Pre-Analysis

Elliot and Timulak (2021) recognized DI-QR as a continuous analysis process that includes pre-analysis, transcript analysis, categorizing information, and interrogating the findings as four main analysis modes. In this section I further explain pre-analysis and reflective journaling, as the interwoven data collection processes I used to prepare and organize raw interview data for further data analysis. My initial phase of pre-analysis and reflective journaling occurred after the raw data was made available in Zoom. After I retrieved the raw transcripts, videos, and audio recordings from Zoom, I immediately replaced participants' names with generic names for this project. Next, I used the videos and closed captions to edit the raw transcripts for participants' verbatim responses. Simultaneously, I began reflective journaling to record my thoughts on the interviews and to list any notes, comments, and questions that required participant feedback. I then reexamined the edited transcripts to add my notes, comments, and questions before I forwarded them to participants for feedback on content accuracy and the request for clarifying details.

When I received participants' transcript feedback and follow up responses, I made additional revisions and edits to the transcripts to address speech nonfluencies, microdetails, and exact repetitions (Elliot & Timulak, 2021). Concurrently, I added pseudonyms, generic names and phrases to replace names, locations, and other identifiers

that linked participants' experiences to their respective institutions or communities. Then I assigned tracking codes or color coded the participants' interview transcripts to gain immediate access to relevant sentences, phrases, and quotes illuminated in their stories. Elliot and Timulak (2021) explained that, as part of the DI-QR process, the creation of tracking codes enables the researcher to determine which participant is providing the content. As a final step in the pre-analysis mode, I read each participant's two transcripts to extrapolate irrelevant dialogue and comments not related to the study, and then combined both transcripts into one document for the transcript analysis process.

Data Analysis

In accordance with its theoretical reference in chapter two, the application of CCW as an analytical framework, acknowledges the relationship among race, racism, and power in society and in the field of education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hughey, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005). Dissimilar to the description of CCW as the theoretical framework, in this section I explore CCW as an analytical framework used to examine the persistence experiences of the Black women student-athletes in this study. In contrast to adopting deficit narratives attributed to the academic persistence (Tinto, 1975, 1998) and achievement (Bourdieu, 1986) of students of color based on their social location (classism) and race (racism), CCW provides an anti-deficit lens, also known as an asset-based approach, to explore and describe the persistence experiences of Black women student-athletes at PWIs. Consequently, the data analysis process for this project included the interrogation of data to determine whether participants illuminated their enactment of

115

the six attributes of CCW in the re-storying of their college experiences.

Although CCW offered the anti-deficit lens to analyze participants' experiences, I also recognized the importance of applying CRF as the basis to understand how study participants differed in their perceptions, descriptions, and interpretations of their persistence experiences at PWIs (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Few, 2007). CRF also recognizes the social and historical context of how oppressive systems (i.e., racism, classism, sexism) shaped the experiences of Black women student-athletes as members of marginalized groups–within and outside their dual-axis identities (Carter-Francique et al., 2017; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Cooper et al., 2017; Few, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Simien et al., 2019). Therefore, CRF offered a critical perspective to gain insight on how CCW is fostered and developed in communities of color and thereby challenges deficit claims about the effect of environmental factors on the persistence of Black women student-athletes (Few, 2007; Yosso, 2005). In concert, these beliefs established CRF as a critical paradigm to undergird CCW as the analytical framework to organize and interpret the descriptive data shared by the former Black women student-athletes in this study. Furthermore, by underpinning the study with CRF, I assured that authenticity criteria were met in my interactions and correspondences with participants prior to, during, and after their interviews. Specific details on how I evaluated our interactions based on five authenticity criteria are discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

In the methods section, I provided participant narratives and briefly described the CCW attributes that were shaped in their home communities and by their lived experiences. The subsequent comments following each narrative also substantiated that

CCW is deployed in a dynamic process rather than as individual forms of agency. The personal narratives also provided initial insight on the participants' interactions and experiences within social, sport, and academic systems–like those they encountered at their respective institutions. Below, I provide brief descriptions of the six attributes of cultural capital included in Yosso's (2005) CCW framework and offer initial thoughts on CCW attributes I presumed to be illuminated in participants' responses.

- *Aspirational capital* refers to the ability to remain hopeful of dreams and goals – despite adversity, barriers (i.e., perceived or real).

- *Linguistic capital* refers to intellectual and social skills gained through interactions and communication experiences.

- *Familial capital* refers to cultural knowledges nurtured within family and community.

- *Social capital* refers to networks of people and community resources.

- *Navigational capital* refers to skills to maneuver through systems and institutions.

- *Resistant capital* refers to knowledge and skills cultivated through oppositional behaviors that stand against inequality.

Elliot and Timulak (2021) identified transcript analysis, categorizing information, and interrogating the findings as the next modes to follow the pre-analysis mode in the continuous analysis process. To initiate these next steps, I read each participant's color-coded transcript multiple times to identify and pre-code the data for sentences, quotes, and phrases relevant to the six attributes of CCW. In Table 1, I provide examples of possible participant responses that I also used to guide the prior coding process.

Table 1

Possible Examples of Community Cultural Wealth for Black Women Student-Athletes

Descriptor	Examples
Aspirational capital	Thoughts on dreams of completing a degree program; life after sports; future in sports; indication of goals; and "quitting not an option".
Linguistic capital	Language of the community: writing, music, poetry, oral history, storytelling, parables; positive affirmations, community connections through the arts, "pearls of wisdom", art, body language/gestures, physical/verbal sport language (plays, team references), call outs, and articulation of institution and NCAA eligibility and graduation requirements.
Familial capital	Acknowledgement of traditional knowledge or values, recognition of family shaping values, principle, beliefs; instillation of spiritual values or beliefs; and family fostering of sport development.
Social capital	Mention relationships and other social contacts for mobility; sport connections; sources of support to navigate systems; access to resources; individual agents (i.e., mentors, peers); and collective agents (i.e., institutional or formal resources).
Navigational capital	Utilization of cultural strategies to survive; indication of inner resources or aspects of self as agent, and ability to find necessary resources or contacts.
Resistant capital	Maintain behaviors and actions to challenge the status quo; finding ways to succeed – regardless of available resources; overcome; and refusal to be denied or defeated.

Note. This table includes possible participant responses based on Yosso's (2005) CCW.

In the research, scholars found steps in the transcript analysis to include grouping information, developing themes, and creating thematic transcripts (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Elliot & Timulak, 2021). Therefore, after I analyzed and pre-coded the individual transcripts, I imported them into NVivo for further analysis. When I concluded the imports, I then created top-level priori codes for attributes of CCW to delineate similar meaning units illuminated by participants and to create thematic transcripts. Afterwards, I

read the thematic transcripts several times to categorize information and check the integrity of my analysis for CCW engagement. I also reorganized the information to ensure the participants' pre-collegiate experiences were not included with their postsecondary persistence experiences related to the research question. *This step offered evidence to support how CCW was shaped in the homes and communities of the study participants and provided the basis for the participant narratives in this chapter. This self-auditing process also allowed for my engagement in an additional level of data interrogation to determine whether the data, themes, and categories of information were coherent.* Furthermore, Elliot and Timulak (2021) indicated data interrogation:

> ensures that you understand how each category is distributed across the sample, which will help you interpret their meaning within the sample (enumerating categories); that you have not just found what you expected (expectation checking); and perhaps even that other researchers can agree on the categories you have found (consensus). (p. 59)

To conclude the analysis process, I interrogated the data to a) interpret how participants' responses answered the research question, b) summarize major findings and c) formulate a discussion to position the findings within the literature.

Data Analysis Reflection

The most challenging parts of the data analysis process were determining what information was relevant to the study and figuring out if the participants' spoken words demonstrated their enactment of CCW. Elliot and Timulak (2021) cautioned researchers to identify those findings that answer the research question and shared ways to explicate

implicit meaning when participants offered too few words to share their experiences. Also, they concluded that researchers should collect enough data to sufficiently answer the research question and to achieve saturation. *I used reflective journaling to rethink how I read the transcripts and determined what information was most relevant to answering the research question. Also, I had to separate data that represented the participants' feelings about an experience versus their reaction to a situation. Even harder was the decision on what to include as findings. Initially, I thought all the information the participants discussed was important to share. However, after reading the thematic transcripts I realized it would be most relevant to connect their enactment of CCW in the findings for chapter four, to experiences that shaped their development of CCW, like those in their participant narratives for this chapter. Also, to address the issue of implicit meaning, I clarified any misconceptions or uncertainties of information by contacting the participants for feedback. My goal was to make this our project, and I garnered their input at integral points in the data collection and analysis process.*

Integrity, Trustworthiness, and Authenticity

Padgett (2012) wrote, "Once distance and objectivity cease to be operating principles, the researcher's subjectivity is also acknowledged and, to varying degrees, managed through *reflectivity*, or systematic self-awareness" (p. 204). Also, Glesne (2016) suggested it is the researcher's interpretation and analysis of words, descriptions, and thoughts of participants that make them meaningful–not the words, descriptions, and thoughts themselves. Consequently, these opinions place the burden of proof on the researcher to demonstrate ethical balance (Elliott and Timulak, 2021) and ethics of

accountability (Collins, 2000) in their study. Respectfully, to address issues of integrity in this study, I complied with institution protocols and included several steps to maintain the integrity of the research process. Prior to conducting the research, I completed Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certification and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to facilitate the project–under the guidance of my advisor. Also, as detailed in the data collection section, I followed IRB protocols to select and recruit participants, and to provide participants with information about the study and factors relevant to their voluntary participation. As part of the pre-analysis mode, I described my actions to maintain the confidentiality of participants by replacing information that would link them to the study locations or their communities. Moreover, integrity checks were built in as systemic and systematic processes throughout the project. Also inclusive of reflective journaling, the measures to check for integrity in this project included:

- interrogation of data through a continuous analysis process,

- saturation of interview data to include participant feedback and input, and

- summation of findings to reflect participants' responses in relation to the research question and reviewed literature.

Within measures to certify the integrity of the project, I also implemented steps to validate the trustworthiness of the data and to verify the authenticity of how findings were shaped and presented. Hereafter, I define and describe how trustworthiness and authenticity were branded in this study to minimize ethical issues and further delineate the rigor of the project.

Trustworthiness

Throughout the research process I employed measures to assess trustworthiness by determining whether the data was credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable. Guba, (1981) suggested in addition to looking for patterns in the data, credibility requires simultaneous actions to account for complexities associated with illuminated patterns. He also indicated that transferability refers to the researcher's ability to recognize "social/behavioral phenomena are context bound" (p. 86), and therefore, the data is not generalizable. In alignment with these two standards, I engaged in prolonged interactions with participants; used reflective journaling to guide subsequent requests for information; and co-constructed participants' narratives to confirm my interpretation of their spoken words (Amin et al., 2020; Guba, 1981; Ortlipp, 2008; Padgett, 2012; Schwandt et al., 2007). Regarding the final areas of assessment for trustworthiness, Guba (1981) linked dependability with consistency in the research process to address the instabilities arising from the data. Additionally, Few (1981) and Guba (1981) suggested that confirmability refers to the credibility of the data and the recognition that the multiple realities of participants were shaped by sociohistorical and cultural factors. With respect to dependability, the methodology sections provide explicit details to document the continuous data analysis process I employed to collect, interrogate, and analyze the data on participants' persistence experiences. To address the confirmability standard, I ensured there was a direct, confirmable link between the data and findings. More specifically, I read the thematic transcripts multiple times and solicited feedback form participants to better understand how social, historical, and cultural context shaped and

informed their attitudes, beliefs, and actions to persist at PWIs. In concert, these actions reduced primary threats to trustworthiness like reactivity, researcher biases, and respondent biases (Padgett, 2012) during the study and enabled me to establish rapport and trust with participants.

Glesne (2016) stated, "Part of addressing the trustworthiness of data is to realize both the *delimitations* and the *limitations* of your study" (p. 213). Glesne further explained limitations are those factors beyond the researcher's control or discerned in retrospect, while delimitations are somewhat controlled or choice factors in research. As detailed next, the limitations and delimitations of this study depict factors to better understand the substance of the data.

Limitations. First, the participants attended and graduated from institutions located in the southeastern part of the United States, which restricted opportunities to gain insight on instructional factors and experiences of former Black women athletes at postsecondary locations in other regions. Next, participants were asked to describe past college experiences which may have occurred up to 30 years ago. Because of the distance between their experiences and the interviews, participants sometimes had gaps in their stories which had to be clarified with follow-up conversations or correspondences. Also, because of their work schedules, time constraints, and the overall timeline for this project, some interviews occurred consecutively or with limited times for the participants to provide feedback on transcripts or to reflect on their stories. This resulted in continuous engagements with participants and more time than initially planned to garner feedback on the interview protocol.

Delimitations. The participants in this study were delimited to only former DII Black women basketball players who graduated from PWIs. Also, beyond extracting information from their participation survey and interviews, no verification was performed to confirm reported grades and graduation outcomes revealed by participants.

Authenticity

Schwandt et al. (2007) proposed fairness, ontological authentication, educative authentication, catalytic authentication, and tactical authenticity as criteria to evaluate the authenticity of qualitative research (i.e., naturalistic inquiry). Schwandt et al. (2007) suggested that the five criteria offer a "new (and sometimes difficult) language of authenticity criteria" (p. 12) that consider researcher-participant relationships, as well as assumptions about the social construction of data and its interpretations. The extent to which I engaged participants as active partners in this project provides evidence that I met these criteria. A brief description of the criteria and my actions to meet them are detailed next.

Fairness. Amin et al. (2020) explained fairness refers to the extent to which the participants' complex constructions of reality, as well as their underlying contextual factors such as background or culture are accessed, illuminated, and analyzed to understand their experiences. Schwandt et al. (2007) described fairness as a process that equitably exposes multiple values, beliefs, ideologies, and perspectives (i.e., conflicting and cohesive) and indicated stakeholders should feel empowerment at the conclusion of and because of the study. From the onset, participants assumed the roles of co-constructors rather than participants in the research. We agreed that based on the dearth

of research on Black women, DII student-athletes, and the success of Black women graduates, our work would be groundbreaking. Likewise, the participants and I agreed the outcome of our collaboration is to a) advance research on the success outcomes of Black women student-athletes, b) illuminate factors related to their persistence experiences and c) offer perspectives on experiences at PWIs with Division II membership. Therefore, the data from their stories offered thick descriptions of information to examine multiple perspectives on persistence experiences at different locations rather than linking the findings to a specific time and place (Guba 1981).

Ontological authenticity. Schwandt et al. (2007) determined ontological authenticity refers to the extent to which all stakeholders' constructions of reality are enhanced, matured, and expanded to "achieve a more sophisticated and enriched construction" (p. 22). They also explained the aim is to raise consciousness or to unite the divided consciousness of all stakeholders. In addition, Amin et al. (2020) and Schwandt et al. (2007) suggested ontological authenticity may entail the realization of how social class, politics, cultural factors, and impoverishment shaped the experiences of the stakeholders. During their initial interviews, I encouraged study participants to examine their experiences from a cultural capital perspective. I introduced CCW as the analytical framework to examine their experiences, described attributes of CCW, and emailed participants a pdf copy of Yosso (2005). Also, our conversations offered multiple perspectives on how social factors, our family backgrounds, and educational experiences shaped our development and informed our enactment of CCW because of our persistence experiences.

Educative authenticity. Schwandt et al. (2007) found as an extension of ontological authenticity, educative authenticity refers to the stakeholders' understanding of and appreciation for the realities constructed by others and how those realties were shaped by multiple factors. The interviews and subsequent interactions enabled the participants and me to gain a strong sense of who we were as Black women students who engaged CCW to persist at PWIs. We discussed common aspects of our experiences and demonstrated respect for our differences. Also, through our conversations, we gained a sense of the social, historical and cultural factors that shaped our experiences. As an example, two participants shared my experience of growing up in communities that provide limited sport development programs for girls. Although we shared the experiences, we realized the availability of "traditional girl sports" were different in each of our communities. These stories led to more in-depth discussions on how we took alternative approaches to develop our athletic talents.

Catalytic authenticity. Catalytic authenticity refers to the extent to which the researcher takes steps to invigorate and advance the research through actions. Schwandt et al. (2007) proposed that scholars extend research beyond measures to achieve fairness or to advance understanding a phenomenon. They further delineated that research inquiries and evaluations should provoke and stimulate action or the form of authentication referred to as "feedback-action validity" (p. 23). The open-ended questions I used for this study provided multiple opportunities for the former student-athletes to reflect on their experiences. To offer perspective, one participant suggested the NCAA place greater emphasis on graduation and provide more oversight to monitor coaches'

126

behaviors. Another participant discussed the importance of having Black women coaches to mirror the higher number of Black women players in collegiate sports. The participants' comments highlighted the level of discission prompted by the interview questions and showed participants were already thinking of ways to improve the condition of college athletics. Additionally, I emailed participants to garner their feedback on suggestions to include in the implications or recommendation section of this study. Finally, I concluded the study with confirmable findings and provided institutional and organizational recommendations to address the unique experiences of Black women student-athletes.

   Tactical authenticity. Tactile authenticity refers to the degree to which stakeholders in the research are empowered to act (Amin et al., 2020; Schwandt et al., 2007). *The participants and I agreed although our experiences were different, our stories were the same.* Throughout the process, we discussed the need for institutional change to include environments that foster the success of future Black women athlete and non-athlete students. During their interviews, two participants illuminated they are working with high school students to better prepare them to meet academic requirements and to be self-sufficient in determining their career path. Another participant is working with student-athletes and training them to seek help for their academic, social, spiritual, and mental health needs. *In essence the participants are already creating success opportunities for others with their current actions.* Furthermore, I continue to interact with the participants, and I sought their input on the implications for this project. One participant suggested we expand the project into a book. Two others mentioned we

should think of doing something with the research when we are done. Throughout the

project, I encouraged participants to share their stories, and I shared data and information

to inform their discussions on the persistence of Black women students.

Chapter Summary

Chapter three focused on the research design that guided and framed this project. I

positioned my experiences within the research and shared information relevant to my

research paradigm, epistemological, and ontological beliefs. Then I explained the

methodology and methods used to conduct the study. Also, I briefly discussed CCW as

the analytical framework that guides this study. I conclude the chapter with how I

checked for integrity, trustworthiness, and authenticity throughout the research process.

In chapter four, I summarize, discuss, and present the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of chapter four is to use a descriptive-interpretive approach to present the findings of this study. In alignment with the multiple measures that I employed to co-construct and confirm my interpretation of the participants' verbalized data in chapter three, the findings are presented to highlight three levels of data confirmability. First, the findings show descriptive data to illuminate details and quotes related to the participants' persistence experiences and engagement of cultural capital. Then, the *Summary of Engagement* briefly reveals my interpretation of the findings and how I understood the participants' engagement of cultural capital based on the descriptive data. At the end of each subsection, the findings reveal the connections between the forms of cultural capital and experiential knowledge participants *Brought From Home Communities* to inform their engagement of cultural capital to persist to graduation.

The findings answer the research question: How did former Division II (DII) Black women basketball players engage community cultural wealth (CCW) to persist to graduation at predominantly White institutions (PWIs)?

Findings

In its pinning within a critical race paradigm, CCW was used to center the five participants' experiences within a historical context and recognize the assets and resources they accumulated over their lifetimes (Yosso, 2005). In conjunction, CRF was used to (a) interrogate the participants' verbal data to extract the forms of cultural capital the former DII Black women basketball players enacted to persist in college; (b) disrupt

claims of essentialism in their experiences; (c) recognize the intersectionality in their individual identities; and (d) acknowledge the multiple locations and experiences that informed their development and deployment of CCW (Few, 2007; Yosso, 2005). The findings reveal the participants' engagement of *I AM NOT Leaving Without a Degree (aspirational capital), Fighting Battles I Shouldn't Have Been Fighting (resistant capital), To Survive and Thrive (social capital), Like Home (familial capital), and Paths to Success (navigational capital)* as the forms of cultural capital associated with their persistence. Although the findings are initially presented exclusively to illuminate the engagement of a specific form of capital, it is understood that the utilization of cultural capital is a dynamic process (Yosso, 2005). Respective of an intertwining process, participants' varied engagement of *It Took More Engagement from Me (multiple forms of capital)* reveals their simultaneous engagement of *aspirational capital, resistant capital, social capital, familial capital, and navigational capital* to persist to graduation.

I AM NOT Leaving Without a Degree (Aspirational Capital)

I AM NOT Leaving Without a Degree describes participants' ultimate aspiration to graduate from their respective institutions—no matter what. Aspirational capital refers to the ability to remain hopeful of dreams and goals despite adversity and barriers (i.e., perceived or real). Aspirational capital first appeared in each participant's description of their personal attributes and goals to earn a college degree. For Shay and Mia, the goal was to earn the degree within four years, which corresponded to the length of their sport eligibility. In addition, Zia's goal was to graduate with a 4.0 GPA and to complete her graduation goal by the end of her sport eligibility. Also, Toni and Jami indicated their

refusal to leave college without a degree. Consequently, aspirational capital manifested in spoken words and actions, centering the participants' academic goals, degree pursuit, graduation, motivation factors, or link between their scholarship and completion goal. Additionally, aspirational capital appeared to provide motivation for participants to enlist other forms of cultural capital that factored into their persistence. To explain the different ways the former student-athletes employed aspirational capital through interactions within and outside institutional sport, academic, and social systems, two subthemes were developed: *Academic Goal Completion* and *Committed to the Goal*.

Academic Goal Completion

Academic Goal Completion illuminates the participants' pre-entry thoughts and intentions to play college basketball to earn a degree. The focus is on how each participant's degree aspirations were influenced by environmental factors (family, educational history, community, and sport experiences) in their home communities.

Zia entered college with the goal of leveraging her sport talents for a college degree. Like her experiences growing up, Zia sought to excel to her highest desired level of playing basketball and to achieve academic excellence in college. Zia, explained,

> When I was in middle school, I thought I wanted to play in the WNBA. But then I got to high school conditioning and realized college was as far as I wanted to go– as far as sports [were concerned]. Again, [I had] mindset of going to the highest level I could. My motivation for playing basketball in college was this is [the] natural progression for those who are at [their] next highest level, academically or athletically.

She also indicated, "I wasn't going to a school that didn't have the major I wanted. Because I knew I wasn't going to play professional basketball, I needed to get a degree that [fit my career goal]." Zia completed her graduation requirements in three years and with the highest program GPA. She also used an additional year of sport eligibility to work towards her master's degree. In 2021, Zia graduated with an undergraduate degree in sociology, minoring in human services.

Jami indicated, although she was never pushed to go to college, her family was a proponent of education throughout her lifetime. She explained her interest in college stemmed from watching television; however, her motivation to use her basketball talent to leverage a degree came from witnessing the experiences of peers in her community. Jami shared,

By watching "Saved by the Bell" and other shows, I [thought], college looks like it's fun. And I knew what [college] could do for me. I didn't know [the] magnitude, but I knew my parents couldn't afford it. And [I believed] the only way I could go to college was [by playing] basketball. That's why I thrived so much. After a while, I started to see people like football players get scholarships and go to college. Then my upper classmates got scholarships and went to college. [I started to think], people go to college, and you get paid [to attend]? Oh, I could do that, too. That was my motivation. I saw other people [going to college on scholarships] and I [thought], I can do it [too].

When asked whether earning a degree factored her transfer decision, Jami responded,

It factored because I [transferred] from [a] junior college. I was probably a few

credits away from getting my associate degree. I probably needed to take one or

two classes, and I would have [earned] an associate degree. I knew the second

time around—when I was going to my next [institution]—I was going to get a

degree or bust.

Jami completed her degree requirements the semester after her sport eligibility was

exhausted. In 2010, Jami graduated with an undergraduate degree in human services.

Shay explained in addition to the college expectations established by her family,

she recognized the importance of earning a degree. She remembered thinking, "You are

going [to college]. This is how you start to have a good life. You major in something.

You get out and have a good job. That's how you get [life] going." Shay also shared,

Neither one of my parents have [more than] a high school diploma. [They] always

wanted for my sister and I, what they didn't have [for themselves]. While neither

one of them graduated from college, they [had] every structure in place to make

sure we could attend. There was an expectation for us to go.

Shay further stated,

I had cousins [who] were older than me, that had graduated from college. I looked

up to them. College was just the conversation in my family. Even beyond my

parents, [earning a degree] was just the expectation. [Going to college] was

second nature.

Shay met her goal to graduate in four years and before her scholarship was exhausted. In

1996, Shay graduated with an undergraduate degree in elementary education.

Toni said, at one point, she debated over whether to go to college. Circumstances that surrounded her life, at the time she prepared for college, included the passing of her grandmother—who from a child, adopted and raised Toni as her daughter. Also, Toni described seeing the prosperity (e.g., mill jobs, cars, homes) of others in her community and questioned, "Do you really want to go [to college]?" Toni indicated her family was really laid back; however, they were supportive of her plans to attend college. She further explained,

> My first cousin-niece and I both went to college at the same time. We are the
> same age. But there was nobody saying, Go here. Go there. Play this. Play that.
> You should do this. You should do that. [They said], "Whatever you decide to do,
> we support it."

When she was asked about her inspiration for going to college, Toni replied, "I sought to complete college in my grandmother's honor. I wanted to be her first grandchild to complete college." Toni achieved her goal to be the first in her family to graduate from college. In 1995, Toni graduated with an undergraduate degree in history.

Myra explained it was important that she continue her mother's legacy as a college graduate and start her life without college debt. To this point, she stated,

> My mom was a first-generation [college student]. [Her accomplishment] was big
> because now, more people in our family are going to college. And she's been able
> to help other people, as well. But just [me] being the one to go to college, get a
> scholarship, and have [my college expenses] paid was different. [Having that full
> experience] is something I really liked. [Finishing college on scholarships] was

something I had to do. I wanted to let everyone else in my family [know], Hey

look. You can get a scholarship too. If you don't want to play basketball, there are

other scholarships out there for you. If you have a 4.0 GPA, let's look at academic

scholarships [for you].

Myra accomplished her goal to maintain academic and athletic scholarships to graduate

debt-free and before her scholarships were exhausted. In 2020, Myra graduated with an

undergraduate degree in business and management.

In alignment with their academic goals and commitments, each participant

graduated with their undergraduate degree.

Committed to the Goal

Committed to the Goal highlights how despite their sport commitment, the former

student-athletes continued to focus on their academic performance and graduation goals.

Toni and Myra's experiences address how they continued to focus on their graduation

goals amidst conflicting sport demands.

For Toni, the experience illuminated personal conflicts with playing basketball

and initial challenges to maintaining sport eligibility. The experience posed a familiar

situation for Toni since she experienced an academic challenge in middle school that

caused her to be ineligible to play basketball. Toni disclosed,

I was not the best student at all. [Before] the eighth grade, I was an A student. But

my eighth-grade year, I failed history. And I couldn't play basketball that year.

[The school] would not allow me to play that year because of my grades. And that

was a reality check.

Similarly, when she entered college, Toni had to adjust to being away from home and admitted she wasn't the best student. She indicated that her GPA dropped below 2.0 during the first two semesters of her freshman year, and at the time, basketball was a job and became a burden rather than an enjoyment. With tears, Toni shared,

> My books were more important to me than basketball. And I lost the love and passion for playing basketball in college because I felt it was my 9 to 5. It truly was my 9 to 5 because they placed money in admissions for me to attend this college. No matter what, I still had to show up for basketball practice. No matter what, I still had to run. No matter what, I still had to play this game. But my books were more important. It was to the point where, I truly believed sports interfered with my study.

She added, "It was important just to have a 2.0. And I was below that for two semesters." Toni remembered having internal dialogue along the lines of: "You came with a purpose. You need to accomplish that mission right here. While you got a little bit of free money to help you get [your degree], you better take full advantage of it. Party when you get finished." Toni indicated a positive shift in her academic performance after her freshman year.

Myra described occasional conflicts between class offerings and the basketball practice schedule. Game schedules posed a problem for Myra and her teammates to attend classes, complete assignments, and interact with their peers. However, she contended, "I understood that my education was my main priority and reason for college." Since Myra began playing basketball later than her high school teammates, she

was accustomed to assuming a demanding athletic schedule while maintaining her academic performance. Equally, she described how she received "extra tutoring" to maintain her academic performance before college. With respect to her pre-collegiate athletic regiment, Myra stated,

> I really didn't start playing basketball until maybe eighth or ninth grade. I wasn't that good when I first started. I mean, I started late. Everyone my age started [playing basketball] when they were kids. I was constantly in the gym. I couldn't do [things] with my friends. I had to go work out [for basketball] each day. I definitely learned early on you have to make sacrifices to improve your skills. Instead of attending prom—my junior year of high school—I was at one of the biggest AAU tournaments in NC. Instead of going to parties in high school or hanging out with friends on weekdays and weekends, I chose to be in the gym with my trainer to sharpen my skills and abilities.

To achieve her graduation goal, Myra stated, "Organization was key." She also explained, "Certain days of the week I would only focus on specific subjects. This allowed me to be more organized, intentional, detailed, and structured." In the classroom, Myra said, "I made sure to take thorough notes and occasionally engage myself by asking questions or participating [in class]." She also reported on Sundays, she would schedule time with peers or friends to have a study session or she isolated herself in a room at the library. She stated, "During the summers I would take online courses, work a part-time job, and continue to train for basketball. This came with doing schoolwork on vacations and sacrificing time with family and friends." Additionally, Myra revealed, "I understood

my education was the main priority and the reasoning for college. Instead of fully

relaxing on away games, I chose to knock out some schoolwork on the buses and in the

hotel rooms." Myra employed intentional strategies to manage her academic success and

goals with regard to the time demands associated with playing basketball.

Jami described her coach's impact through cultivating a team culture of academic

success and goal completion. She also stated, "I wasn't going to leave without a degree

because I didn't get my associate degree when I was at my [junior college]." Although

her goal to graduate was cemented prior to her enrollment, Jami acknowledged that her

coach played a significant role in shaping the team's mindset about graduation. She

shared, "[Coach] was able to cultivate a culture there for us that I don't think a White

female or male coach could do [when] working with so many African American players."

Jami explained her coach was serious, and she emphasized the players' purpose for

playing college basketball. She recalled the coach saying, "You graduate! You get a

degree!" She also shared,

> She was big on us getting "B's." If we had "B's," we got to go out for a steak
>
> dinner. If we had a 3.0 average, she took us to a steak dinner. She showed us
>
> education was important to her. And I knew I needed a degree.

The coach's team approach to bolstering positive graduation outcomes resembled the

approach Jami and her friends took towards things growing up. As an example, Jami

shared,

> My core friends, prior to college, all went to a university—a PWI as well. But we
>
> were all doing the same thing. We are all from the same community, the same

culture— everything. I felt like we were in [college] together—although we were

in different states or different parts of the state. We did everything together. We

completed everything together. And [graduating from college] was one of our

goals that we were doing together. Everybody saw us as the same. So, I probably

would have felt more embarrassed if I didn't complete [my degree] as well.

Jami also felt it would be an embarrassment to members of her home community to find

out she did not graduate from college. She expressed, "I was trying to make everybody

proud or to complete something together with my core group of friends."

Zia's experience demonstrates her engagement of aspirational capital to achieve

academic excellence as a graduation standard. She entered college as an honors college

student and with qualifying advanced placement (AP) credits from high school. Zia

explained she always had high academic expectations for herself. She shared,

In middle school, [I completed] the high school [level] classes. I was always

[enrolling in] the highest credit class I could [take]. I [completed] honors classes

from middle school through high school. I [received] college credit for every AP

class I [completed in high school]. I graduated with honors. I graduated top20 in

my class.

Because of her successful pre-collegiate academic and athletic history, Zia also aspired to

graduate with a 4.0 GPA. However, her goal was thwarted when she earned a "C" during

her freshman year. Zia professed that although the grade crushed her, the occurrence

made her "extra motivated to not get anything less than an A again." Zia also stated, "I

paid more attention to the syllabus—to all of the syllabi—that I read. I was very attentive

to instructions [and] thorough with any of the assignments." Regarding basketball, she stated, "Basketball did not affect my academics because I had the drive and ambition that I wanted to be as successful as I could at whatever I did. So, if basketball wasn't working then that's fine—academics was working."

The participants explained how their aspirations to earn a college degree helped them stay focused on their goals when they faced challenges associated with interactions withing sport and academic systems. Also, one of the participants shared the effectiveness of a coach establishing a team culture of academic success.

Summary of Engagement (Aspirational Capital)

Instead of focusing solely on their sport participation, participants demonstrated their engagement of aspirational capital to prioritize their student identities to accomplish their academic goals. Toni expressed how, initially, the demands of playing basketball negatively impacted her academic performance. Likewise, she elaborated on her engagement of aspiration/resistance talk to stay focused on her positive graduation outcome. Myra's experiences depicted her engagement of aspirational capital to employ time management strategies to accomplish her academic goals. Jami's situation highlighted the effectiveness of a coach to create a team culture that promoted academic goal completion and how the standards established by the coach encouraged her to maintain aspirations to earn a degree. Zia's experience showed her engagement of aspirational capital to achieve academic excellence after she encountered an academic challenge.

Brought Aspirational Capital from Home Communities

Although they entered college with varying environmental factors (e.g., family backgrounds, educational histories, communities, sport experiences), each participant indicated she came to college with the goal of earning her degree. While in college, they drew from their pre-entry goal commitment to engage aspirational capital to achieve their academic goal completion. Myra's engagement was shaped by the desire to continue a family legacy and a childhood experience that required her to activate a rigid basketball schedule while simultaneously maintaining her academic performance in high school. Zia's engagement was to achieve academic excellence, a standard fostered by her parents and recognized in her actions to take advanced courses as early as middle school. Jami's degree aspiration was shaped within her home community by watching peers who attended college on scholarship and then by the collective agreement she made with her core friends from high school. Furthermore, the coach used a team approach to promote Jami's graduation goal. Toni's degree aspiration resulted from her desire to be the first to honor her grandmother by earning a degree and focused on a pre-collegiate experience that impeded her participation to play basketball in the eighth grade. Shay's degree aspiration was shaped by her parents and witnessing family members who attained their college degree.

Fighting Battles I Shouldn't Have Been Fighting (Resistant Capital)

Fighting Battles I Shouldn't Have Been Fighting reflects participants' responses in situations they perceived to be motivated by inequitable ideologies related to their race, gender, or social class. Resistant capital refers to knowledge and skills cultivated through

oppositional behaviors that stand against inequality. Shay and Toni shared how situations they perceived to center racism and classism informed how they navigated campus differently as a form of resistant capital. Both participants felt they were targeted with negative comments and stereotypes because of their race and student-athlete status. Toni further described her perspective as a student-athlete from a lower social position and who entered college as a first-generation student who experienced academic challenges. Shay and Toni also shared the experience of having their sport development shaped in home communities that centered basketball as a boys' sport.

Shay shared an incident in which she and some of her teammates were stereotyped by a professor during their first days on campus. Shay recollected the professor introducing herself and then asking, "So what are you majoring in, recreation or PE?" Shay recalled the professor's shock to find her pursuit was to earn a degree in business. She stated, "I was pretty determined - even more from that conversation—not to major in [PE or recreation]. To me, it was an expectation that [if] you were a [Black] athlete [your major would be] either PE or recreation. Still offended by the situation in reflection, Shay asserted, "I was fighting battles I shouldn't have been fighting." To clarify, she explained,

> I mean, having to go and prove I can be in college and major in business or
> education. I don't have to major in PE. I can be an athlete and hold down being a
> resident assistant. I can be an athlete and graduate on time. I can be an athlete and
> major in education and be okay with that. Why was I fighting those

unnecessarily? I mean, why did I have to fight those battles? Why was it even a

battle?

Shay recalled shifting to a mode of proving herself as capable of earning a degree in something other than PE or recreation. She recalled her resistant talk, saying "Oh, I'm fighting. I'll show you. You are in that mode of I'll show you. I'm gonna show you." Shay indicated she was raised to be a fighter and to work hard. She also recollected on how gender stereotypes hindered her skill development and negatively influenced her outcome during tryouts for the eighth grade team. She shared,

> My mom wasn't a real fan of me playing basketball. I [played] t-ball softball, but
>
> never basketball. It wasn't until eighth grade that I tried out [for the basketball
>
> team]. There weren't a lot of girls playing, but [there were enough for a team] I
>
> feel like [basketball] was probably [viewed as] what boys do—not necessarily,
>
> girls. Softball was okay. T-ball was okay. But basketball? No, it wasn't really
>
> encouraged.

Shay indicated she was from a "family of basketball." Therefore, not making the eighth grade team was a disappointment. She further stated, "I wasn't ready at the time." She explained that her ninth grade year on the team was a developmental year, but by 10th grade, she earned a spot on the varsity team. Shay also stated she received scholarship offers in the 12th grade.

Toni described how she altered the way she navigated campus during her senior year after a negative encounter with a professor who she felt "punished the entire class" because a field trip had to be canceled. She explained,

He scheduled a field trip for the class to travel, but there were [students] whose

parents had already paid for flights for them to come home for Thanksgiving

Break. He punished those [who] didn't travel for those who traveled.

To clarify, Toni indicated due to her sport obligations, she was one of the students who

remained on campus and could travel to Charleston for the extracurricular experience.

However, some of her non-athlete peers had plans to spend time with their parents. Toni

explained, because of the trip being canceled, the professor gave the class an elaborate

assignment to read over 3,000 pages of literature and to complete an oral report.

Admittedly, Toni said she failed to comply with the requirements of the assignment, and

it resulted in an outburst between her and the professor. In retrospect, Toni said the

situation "[triggered my anger], and to cope with the anger outburst, I walked away. I felt

he mistreated those less fortunate, and I happened to fall in that category at that time."

She also revealed, "[Our] relationship was broken from that point because he punished

me for something I never should have been punished for [doing]." She later explained

that the eventual outburst came after four years of enduring issues such as the professor:

making negative comments about her work; accusing her of cheating on oral exams;

ignoring her in class; communicating about her through the coach instead of speaking

with her directly; and calling her Menace rather than by her name. To explain the latter,

Toni shared,

He called me Menace. He didn't call me Toni or [by my last name] - like *Menace

II Society*. I was never me. But that's what he called me. I honestly don't know

where that nickname or label came from. It was almost like for four and years you

were targeting me to the point where I broke.

When asked about her response after the outburst, Toni replied,

> I definitely avoided him on campus. I avoided all negative interactions with him.
> My final grade and graduation determination was based on him. He gave me the
> lowest grade (2.0) to pass me—which allowed me to graduate. He barely spoke
> with me at graduation."

Toni said prior to college, her "community network" (e.g., family, coaches, church members, friends) encouraged her to stay focused in college and advised,

> You [must] rely on your faith. No matter the situation, just be you. Don't ruffle
> feathers. Just stay humble. You'll get through it. Your mission is to go play
> basketball, get your degree, and go home or go wherever your degree leads you.
> You stay focused. I don't care what's going on, on that campus, stay focused. You
> [will] face some obstacles. You [will] face some racism because you are going
> into a different realm of people.

In concluding her thoughts on the issue, Toni stated, "I just feel like the Lord was really looking out for me because this man was really out for me." She also felt the professor's actions towards her were because she was an athlete, Black, and a woman. As one of two Black students in the history program, Toni did not recall the Black man student-athlete or her white student peers to encounter the same treatment from the professor.

These experiences depicted how the participants responded to negative encounters with faculty. Initially, both participants engaged in passive forms of resistant capital, and

145

then, Toni felt she was "triggered" to react negatively after enduring years of mistreatment by her professor.

Summary of Engagement (Resistant Capital)

After encounters with situations they perceived to project forms of oppression, Shay and Toni engaged resistant capital by changing the way they navigated college. Shay engaged resistance/aspirational talk to stay focused on her goal and to prove her ability to pursue a degree in education. After a negative encounter with one of her main history professors, Toni was intentional in her actions to avoid campus and classroom confrontation with her professor.

Brought Resistant Capital from Home Communities

Shay and Toni indicated their home communities shaped their development of resistant capital. Both participants expressed how their earliest development and engagement of resistant capital resulted from playing basketball as girl athletes. Also, Toni's community network cautioned her about the potential to encounter racism and how to respond to unfair treatment in college.

To Survive and Thrive (Social Capital)

To Survive and Thrive recognizes participants' interactions with institutional agents (e.g., peers, mentors, advisors, faculty, staff, coaches, etc.) and community members who provided essential support, resources, and networking opportunities for their persistence and social mobility. Social capital refers to networks of people and community resources. Additionally, the participants' stories highlighted how they responded to effective and ineffective campus socialization processes to persist to

graduation. The supposition is each participant developed and engaged social capital through their pre-collegiate sport experiences and recruitment processes to gain access to college for social mobility. To explain the different ways the former student-athletes engaged social capital three subthemes were developed: *Recruitment and Sport Commitment, Academic System Engagement, Faculty Engagement,* and *Sport System Engagement.*

Recruitment and Sport Commitment

Recruitment and Sport Commitment highlights how participants initially engaged social capital to negotiate their scholarships offers and to forge initial relationships within institutional sport systems—with a central focus on relationships with coaches. These experiences also offer insight on how participants' acquisition of social capital was shaped.

Zia stated she was not heavily recruited during high school, and her dad was very involved with the process by videotaping her performance, creating YouTube videos, and sending information to coaches. She also recalled the process to include "phone calls with the coaches and texting back and forth." In addition, Zia remembered feeling pressured into thinking she had to sign an early letter of intent with her institution or lose her scholarship. Still frustrated, she stated,

> And what people tell is you need to commit before your senior year. I got nervous about going into my senior year. The one institution had not offered yet, and they wanted to see me play during the season [before making an offer]. So, right before the season started, I went ahead and committed to the institution I attended. It was

the best offer at the time. I wanted to secure that scholarship. I mean college

coaches will tell you secure it now or somebody else will get it. But they

pressured me into it. I'm so [agitated] about that because I came to find out that I

had time [to sign my letter of intent]. I could have waited to commit. I mean, it's

smart on college coaches' part. But they were still signing people.

Toni remembered that her high school coach played a significant role in her

recruitment process. Her intentions were to attend and play basketball at HU, a

historically Black university, and her high school coach created the opportunity for

someone from HC to watch her play. However, when the coach came to observe Toni,

she was across the state getting fitted for a brace to support her knee after ACL surgery.

Toni recalled the next recruitment opportunity occurred on the day her grandmother

passed. She remembered,

My senior year, my grandmother passed. And my future college coach didn't

know. He didn't know, but he came to the school to see me—recruiting me. And

that was major to me. This man shows up during the time I am grieving. He had

no idea.

Toni said it was significant for her to have the coach recruit her on the day her

grandmother passed, and that is why she selected to play basketball at the institution she

attended.

Myra shared she had a few offers to play college basketball; however, she was

drawn by the location of the institution she attended, and she believed the institution had

a family-oriented atmosphere. Regarding her recruitment visit, Myra remembered,

I got to play and practice with certain teammates. And [I went] to dinners and just

kind of felt them out [got to know them]. And I felt the institution was more fit for

me—even the players, [For instance], I'm very girly. That's not necessarily the

dynamics for other female athletes that play basketball. That was something I

wanted to be around. I wanted to be around more women that kind of carried

themselves like me. But also, can put that work in and get a little rough on the

court. That was another reason why I chose that institution. And, of course, they

had my major. So, that was a plus. I just felt like that's where God was calling me

to be. It just aligned.

Myra also stated, "Part of the reason why I chose that school was because I was under the

impression the [team culture] was God-fearing and a motherly type environment within

that. I quickly found out it was a little bit different."

As previously shared, Shay received three scholarship offers to play college

basketball. When asked whether the prospects of earning a degree factored her decision,

Shay explained, "They were three pretty good colleges, and they had my major at the

time." Shay said having her major was the main thing, and the decision came down to

who was offering the most money cover her college expenses. Shay also shared,

What was cool about the recruitment is one of my high school teammates was

already there. She was two years older than me. And the coach was recruiting one

of my teammates from high school that was a year younger than me. After a

while, three of us were there—from the same high school. The team was really

good. The coach was really cool. The recruitment was great—from the institution,

as well. On top of it, they gave me the most money.

Shay explained she never had an opportunity to play for the coach who recruited her to play basketball. He became the head coach for the men's basketball team but remained at the institution and continued to serve as her mentor.

Jami stated recruitment was big for her in high school but when she considered transferring to a four-year institution, it was not a factor. She shared,

> In high school, I was big on recruitment. I wanted to go to CAU, [badly]. I don't even know why. I never visited [CAU]. But my high school coach wasn't good at—and I love the lady to death—recruitment and exposure. We would get things, and she wouldn't tell us.

She further stated, "After I matriculated to junior college, it wasn't that important to me. [I thought], okay, I'm [taking] whatever [scholarship offer] I can get. I [transferred] to my undergraduate institution without ever visiting the [campus]."

The participants' recruitment experiences showed how they interacted with coaches and teammates prior to college and how those interactions influenced their college selections. These experiences also provided evidence of how environmental factors influenced each participants' initial interactions within institutional sport systems.

Academic Engagement

Academic Engagement illuminates examples of each participants' interactions with individuals (e.g., peers, faculty/professors, teammates) within institutional academic systems. Participants' experiences demonstrate their engagement with teammates to establish learning networks that were important to achieving their academic goals.

Whether during their travel to play sports or in their rooms, they found a way to support each other's academic goals. In essence, within the confines of the team, they created their own networks to promote their opportunities for social mobility.

Myra recalled times she and her roommate would schedule impromptu study sessions in their apartment. She found during those sessions she and her roommate would "hold each other accountable" and "motivate each other and keep each other encouraged" to offer mutual motivation to complete their assignments. Myra noted, before college, she would work with her mom or a tutor to address her academic issues.

Shay expressed you gain the advantage of having a support system when you are on a team, and your teammates will ensure your success. Shay further shared,

> I struggled with writing papers, and I don't feel like my English foundation in high school prepared me for English in college. That was a struggle. Thank God one of my teammates was an English major. She helped me out a lot.

Though Shay's interactions were not shaped by a pre-collegiate academic experience, she was accustomed to receiving support from her family.

Toni described how she and her teammates stayed focused on their academic goals while playing basketball. She explained that above the friendships they developed, she and her teammates were each other's sources of support and inspiration. She shared, "We were all determined to get our degree at whatever cost. We were willing to help each other [achieve our academic goal]. And I didn't want to come home empty-handed." Toni also noted while the institution or athletic department may have provided other levels of academic support for student-athletes, those resources were not apparent to her.

Instead, she indicated, "We [she and her teammates] relied on each other a lot because we traveled a [lot]. Our focus on the road was to make sure each of us was where we needed to be academically." She further stated helping each other was a necessity since they needed to maintain a 2.0—even though they were pulled from classroom time. Toni said she and her teammates carried their [school] work and books on the road, and [they] became each other's tutors. As previously shared, Toni's experience of being ineligible to play basketball in 8th grade heightened her level of consciousness about grades and sport eligibility in college. Also, Toni stated she was encouraged by her community network to stay focused on her work in college.

Zia revealed she struggled with math in high school, and she did not have problems seeking help to address her issues. To explain how her reaction to challenges in high school reflected how she responded in college, she shared,

> I've always struggled with math. And probably one of the most pivotal things for me was my junior year of high school. I was in Precalculus honors. I'm telling you Pre-Cal almost took me out. It was just so hard. It was so hard. And it felt like no matter how much I did on my own, to try to understand the material, I just couldn't do it. And so, I would go to [my teacher] and get extra help all the time—anytime I needed it. My friend's dad was a math teacher, and I would get help from him.

While reflecting on that situation, Zia remembered she experienced the same challenges as a high school freshman. She recalled, "Geometry was the same way. I struggled with

152

Geometry, and I would go to my teacher and ask for help. And I didn't have a problem with it because I wanted to be so successful." She also added,

> When the same thing happened, and I was struggling with math in college, I
> would get extra help. And [I] didn't have a problem going to my professors for
> help. I had teammates who wouldn't. They would just struggle. But I learned
> early on to get help from my teacher or my professor. And that was very helpful.

These experiences highlighted the ways participants interacted with teammates and faculty to achieve positive academic outcomes or to overcome academic challenges. The interactions also showed a continued pattern of participants focusing on their academic goals and graduation outcomes.

Faculty Engagement

Faculty Engagement describes participants' interactions with faculty they felt were relevant to their persistence and informed their development of social networks. These experiences were outside of those directly related to improving the participants' academic performance. However, the impact was beneficial to their holistic development.

Related to faculty engagement, Zia indicated she was instructed by two Black professors during here entire time in college. And because the faculty dynamics reflected that of her entire education experience, she said "It didn't have an impact. I was kind of desensitized to acknowledging that. And so, it didn't really have much of an impact. I mean, they were just normal for me, you know?" After her freshman year, Zia changed her major from business to sociology. She recognized the relationships with her primary sociology professors and students in the program to be formative to her development. To

describe her professors, Zia said, "They were wonderful people. They were real. They would have real conversations. We were really laughing in the classroom [and] talking about real stuff. They were helpful. It wasn't as if they gave us dumb [assignments] that were useless." She further explained these professors helped her enjoy learning, taught fascinating things, and facilitated class conversations about "community and real issues. She added, "They really helped me enjoy learning."

Although she experienced a few challenges with high school math, Zia expressed similar thoughts about her high school experiences and how those experiences prepared her for college. She stated,

> I really enjoyed learning. I had a good time learning, and I learned a lot. I was so fascinated by information. Now, I hated doing assignments. I thought [assignments] were the worst thing ever. But I loved just the intake of knowledge. It was so fascinating for me. And I had a [wealth] of knowledge going into college.

Jami found the interactions in Professor Watson's class to stand out for her. Jami shared that in the professor's class, they did not have to be perfect or scholarly. She claimed, instead, "We could be ourselves, and she was real. And Professor Watson was a Black instructor—probably the only Black instructor I had the whole time I was there." To elaborate, Jami shared,

> She would let me know if I [said] something that wasn't right, or she thought I would offend somebody. She would call me [aside] and say things like, "I don't

think there's anything wrong with it, but I could see why somebody would take it offensive if you said this to them."

Jami felt Professor Watson allowed her to be authentic first. Then she helped Jami to understand how to alter her behavior in ways that allowed her to become more conscious of other people's feelings. Jami expressed she also established a relationship with Professor Watson outside the classroom. Similar to her relationship with Professor Watson, Jami revealed, prior to college, she established trusting relationships with her primary and secondary teachers and coaches. Regarding those relationships, she stated,

When I think about high school, I still talk to my high school coaches. I still talk to the football coach. All those connections I made in high school are probably the reason why I wanted to be a guidance counselor. Those people were important to me.

Jami also remembered, "We had an event at school, and I had to wear [my teacher's] wedding dress. [Those events] are the things I remember. The people that were in my circle, [those close to me], held me accountable."

Myra professed that at the beginning of each semester she would introduce herself to the professor. She found those initial encounters with her professors to establish the perception she was an athlete who cared about her academic performance. She also felt it was important for the professors to know she was not intentionally missing class or would use her athlete status as a crutch or an excuse to miss class. Myra stated, "First impression to me [are important]. After class, I waited on everyone to leave. I would go

and introduce myself." Myra said she wanted them to know, "I am going to be on the road, but let's communicate [about class]." She also shared,

> I think [our initial conversations] helped me a lot in the long run. If I didn't understand something or missed an assignment or class, [my professors] were more willing to help me or meet me one-on-one. I believe that made a big difference.

Out of those relationships, Myra remembered a professor attending some of their basketball games and being very supportive. The same professor allowed her to redo an assignment that Myra deemed did not demonstrate her knowledge of the content. Myra also mentioned a relationship she established with one of her professors resulted in a job offer after graduation.

Myra explained, as a child, she was taught to initiate greetings with others. She revealed, "[My mom] would encourage and tell me to simply say, "Hey." Looking back at it, [learning to greet people] helped to foster my behavior when it comes to meeting people, introducing myself, and making my presence known."

Among the faculty relationships that stood out for Shay was the one she developed with a professor from Canada. Shay suggested he was very supportive and explained, "He got it, though. When I look back, I realize he understood diversity. He got it! He did! He really helped me in terms of providing references. Also, he was a professor when I got my master's."

She clarified,

I just feel like he was aware of cultural diversity. [I am] talking about in the early 90s, on a campus where I really didn't see [diversity]. He understood too that there were some disadvantages for me—being an athlete and being the only Black in the classes. I think he went the extra mile to make sure I felt supported.

Shay also identified two other professors who supported her as an undergraduate student, helped her to secure employment after college, and wrote references for her graduate school and employment applications. Shay illuminated, "One of my professors really helped me get my first job and then got me back to the school where I student taught and wanted to be."

Shay's ideals of support stemmed from her home environment where she was supported by family members who understood the unique challenge of being a Black girl basketball player. Her uncle, a prominent basketball figure in Shay's home community, pushed her to be the best on the basketball court after she was cut from the eighth grade team roster. Also, Shay said, "My parents were super supportive [of me playing basketball]. I remember my dad put up a goal in the backyard. They didn't miss games. They came to all my high school games and a lot of my college games." Shay also stated,

My dad always instilled in us… Go be the best you. Nobody [is going to] give you anything. As a matter of fact, they are not expecting you to be anything. You [must always] put your best foot forward [or do your best]. I just think that's just how I was raised. [He also taught us to] be your own person [and] it's okay to be different.

The experiences revealed how positive interactions with faculty influenced and impacted participants' college experiences. Though the compositional diversity of faculty was acknowledged, the participants described positive relationships and social interactions in classes where their cultural differences were recognized and accepted.

Athletic Engagement

Athletic Engagement describes experiences or situations the participants found to advance their mobility. Zia and Shay's experiences describe how the relationships with members of their institutional sport systems (e.g., athletic department personnel, coach) impacted their social mobility.

Though Zia experienced a contentious relationship with her coach, she stated, "I felt a sense of belonging, especially with the athletic department [personnel]." Zia also expressed those relationships are still "near and dear" to her. The evidence and impact of those relationships are expressed in Zia's thoughts on her current position. She shared,

> I work for Fellowship of Christian Athletes now, in the county where my
> undergraduate institution is located. I have ten schools that I [offer] ministry to
> and [my undergraduate] institution is one of them. I'll call the AD and ask him for
> something, and he will say, "Oh, yeah, sure. We can do that."

Zia also indicated that she is on first name basis with athletic department personnel, and whenever she is on campus to work or for a visit, she experiences positive interactions with them. Zia also explained in addition to gaining a stronger relationship with the Lord, her college experiences prepared her for her current career. She revealed,

I'm literally in a position where I'm getting to help athletes who are in the same

position [I was in]. I go to practices and talk with players, individually. I do Bible

studies with players. If they are struggling academically, I try to point them in the

right direction. Hey, talk to your professor. Hey, go to tutoring. Get the help that

you need.

She added, "Because at the end of the day, basketball is going to stop, and you [must] do

something after that." Zia said she would not be as passionate about her work if she did

not struggle in college. She commented, "I wouldn't do it again, but I am grateful for that

experience—how the Lord showed Himself to me, and how he equipped me for the work

I'm doing right now."

In Shay's case, although the relationship with her coach never materialized to the

point of contention, she expressed,

My relationship with the new coach was tough. The guy who recruited me ended

up being the boys' coach. So, I never played for him. I never felt I embraced [or

accepted] the coach that came in for the three years after [my original coach

changed positions]. I [believe] it was because I was so close to the coach that

recruited me. [And] my new coach would always bring it up. He would always

remind me that he felt [as if] I was closer to the coach who recruited me, and I

didn't [accept] him [as a coach]. So, we had an awkward relationship.

Even though that relationship was awkward, Shay maintained the relationship with her

first coach and named him to be one of her mentors. To describe their relationship, Shay

stated,

My mentor, who I was really close with, was the men's coach. And we were close

the entire time [I was in college]. That was kind of like my person that was safe

and I could go to for anything to be quite honest.

Shay also indicated one of her mentors advocated for her to receive an assistant coach

position at another institution. She was hired and served in the position for three years.

The participants experiences exposed the athletic culture at their institutions to

foster social support and leadership development. In both situations, those positive

relationships enhanced the social mobility of the former athletes after they graduated

from their respective institutions.

Summary of Engagement (Social Capital)

Although their experiences were different, the participants' engagement of social

capital was apparent in their initial interactions to gain access to college through

recruitment. Also, participants described multiple ways they engaged social capital to

achieve academic success and to access academic support from teammates and faculty.

Additionally, they described their engagement of social capital to develop and maintain

social networks with faculty and members of their athletic department (e.g., coach,

athletic director, athletic department personnel). The latter engagements of social capital

resulted in career opportunities for participants.

Brought Social Capital from Home Communities

Each participant engaged in recruitment and pre-collegiate sport activities they

described to shape their athletic talent and provided opportunities for them to develop

social capital by networking with others (e.g., teammates, coaches, teams, fans,

community members, etc.) Myra also shared how one-on-one interactions with tutors or playmates, facilitated by her parents, fostered her development and deployment of social capital. Shay indicated family members shaped her development of social capital, and she further enhanced her social capital development by playing basketball. Toni shared how her engagement of social capital was shaped in her home and by the advice she received from her community network. Zia and Jami described high school experiences that influenced their social capital development.

Like Home (Familial Capital)

Like Home surfaced how participants used and referred to the knowledge, values, and ideals they gained from their various home communities (i.e., church, community) and the relationships they established in college as influencers of their persistence. Familial capital refers to cultural knowledges nurtured within family and community. Though described differently, each participant explained how the continuous interactions with their family and home community networks influenced their persistence. This form of capital also emerged as participants expressed how the relationships or kinships they gained from teammates, athletic department personnel, faculty, local church members, and team families helped them gain a sense of belonging at their respective PWIs. Three subthemes were developed to demonstrate participants' engagement of social capital as a persistence factor: *I'm Not Doing This By Myself, A Sense of Belonging,* and *My Extended Family.*

I'm Not Doing This By Myself

I'm Not Doing This by Myself focuses on how participants' families or connections with individuals from their home communities impacted their persistence. Each participant indicated the importance of maintaining relationships and ties with home (e.g., family, church members, friends, community) as factors that influenced their persistence.

Multiple participants described their families as loving and supportive. Shay stated, "They came to games. They came to visit. They made sure I had everything I needed, including money and clothing. I had a car my freshman year." She also shared several family members accompanied her to college, and her church was supportive of college students.

Myra expressed, "Having their love and their support throughout the way [was important] —especially in college because I was four and a half hours away from home." Like Shay, Myra recognized their attendance at her games and how being able to see her family and friends helped her stay grounded. She also revealed the connectivity with her family to include phone calls to her mom to vent and receive advice. Myra found her family to be a source of encouragement and emotional support throughout college. She shared, "Still being able to confide in my family about what I was going through and having them encourage me [was good]. 'Hey, you got this. You can see it through. Graduate. You got it!'" In addition to encouragement, those words offered aspiration/resistance talk to support Myra's goal completion.

Zia discussed the positive impact of having her family, extended family, church members, and former coaches at games. Like Myra, she recognized the phone calls with her mom as beneficial to express what was going on in college and to receive encouragement. However, she found the physical presence of her family to be more advantageous. She stated,

> Seeing my parents … the physical support was more important for my decision to stay in college. The phone calls were more of a venting thing—helping me to know I was not alone. The physical… I can put my eyes on you. You have come out of your way here lets me know I'm not doing this by myself. That was more important.

Zia also revealed it was helpful to be able to relate her situation to a childhood friend who was experiencing the same types of basketball challenges at another institution.

Toni and Jami also acknowledged that their families showed support by attending games. Toni recalled, "And it was a highlight for my family to travel to games because they thought the world of us. So that was motivation." She also shared how her community network traveled to games and followed the team.

Jami indicated after her parents moved to a nearby state, they would come to the games and sometimes traveled to see the team play basketball. She stated, "Eventually, my parents were able to come [to our games]. But in the beginning, no, because the games were too far from home.]"

These experiences described how continuous interactions with their family allowed participants to feel supported in college and gave them a sense of their family's

presence. The participants described phone calls and the physical presence of their families at games provided emotional support.

A Sense of Belonging

A Sense of Belonging focuses on the participants' deployment of familial capital to forge kinships and relationships to gain a sense of belonging on campus. More than social or networking relationships, participants described these associations to convey a feeling of family, friendship, kin, or home with individuals on campus. Their responses also illuminate whether their sense of belonging was influenced by institutional factors such as compositional diversity, racial climate, and the availability of culturally relevant resources.

Jami described the campus as a predominantly White religious institution and a dry campus that did not have historically Black fraternities and sororities. She also recognized the campus lacked racial diversity and "most of the Black people [on campus] were athletes." As an initial experience, Jami recalled witnessing racism and further stated, "I knew I was Black. But the people let me know I was Black when I came to this State. They informed me." As a result of these factors, Jami gained a sense of belonging with her teammates, coach, athletic department personnel, the men's basketball coach, and a member of the men's basketball team. To explain the significance of those relationships she stated,

> I think if I felt alone and didn't feel I belonged there, or didn't feel I was wanted or needed, I probably would have resorted to leaving—many times. There were times when things were not going well with basketball, not academically or in

school. I [thought], I'm going home. I want to go home. But that was just because

I was mad or in my feelings. But if I didn't have those relationships, I probably

would have [left] or not completed [my degree] - even though in my head I had

the will power and said, this is where I am going to get my degree. The

relationships I built and the people that surrounded me were probably the reason

why I was able to stay there, complete [my degree program], and still stay in this

State.

Jami explained she grew up in a community that was predominantly Black. She stated,

We were all minority. We all were in the same melting pot. We were all together.

We were all grinding together. But, when I came to this State, it was like people

blatantly let you know. And they didn't have to say anything. It's the way they

looked and the way they talked.

Jami also indicated not being made to feel welcomed by school administrators and

officials was not an issue because she intentionally established sustaining relationships

with the people she was around most.

Zia recognized although the campus was "the right size" for her, there was not a

lot to experience on campus because her focus was on basketball. She stated, "It was very

little on campus because I was so focused on basketball. I was in honors college at the

time, so I figured I might have some community with honors college. However, Zia

revealed,

My community really was my basketball team. My sense of belonging… I felt I

belonged with the team. Again, the primary purpose of me going to that

institution was to play basketball. And so that's kind of how I filtered everything.

I didn't necessarily feel a sense of belonging with the school—if that makes sense. As highlighted in Zia's engagement of social capital, she felt a sense of belonging with staff in the athletic department and shared how those relationships benefited her present position in working with current student-athletes. Also, Zia previously revealed how she grew up in an education system where the demographics for each of the school she attended were predominantly White. Zia indicated she was a part of a high school basketball culture that centered on cohesiveness, "selflessness" and "a winning mentality."

Shay indicated since she grew up in a Christian home, she held certain expectations for attending a religious school. However, in addition to having curfews, Shay found the institution to employ strict religious-based practices on movie ratings, dress code, church attendance, and they were required to pray before and after classes and practice. She also expressed,

> And then there were a lot of people that didn't look like me. Also, I feel like they
> felt if something was going to happen, it was going to be the [Black] athletes
> [blamed for it]. I felt we had a kind of laser eye on us, in terms of if somebody
> was not following rules. It's a huge school for people going into the ministry.
> There were things happening with the kids going into the ministry. But those
> things were always kept, hush, hush! And I felt, as athletes, if we did something,
> everybody knew it.

She added, "I mean, it seemed like we always had to kind of just be on guard—all the

time." Consequently, her bonds and sense of belonging were shaped around the relationships she developed with her teammates and former coach/mentor. Shay concluded, "An advantage that you have playing on an athletic team [is] they're not going to let you fail."

As described in her engagement of social capital, Shay grew up in a supportive environment where she was encouraged to be the best and to find ways to overcome challenges. Shay was also raised to appreciate her differences and she had overcome sport challenges. Her relationships with the other athletes and her teammates were kinships.

Myra described her higher education experience taking place in a location where the institution and its surrounding community had a low racially minoritized population. She indicated the campus did not offer much to interest her, but she was also primarily focused on basketball and getting her education. Specific to campus diversity she witnessed on her initial visit, she stated,

> I did not see a lot of Black people at all. The few Black people I did see were either on my team or they played a sport. As far as a regular student attending, you didn't really see that.

She added,

> Now, if I didn't play basketball and didn't have a scholarship, would I have chosen that school? No. I would have gone somewhere where there were more Black people, more African American people, and would have given me more comfort. So that definitely would have impacted my decision. If I didn't [have a

scholarship], I wouldn't have chosen to go four hours away from home, yet alone,

be in that condition.

Myra admitted her experiences at a predominantly White private primary school made it easier to adjust in college. Myra explained she gained a sense of belonging with her roommate, who was also a Black women basketball player. She shared, "We really kind of made our home like our apartment—because we were roommates. We could confide in and feel comfortable with each other, or just in general." Myra also indicated she gained a sense of home with her roommate, and to describe the feeling she stated, "So at the end of the day, we still had a place [where] we knew we could go, where we belonged, and it didn't matter."

Toni disclosed coming to campus was a "different world" for her. She recalled feeling like a double outsider because she was a Black athlete. She also recalled thinking,

So here I am, walking onto a campus where I held one religious belief and was introduced to a different one. The religion was totally different. It is predominantly White. Here I am, a Black student athlete. My grades probably weren't as high as those that were coming in from all the other states and of a different hue.

Toni also noted the campus composition had low representation of Black students. She elaborated,

When I got to college, I may have been part of 10% that was on campus. And then we were isolated. To me, I felt like I lived on the third floor, and that was the athletes' floor. I think, it may have been a few [athletes]—because it was an

overflow—were on the next floor. But the third floor was really the athletes'

floor. So, we were isolated—if that makes sense to you.

Toni indicated after her freshman year, she became acquainted with other peers, and she

escaped campus life with two friends who had cars. She also remembered being in a

singing group that traveled, sang at chapel, and participated in talent shows. With respect,

Toni said they had outlets and opportunities to do things. However, because of basketball

curfew they were required to return to campus at specific times. Toni further suggested

the campus students were segregated based on sports. Because Black women and men

athletes comprised one group, Toni stated, "we gravitated to each other because of our

culture." Moreover, Toni shared, "I didn't have family nearby. So, my basketball team

became my family. The coaches became my fathers. Yeah. They stood in the gap."

Toni indicated she grew up with a good community network that embraced her as

their own after her grandmother passed during her senior year in high school. She shared

how they influenced her interactions with others in college. Toni also developed an initial

relationship with her coach prior to her campus arrival and after the passing of her

grandmother. Each of these relationships gave Toni a sense of family.

These experiences described how, in the absences of compositional diversity and

culturally relevant activities, the sense of belonging participants gained with their

teammates and members of their athletic communities were relevant to their persistence.

My Extended Family

My Extended Family describes the family connections participants developed

outside of those formed on campus and at home. Like those described to give participants

169

a sense of belonging on campus, these relationships enabled participants to gain a sense of belonging within the local community.

As previously highlighted, Zia brought to college, traditional church values that influenced the eventual bonds she established with members of a church near the campus. Additionally, she was encouraged to seek help, when necessary. Zia used the traditional values she brought from home to establish a bond with members of a local church to manage the stress of playing basketball. She described the relationships with the members to strengthen her emotionally and spiritually. She shared,

> I remember a lot of times going into church on a Sunday, just feeling so broken and defeated from basketball and my relationship with my coach and stuff. And, church, felt like a refuge for me. It felt like a drink of water just to be around those people who just loved me. They were always so kind and welcoming. And it helped my emotional health, for sure, and my spiritual health.

When asked about how those experiences influenced her persistence to graduation, Zia added,

> I don't think I would [have given] up on college, but I don't know. If I didn't have my relationship with my church, my church family, and just that outlet with the events that were going on, I don't know. I mean, I don't know how it would have impacted my graduation.

In addition to extending kinship, Zia's description of the relationships she established with church members gave the former student-athlete a sense of family and home. Zia's pursuit of support for her emotional and spiritual health demonstrated her resiliency and

unique characteristic to find sources of support for herself and to understand the

relevance of those networks to her success.

Specific to her initial thoughts about the campus, Jami recalled, "There was a

Confederate flag on the corner, and we almost turned back around after driving 15

hours." She later added, through a frown, "My sister was like … Am I dropping my baby

off here? And I was like, let's just go, whatever." In response to their concerns, Jami

recalled her coach insisted, "I'm going to take care of your sister. Don't worry about it."

To describe the evolution of their relationship, Jami stated,

> The relationship we built outside of basketball is probably more important than
>
> what we built from basketball. I think [our relationship outside of basketball] was
>
> probably the most important thing for me in completing [my degree], staying [in
>
> college], and being happy while I was there. I had someone there I knew would
>
> advocate for me—like no other.

Jami also indicted the coach helped her spiritually by standing up as a woman of God.

She shared, "My college coach became more than a coach. Her family became my

family. And so, if it was Sunday, I would go to church with her and her family."

Also, Jami recognized her coach's family to play a significant role in her

persistence. She explained that her coach's family regarded her as family and made sure

that she was okay in college. Regarding kinship with the coach's family, Jami elaborated,

> Easter, big holidays when we couldn't go home, I would go with her family. And
>
> even now, if she says aunt, I say aunt. Her parents, I called them my grandparents.
>
> Recently, her aunt passed, and she put my name as Jami Smoltz. There is a picture

of me in the obituary. I feel when you make it inside someone's obituary, you're

close [family]. So they became real family. They became more than friends or just

associates. They became family … like, I'll make sure you're okay.

She also shared,

My mama always said, I always find people everywhere I go. Somebody always

connects with me. In high school, I had somebody. In middle school, I had

somebody. It's always that one or two people that somehow or some way connect

[with me]. They look out [for me] and [attend to] my well-being. My mom said

she doesn't know what it is about me, but I always find that one person that

makes sure I'm okay.

With the institution more than 15 hours away from her home community, Jami was also

able to establish a sense of family and home with her coach's family.

In these experiences, participants recognized the relationships with members of

the campus community and how those kinships influenced their college persistence. Both

participants described kinships outside of campus that gave them a sense of home and

provided spiritual, social, and emotional support.

Summary of Engagement (Familial Capital)

Each participant shared how their engagement of familial capital was relevant to

the family support they received prior to and during college. As examples, they

highlighted how family and members of their communities supported their sport

participation by traveling to games to watch them play basketball. Zia and Myra

described their engagement of familial capital included gaining support through phone

172

calls and conversations to manage strained relationships with their coaches. In the absence of compositional diversity, amidst incidents of racism, and with the lack of culturally relevant resources, participants engaged familial capital to gain a sense of belonging and kinship with their teammates and athletic department personnel. Jami also described how she engaged familial capital through the relationship with her coach and how their relationship blossomed into another aspect of familial capital to bond and form kinship with the coach's family. Zia engaged familial capital by first drawing on her traditional values of spirituality and then through the kinships she gained because of her church participation.

Brought Familial Capital from Home Communities

The participants' development of familial capital was first recognized in their participant narratives for chapter three. Foundational to their development of all cultural capital attributes, familial capital was shaped by environmental factors (e.g., family background, community, sport participation, education history), interactions, lessons, relationships, and experiential knowledge the participants acquired from their home communities. The familial capital participants developed through their home relationships also enabled them to form relational skills relevant to their replenishment and engagement of familial capital in college.

Paths to Success (Navigational Capital)

Paths to Success describes how participants interacted within institutional systems or found resources pertinent to their positive graduation outcomes. Navigational capital refers to skills to maneuver through systems and institutions. To explain the different

ways the former student-athletes engaged navigational capital through interactions within and outside institutional systems, two subthemes were developed: *Meeting Sport-Related Time Demands and Campus Resources.*

Meeting Sport-Related Time Demands

Each participant described how sport-related time demands factored into their college experience. Specific to the demands were morning conditioning, evening practices and games. Their morning conditioning, and practice shootarounds occurred as early as 5:00 in the morning and at times before attending 8:00 a.m. classes. Jami and Myra described their morning rituals to begin at 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. and to include pool workouts, running, and morning shooting drills to end around 7:30 or 8:00 a.m. Toni recalled a typical day to start around 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning and to include running before she went to class. Zia stated she never had a class before 8:00; therefore, she would use mornings to complete her workout and get in shots. Though the participants' practice times varied in-season and out-of-season, and depending on the institution and decade in college, the participants recalled practicing five to six times a week for 2 to 3 hours after completing classes. Similarly, they described practices to include stretching, prepping for games, watching film, going over plays, scrimmaging, and completing basketball drills. Also, they described game days to include traveling to compete, leaving campus early, missing classes, and sometimes returning after midnight. Shay and Toni recalled their game experience to also include players driving the vans to and from games. Shay recalled,

We traveled quite a distance—a lot of times on vans. I don't know if we ever rode

a charter bus. It was always on vans. And back then, some of the players had to

help drive too. If you were an upperclassman, you drove the vans too. So, you get

back really late at night. Sometimes you might get back at two in the morning. If

you had an 8 o'clock class, you [had to] be there the next day. That was tough.

With similar thoughts on the issue, Toni shared,

We were required to drive—even after we had played. Our coach would drive one

[van]. If there were two other vans, [there] would be student drivers. We would

rotate driving each other back and forth from games. If we played a whole game,

we would have to drive—if it was our time to drive. We had a lot of responsibility

on our backs. We were teenagers—some of us teenagers like me. We were

between the ages of 18 and 22 or 23. Driving… being responsible for other lives

on the interstates, in city traffic—and you know how it can be. And it probably

was worse back then. Or traveling [rural, less populated] roads. You know, we

had a lot of responsibility on us. Not only were we responsible for keeping our

grades. We were responsible for practice. We were responsible for driving each

other and making sure we kept our teammates safe. I wasn't prepared for all the

responsibility that was tagged on like driving! We had to make sure we had a

valid driver's license because we were The Drivers—to transport our team back

and forth to games.

As a former coach for the same institution she attended as a player, Shay determined that

institutional practices no longer include women basketball players driving to and from

games.

In short, these experiences emphasized the sport-related time commitments the participants were required to manage in addition to their academic requirements. Unexpectedly, participants also revealed that part of their sport obligation included driving team vans to and from games.

Campus Resources

Campus Resources describes participants' knowledge and use of available resources to promote their holistic development (e.g., academic tutors, advisors, organizations). Participants described resources they remembered were available at their respective institutions and indicated whether they utilized campus resources to achieve their academic goals or engage socially.

Jami previously shared that the campus lacked the opportunity for Black students to join historically Black fraternities and sororities. She remembered the availability of academic resources such as labs where student-athletes could go to receive assistance with writing papers and for math support. She also indicated study hall hours were mandated for student-athletes whose grades were "below a "B" or were not doing well." She also stated, "[The coaches] were highly academic driven. If you [did not] have the grades, you [could not] practice or play. I felt we had the support we needed. We just had to go out and get some support." In addition, Jami shared, "Sometimes I wanted to be in study hall because that allowed me time to focus solely on what was in front of me— which was work. Whereas if I [had gone] to my room, something could [have] come up.

Regarding campus resources, Shay stated, "We had study hall, and I had an advisor who was over me. I had teammates." She recalled, "We had—I want to call—a Black Student Union on campus. We had a choir—we would get together and sing." Shay also indicated that she had "mentors and academic structures set up to make sure all was well [with me]," and she saw those mentors and structures as resources and support. Additionally, Shay mentioned her role as a resident assistant (RA) was to serve as a resource and offer support for students assigned to her residential hall floor.

In addition to her earlier recollection of singing with a group, Toni recalled the positive impact her RA had on keeping residents encouraged and motivated in college. In addition, Toni described her RA as a person she could go to for help, when needed. Toni could not recall whether the institution had a study hall for student-athletes; however, she remembered being assigned to receive academic advisement from the Department Chair of the English Department. She shared, "And because my advisor was the English [Department] Chair, my work study [was] in the English Department. Also, Toni vaguely remembered,

> There was a lady on campus that would assist in preparing [students] to either
> have jobs lined up after they graduated or worked [with them] on resumes. I never
> had that experience. I don't know if it was because I didn't take advantage of it or
> I didn't have the time to take advantage of it.

Myra explained she never had the opportunity to get involved with campus life. She stated she did not have time for campus activities because of her involvement with basketball. Myra also shared that she and her roommate began attending Bible study;

however, their participation lasted three weeks. Also, Myra recalled the availability of academic support; however, she remembered gaining greater benefits from interacting with her professors. She explained,

> I mean the support was there. Academic wise, I feel like I received more support
>
> from my professors—more so than my coaches. Because you also [must] think on
>
> the business aspect of it. College athletics is a business. So, even though [coaches]
>
> want you to have good grades and do good in the classroom to be eligible, they
>
> also want to see you produce. Because that's how [coaches] get paid. It's not that
>
> they didn't support me in that area, [I was] self-motivated, as well.

In addition, Myra remembered having an academic advisor that was assigned to her by the athletic department. She shared, "She helped me stay on course by making sure I was taking the right classes to graduate in 4 years. She recommended what summer courses I should take versus the ones I shouldn't." She also indicated that the institution offered tutoring services; however, she had to initiate processes to receive help.

Previously Zia described campus as the right size and fit for her and she shared her thoughts on available resources. Also, she recalled participating in a campus Christmas activity and stated she went to New York and participated in fun activities with the honors college. Regarding academic support, Zia remembered study hall was assigned to student-athletes at the discretion of their coaches and there was an advisor for the team. She also shared that teams had study hall check-ins that required student-athletes to be present but did not hold them accountable for completing their work. In addition, she stated, "They normally have somebody monitoring study hall. But if you

have one person monitoring 10-15 people, I don't know how effective it will be." Also, Zia revealed, "My coaches, they didn't make us do study hall—unless our grades were bad." She contended that her coaches were not supportive academically—outside of players maintaining sport eligibility. She expressed, "So, my thoughts on their support are it was selfish and ineffective, because their motivation for my teammates was… hey, you just need to do your work, so you can play." Furthermore, Zia implied the support offered by the academic department was not sustainable. She shared,

> I remember specifically one of my teammates was really struggling with two classes. Honestly, she wasn't doing her work because she was just mentally out of it. And I went to one of our support staff members on her behalf to ask for help. The staff member was helpful to a point—initially reaching out to the professor. But she didn't follow up with my teammate saying, Hey, are you doing your work? Hey? How is it going?

Zia indicated she was the one doing the follow-up to assist her teammate. She further stated,

> The thing is my coaches didn't even know. And this was our best player—an all American player. And my coaches didn't even know she was not doing her work for two classes she needed, or she would [have been] ineligible for the next semester. They had no clue.

With respect to her use of support services, Zia admitted she was internally motivated to be academically successful, and she only sought to find resources and academic support

to assist her teammates. Zia also explained the experience of assisting her teammate with support, helped her to realize her purpose to assist other athletes. She added,

> I'm literally in a position where I'm getting to help athletes who are in the same position [I was in]. I go to practices and talk with players individually. I do Bible studies with players. If they are struggling academically, I try to point them in the right direction.

As previously highlighted in Zia's engagement of social capital, based on her own experiences in high school and in college, Zia understood the importance of finding the right resources to achieve success.

The participants indicated their respective institutions offered limited opportunities for them to participate in activities outside of their sport. However, they identified academic resources and support to include tutors, labs (math and writing), study hall, and academic advisors.

Summary of Engagement (Navigational Capital)

The participants described their limited engagement of navigational capital to activities and resources that piqued their interest and supported their academic goals. Shay and Toni engaged navigational capital to find singing groups which allowed them to express their talents. Myra's engagement of navigational capital was to find a Bible Study group, utilize campus tutors for academic support, access resources and support in study hall, and navigate coursework under the guidance of her advisor. Jami also engaged navigational capital to gain access to study hall resources and space. Zia's engaged

navigational capital to find and participate in a campus Christmas activity and to locate resources for her teammate.

Brought Navigational Capital from Home Communities

Participants' development of navigational capital was shaped in their home communities and based on their pre-collegiate experiences. Zia, Toni, and Myra shared pre-collegiate experiences that required them to seek academic support as primary and secondary students. Also, each participant explained that pre-collegiate sport activities and interactions (i.e., AAU, community recreations, tournaments, family and community interactions) fostered their navigational capital to enhance and develop their sport talent.

It Took More Engagement by Me (Multiple Forms of Capital)

It Took More Engagement by Me explicitly describes the participants' engagement of community cultural wealth as a dynamic process. In greater details than previous examples that faintly showed the intertwining of cultural capital, these examples expose participants' engagement of multiple forms of capital to respond to challenges and access resources relevant to their persistence. Three subthemes were developed to demonstrate how through a dynamic process, participants simultaneously engaged cultural capital in varying ways to persist in college: *Contending to Keep My Scholarship, A Change of Plans, and My Mental Health Support*.

Environmental factors and experiences previously shared to foster their development of community cultural wealth in previous examples for this chapter are presumed to influence the participants' response in this section. Therefore, a summary of engagement and an explanation to show participants' development of cultural capital are

excluded from the end of this subsection. As previously described in this chapter, the forms of community cultural wealth engaged by participants include:

- *Aspirational capital* refers to the ability to remain hopeful of dreams and goals – despite adversity, barriers (i.e., perceived or real).

- *Familial capital* refers to cultural knowledges nurtured within family and community.

- *Social capital* refers to networks of people and community resources.

- *Navigational capital* refers to skills to maneuver through systems and institutions.

- *Resistant capital* refers to knowledge and skills cultivated through oppositional behaviors that stand against inequality.

Contending to Keep My Scholarship

Contending to Keep My Scholarship portrays how participants engaged aspirational capital in situations that proposed a challenge for them to maintain their scholarships. Zia and Myra described the relationships with their coaches as contentious. To respond to the adversity, they experienced with their coaches, they chose to bond with teammates and continued playing basketball to maintain their scholarships.

Zia expressed it was rough playing for her coach, and she and another teammate almost "trauma bonded" over their experiences. Regarding the problematic situation with her coach, the emotional support she received from the church was noted in the previous section to show Zia's engagement of familial capital. To offer greater details on the coach, Zia shared,

College coaches are under so much pressure to succeed. [The thought is] succeed or lose your job. Players can sometimes become a means to an end. For me, this is how I felt…if number 4, not Zia hits her shots, we're [going to] win games. If we win games, my reputation is maintained, and I keep my job.

Despite claims of a miserable basketball experience, Zia emphasized earning a degree was her primary focus and her basketball scholarship paid for her opportunity to earn a degree. To this point she stated, "And probably the only reason I kept playing is because [my scholarship] was paying for school, and I didn't want to be labeled a quitter."

Finishing college on scholarship was an important aspect of Zia's academic and athletic identities; therefore, leaving college before earning a degree or quitting the basketball team were not options. Zia indicated "the accolades that came with [recognizing my performance] were motivation for me." She further explained the adoration and admiration she gained from others always motivated her to be the best academically and athletically. Zia elaborated,

Grades were a priority for me. Having good grades and then I was just a really good athlete. I found, in growing up, my mindset was if I can maintain the best grades—all A's was my expectation—then I'll get more affection, adoration from people. I remember during our elementary school awards days; people would just be in awe of me because I'd have a million certificates. And I loved that! I just loved that people thought so highly of me. And then, same thing with basketball. I just love the positive attention I got from sports. So, in part my growing up, my ambition for sports was also ambition for the affection from other people.

Zia also reflected on how her upbringing played a role in her response to the situation with her college coach. She stated,

> If my parents hadn't raised me a certain way, I would have thought, if basketball wasn't going well, then nothing was going well. And [my basketball experience] would have crushed me. But [my parents] raised us to see the big picture. Yes, basketball is not going well, but school is. Ultimately, my school is the thing that [will] get me to [my career goal]—not necessarily basketball.

In concert, Zia engaged aspirational, social, and familial capital to maintain her athletic scholarship. The bonding she developed with her teammate and relationship with church members depicted her simultaneous engagement of social and familial capital. To explain, Zia expressed in previous sections that she recognizes her relationships with church members and teammates to resemble family. Additionally, she had the wherewithal to engage navigational and social capital to realize their relevance in helping to support her emotional needs. Zia also relied on aspects of familial and aspirational capital to fuel her motivation to keep playing basketball and to counter thoughts of quitting the team or leaving college. First, Zia was motivated to succeed academically and athletically by the praise and adoration she gained from others. Therefore, quitting basketball or leaving college before earning a degree would project negativity to her character. Also, Zia's recollection of her upbringing served as a reminder that her academic goals, not playing basketball, would lead to her desired career. Playing basketball—on scholarship—was the means to accomplish that goal.

Like Zia, Myra entered college with the distinct goal of earning a degree while on

scholarship. However, Myra experienced a strained relationship with her coach and temporarily lost her scholarship due to being kicked off the team. To describe her goals, she explained,

> [My] main goal was to graduate. But the four years I was at my institution, [players] would lose their scholarships—whether it was basketball or academics. [My goal] was to graduate in 4 years. I noticed most people would have to [stay in college] an extra semester or another year. [Staying longer] is not something I wanted. Those were my main goals, and [I wanted to] get on the Dean's List at least one semester.

In addition, Myra recounted an extensive workout regimen that required her and her teammates to spend long hours practicing, training, conditioning, running, swimming, and fulfilling other obligations to meet their sport commitment. Because she was meeting obligations to play on the team, Myra was unaware of what caused the relationship with her coach to go awry. Myra also expressed how teammates urged her to speak with the athletic director about the coach's actions. To describe the incident where she temporarily lost her scholarship Myra recalled,

> There was one incident where she actually kicked me off the team because she thought I didn't want to be there. I don't know how she would think that. But from that conversation on … No! I was gonna show her that I wanted to be there. While everyone else was not in the gym, I was in the gym every single day to prove to her I wanted my scholarship. And I wanted to be there regardless of whatever else. I definitely feel like that [situation] kicked another gear in me.

185

Also, like I said, when it came down to those end-of-the-year meetings, she

couldn't say I wasn't in the gym every day. She couldn't say I didn't give effort.

She couldn't say I didn't show I wanted to be there. So, I just wanted to control

my own narrative, I guess.

Myra explained she started playing basketball later than others in her community, and

this caused her to train more intensely to develop basketball skills. She explained being

kicked off the team, and the prospect of losing her scholarship provoked a reflection on

one of her initial experiences as a novice basketball player. Myra recalled,

I started basketball in ninth grade. I had to be in the gym all day. I had to make

those sacrifices to not be with my friends to work on this craft [basketball], so I

could get good at it. And when going in college, the same thing showed up, [I

thought], Hey, so now you're here. Your scholarship is being questioned, for

whatever reason. So, it is time to go back to step one. Be in the gym. Make that

sacrifice to show you want to be here.

In addition, Myra felt leaving the institution prior to graduation or entering the transfer

portal were not options. She remembered thinking, "I'm gonna finish my 4 years here.

And this is where God called me to be. And this is how we're gonna finish it."

Myra's engagement of aspirational and social capital is simultaneously

represented in her words and actions to prove she deserved to keep her scholarship. As an

example, she stated, "No! I was gonna show her that I wanted to be there. While

everyone else was not in the gym, I was in the gym every single day to prove to her that I

wanted my scholarship." Furthermore, Myra's actions to prove her athleticism

186

demonstrated her "silent stance" and engagement of navigational and social capital to interact within the institutional sport systems to maintain her place on the team and achieve her graduation goal. Myra's engagement of social capital is also apparent in her interactions with the coach. Although Myra did not have an amicable relationship with her coach, she understood to achieve her graduation outcome, she had to communicate and prove her worth to the team.

Dissimilar from the previous two examples that focused on issues with coaches, Shay's engagement of multiple forms of capital occurred because of an encounter with the Dean of Education. Although she changed majors during her junior year, Shay wanted to stay on course with graduating in four years. Shay indicated not wanting to be a fifth-year graduate and the desire to alleviate financial burden on her family as factors related to her goal to finish college within four years. She stated, "So many athletes were fifth year graduates. I just refused to be one who stayed for a fifth year. I wanted to show that I would graduate in 4 years." Also, Shay recalled thinking,

> I'm not going a fifth year. I changed my major, but I am finishing in four [years] because my scholarship was for four [years]. I didn't want to put a burden on my parents to have to pay for college. Because I mean, I had a full ride for the 4 years.

During an initial meeting, the dean suggested that Shay quit playing basketball as an option for her to graduate within four years. Shay recalled,

> I talked to the Dean of Education about [changing my major to education]. And she said, "The only way you are going to be able to major in education and

graduate on time is you need to quit basketball." I was [also] an RA or resident

assistant, at the time. She said, "And quit being a resident assistant." I

[responded], "I can quit being a resident assistant. But basketball pays for me to

be here. So, I'm not quitting that." She [replied], "I don't see how you're going to

graduate on time." I said, "It's important that I graduate in 4 years."

Shay recalled the meeting to conclude with the dean expressing disbelief in her ability to

graduate within four years. To achieve her goal, Shay said,

I had to double up. I took 21 hours that first semester of my junior year. I think;

18 the second semester and went to summer school. I had 18 semester hours, my

senior year— first semester. And then I [completed] student teaching that last

semester. So, I did graduate on time. And I was the only Black person majoring in

elementary education at the time.

When Shay was asked how previous interactions helped her to become more

resistant to opposition, such as in the situation with the dean, she said, "I can say I'm a

fighter." To elaborate, she explained a situation where she was cut from the girls'

basketball player roster during eighth grade tryouts. She recalled, "My uncle, who was an

icon in the area, vastly opposed when I got cut. He [reacted], 'Oh, you got cut. People in

our family don't get cut." Since basketball was not a developmental recreational sport for

girls, in her community at that time, Shay's skill development came from playing outside

with her "boy cousins." In retrospect, Shay explained,

As a coach now, I would've cut me back then. Skill wise, I had never played before—other than outside with my boy cousins. I don't know any skills that were quite ready. I [did not have] enough experience playing.

Shay's actions and comments before, during, and after the conversation with the dean depicted her engagement of aspirational, social, and navigational capital. For instance, Shay's reiteration of her goal to graduate with an elementary education degree—in four years—shows her engagement of aspirational capital. Her interaction with the dean demonstrates she understood how to deploy navigational and social capital to follow protocol for changing her major to education. Also, this experience recognizes Shay's engagement of familial capital to recall she gained her "fighter" instinct from her family pushing her to be a great basketball player. Shay's contention that she would not "quit basketball" also offers a greater perspective on her engagement of resistant capital. Shay grew up during a period in which basketball was recognized as a sport for boys. Therefore, her basketball skill development showed in her resistance to gender ideologies that placed limitations on girls' sport opportunities, she excelled in basketball and earned a scholarship to play in college.

These examples show each participant's demonstration of determination and resiliency to maintain funding to earn their degree. In Zia and Myra's case, the emphasis was on the correlation between their sport participation and maintaining their scholarship as a graduation factor. Likewise, Shay's response reiterated the importance of her scholarship to completing her academic goal.

A Change of Plans

  A Change of Plans illuminates the participants' deployment of aspirational capital as they changed their plan of study prior to graduation. Despite challenges within their institutional academic systems, and internal dilemmas regarding their career path, each participant maintained their desire to complete a degree. Though different, Toni and Jami's situations included being ill-advised on how to proceed towards their career goals.

  As one of the first members of her family to attend a postsecondary institution, Toni entered college after the passing of her grandmother and with limited guidance on how to navigate the experience. To describe her initial thoughts she shared,

> You always want to be the first to [go to college]—the first to experience college. I wanted to be the first to get a degree out of all my grandmother's grandchildren. I was the first to do it. And that was [with me] trying to beat everybody else to [earn a degree first]. It was a mission.

Toni indicated because she was the first to attend college, she was responsible for completing relevant paperwork for her enrollment. To describe her initial processes to navigate institutional systems, Toni stated,

> Before I came on campus for the first time to start classes, on my paperwork, I put my major as pre-law. Pre-law didn't even exist. But for years, I was under the impression that I was obtaining a pre-law degree—to learn my junior year there was no such thing as pre-law major at my institution. And because I had so many history classes under my belt, I ended up with a history degree.

She asserted,

Years ago, they were so desperate to have Black student-athletes they would do
anything on the front end to bring us in. For years, pre-law! Pre-law! And I think
what happened is the day I came in for advisement, I ended up with an English
major [as an advisor]—instead of someone in history or pre-law. So, I guess it
wasn't a thought for her because she was in English. That's who was my advisor
versus someone in that department [pre-law]. So, for two years I thought I was a
pre-law major.

When Toni determined pre-law was not an option she chose to major in history. She
offered the following rationale:

I told you my eighth grade year, I failed history, and I couldn't play sports. Once I
learned a pre-law major was non-existent, I chose my weakest area of study to
declare as my major. Being I was not the best history student during my high
school days, I decided to use my weakest subject to finish strong.

She explained, "[History] made me work. I had to really work hard. I wanted to find
something that pushed me. And I knew history was my weakness."

Toni's experience shows her engagement of navigational, social, and aspirational
capital to declare history as her major. Her deployment of navigational capital is first
noted with Toni's submission of paperwork to confirm her goal to major in pre-law. Also,
her activation of navigational capital is recognized in Toni's enrollment and completion
of history courses to maintain her sport eligibility and active enrollment status—prior to
realizing there was not a pre-law program at the institution. To this point, Toni indicated
she completed so many history classes that she could declare history as her major. Toni's

experience also illuminates her engagement of social capital through the interactions with her advisor. Although Toni did not find their interactions beneficial, she acknowledged that meeting with her advisor was relevant to her role as a student-athlete. Her engagement of aspirational capital is viewed in her (a) goal to be the first grandchild to earn a degree, (b) resiliency to declare a major after she discovered pre-law was nonexistent, and (c) efforts and self-determination to prove her competency in history.

In Jami's case, she aspired to earn a degree in a field that would enable her to work with youth. Like Toni, Jami was the first member of her family to attend college and therefore, each experience offered the potential of a new learning opportunity for Jami. Jami gained her motivation for college from seeing the impact of college on her peers. She shared, "I saw what my peers experienced, and I wanted that for myself. When they came back and I saw [their] maturation, I [thought] Who [are]you? You came back a different person." She further stated, "I knew that if I left [for college], I had to come back and give a story. And [my success story] was more for [the people in my community] than it was for me." Jami indicated her high school recruitment process was thwarted by her coach getting recruitment information and not sharing it with players. She added,

> When I got to junior college, I [thought], here we go again with the same thing [that] happened in high school. And I told myself I wanted to leave my home state. [Therefore], any [scholarship offer for an institution] outside the state that came towards me, I was [going to accept].

When Jami transferred from a junior college in her home state to the institution where she graduated, she had not earned her associate degree. Also, Jami remembered *someone* told her to pursue a degree in education to become a school guidance counselor. After not meeting the obligations to complete her teacher preparation program, Jami changed her major to human services. Although Jami selected human services as her new major, she stated, it "was not [the degree] I wanted to have, but I knew [human services] was a kind of service counseling." She felt the degree would still provide her with the opportunity to work with youth. The change in major altered Jami's graduation date to occur after her fourth year of college and she had exhausted her basketball eligibility. When she described her experience, Jami declared, "School wasn't hard. I knew what I wanted, but I had to take [alternate paths to earning a degree] because I was misinformed." Jami also admitted, "That [experience of being ill-advised] is why I'm really a guidance counselor now—to inform our [students] to do their own research. Don't let other people tell you what you need. Find out for yourself."

Jami's experience of changing her major shows her engagement of aspirational, navigational, and social capital. Jami's simultaneous engagement of navigational and aspirational capital is first apparent in her transfer from junior college. Jami indicated that she negotiated the transfer on her own and based on her negative high school recruitment experience. Also, her deployment of aspirational, navigational, and social capital is recognized in her initial pursuit to earn a degree in teaching as a path to becoming school counselor. Though she was ill-advised, Jami's interaction with *someone* led to her decision to pursue a degree in education. Another example of Jami engaging navigational

and aspirational capital is evident in her success to change her major, navigate

coursework, and to eventually graduate with a degree in human services.

Shay's experience factored changing majors to find a career path that spoke to her

passion for teaching. Regarding her initial decision to major in business, Shay stated,

> I majored in business because that's what my dad wanted me to major in. I always
>
> had a feel for education. But [my dad] felt pretty strongly that teachers don't
>
> make money. So, he was against it. But my older cousin was a teacher. And I
>
> always kind of knew teaching was what I wanted to do.

When Shay changed her major from business to education, she was the only

Black student and Black woman student in her elementary education classes. Shay

indicated, "I think it's always a disadvantage when you're in a space, and you don't see

anybody who looks like you." She remembered a White professor who gave her a hard

time and responded questionably to work in contrast to praising the work of her White

women peers. In another situation, she recalled another White professor who called her

out of the classroom, saying, "Shay—you have large lips like my daughter. And you need

to learn to enunciate your words better. And I [thought] Wow! My professor just told me

I [have] big lips." Shay also remembered,

> When we did our student teaching, most of the people in my cohort had their
>
> student teacher placement in a large prominent school near our campus. I was
>
> placed in a school that was about 30 minutes away from campus. I was the only
>
> one placed at that elementary school. It was a Title I school, had 98% of their
>
> students on free and reduced lunch, and the student demographics was

predominantly Black. And I was the only Black person in a faculty-type position.

It was pretty intentional why I was sent there.

Shay recalled thinking,

If I didn't have a strong mindset or have seen my cousin—who really inspired me

to go into teaching—I could have a perception that Black people don't major in

education at my institution. Because I didn't see it. You could start to realize or

think [teaching] is not for me or that can't happen. Or you know… I'm not

welcomed [in the field of education]—those type things.

Shay likened the experiences she encountered at the institution to fighting battles. She

stated,

I think I was just raised to be a fighter. And because of [my upbringing], I didn't

think about [having to prove myself] was like fighting battles I shouldn't have

been fighting. Especially with the education major—I had to really prove that I

was serious, [and] I was cut out for [an education degree]. I had to work hard.

As she reflected on her situation, Shay stated, "And now I think about it like that wasn't

even fair." She also explained,

I feel when you're young, what you see is what you believe. And if you don't ever

see it, then you don't believe it. And I feel people need someone they can really

identify with—you know, a safe place. And I feel that comes in representation.

And as far as education was concerned, I didn't have that.

Shay's experience highlights her engagement of resistant, aspirational, familial,

social, and navigational capital. First, Shay's simultaneous engagement of aspirational

and familial capital is recognized by her father's influence on her initial plans to pursue a business degree and her cousin's influence on Shay changing her major to education. The act of changing her major from business to education is also indicative of Shay's deployment of aspirational and navigational capital. Shay's employment of resistant and social capital is noted by her interactions with professors and in reaction to microaggression and racism she experienced in her classes.

Zia indicated ensuring the institution she attended had her major was an important aspect of her recruitment process. She recalled, "I wanted to be a business major with a minor in sociology, and each of the institutions recruiting me had my major. The only academic thing [recruiters] focused on was whether they had my program or what I wanted to study." Zia revealed although her dad and coaches focused on the athletic aspects of her recruitment process, her mother addressed issues related to her academic prospects in college. She shared, "My mother was big with the recruiting process, academically, because she wanted me to be in honors college. Every time we [talked] with a coach, she asked if [the institution] had an honors program." Zia stated that each college that recruited her had an honors program. Zia explained her goal to earn a business degree changed when she encountered a spiritual dilemma after her freshman year. She recalled,

> My freshman year I was a business major, sociology minor. And then my
> sophomore year… that summer I prayed. And in a devotion time with the Lord, I
> felt like He told me to change my major to sociology. And I was [thinking],
> absolutely not. I'm a semester ahead and I will fall back."

Because of her upbringing, Zia believed having devotion and consulting with the Lord were important aspects of life. She also shared, along with her siblings, she was taught, "If you're struggling, go to the Lord." In addition, Zia found although she battled internally with the decision, "it was the best decision" she made. Furthermore, she stated, "I changed my major to sociology with a minor in human services. That was also very formative in my relationships with my professors and eventually the students because I was in a major that I loved." Moreover, leaning on her spiritual and family guidance made her more confident in her decision to change her major from business to sociology.

Zia's experience exemplifies her engagement of familial, aspirational, social, and navigational capital. Zia's initial engagement of aspirational and familial capital is noted in her decision to earn a degree in business and to play college basketball. Her engagement of familial capital is acknowledged by the direct involvement of her parents during the recruitment process and indirectly in how her devotion led to Zia changing her major. Zia's simultaneous deployment of aspirational, navigational, and social capital is recognized in her success to interact with institutional agents (e.g., advisors, registrar's office, faculty) to change her major from business to sociology, complete coursework towards earning her degree, and graduate with a degree in sociology with a minor in human services. Zia's engagement of social capital is also shown in the formative relationships she developed with her sociology professor and academic peers.

In unique ways, each participant described their process of changing majors to include their engagement of multiple forms of cultural capital. For instance, Toni and Jami's experiences revealed their resiliency to react positively in situations where they

were misinformed or misguided about their academic pursuit. Shay's experiences illuminated the presence of and her response to racism and microaggression. Zia's experience showed how religious beliefs and spirituality factor in the decisions made by Black women athletes who bring their religious traditions to college.

My Mental Health Support

My Mental Health Support highlighted a participant's interaction with an outside agency to address her issue of mental health wellness. Zia's complicated relationship with her head coach was previously recognized for how she engaged familial and social capital in relationships with her teammate and members of a local church. Now their relationship is highlighted to emphasize Zia's need to seek mental health support. Zia revealed the pressure from the coach to succeed, led her and others to feel mistreated and traumatized. Regarding that period, Zia recalled thinking,

> Me and my teammates are the only thing standing between your success and you
> not succeeding. Then, if we are seemingly causing you to not reach your goal,
> you're [going to] treat us like the enemy. And that's how it felt. Oh, it was awful.

To further elaborate on her trauma, Zia concluded,

> That's why I have a therapist now. I had low grade anxiety before—never
> diagnosed. But college basketball absolutely bloomed [my anxiety]. I was so
> anxious about failure. I was so anxious about letting my team down. I was so
> anxious about having to run extra, my coach yelling at me, or him saying
> something he could do would intensely hurt my feelings. I had to get a therapist,
> eventually. But that relationship, it was just painful. I see him now sometimes

because my best friend still plays for him. He moved schools. And I just look at

him and just feel kind of heartbroken because I know he's up to the same antics—

of like manipulation and degradation of people just to win a basketball game. So,

I mean, that relationship was not the best.

Previously, Zia expressed, at an early age, she and her siblings were encouraged by their

mother to seek help whenever they needed it. Consequently, she sought and found a

psychotherapist to address her issue with anxiety.

Chapter Summary

Chapter four used a descriptive-interpretive approach to present findings to show

how former Black women student-athletes engaged community cultural wealth to persist

to graduation at predominantly White institutions. The findings show the various ways

women in the study developed and engaged aspirational, resistant, social, familial, and

navigational capital to persist to graduation. In chapter five, I situate the findings in the

literature for discussion, provide implications for practice and research, and share the

study conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSION

Discussion

Chapter five answers the research question and uses CCW underpinned with CRF to situate the findings within the literature for discussion. In respect to issues illuminated by the findings and gaps in current research on the persistence experiences of Black women student-athletes and athletic programs and institutional structures at PWIs with DII membership, the chapter also suggests implications for future practices and research. The chapter concludes with an overview of this study.

Research Question:

My research question was: How did former Division II Black women basketball players engage community cultural wealth to persist to graduation at predominantly White institutions?

Answer to Research Question

In describing their experiences, the women in the study provided explicit details, allowing for the interpretation of how their formal and informal interactions, communications, and information exchanges within interlocking institutional systems required their engagement of CCW to persist to graduation at PWIs. In sharing their experiences, the women further explained how compositional diversity, institutional climate and culture, and the academic culture of the athletic department influenced and impacted which form(s) of cultural capital they engaged within the context of those interlocking systems. Consistent with historical and contemporary literature on the

college experiences of Black women student-athletes and non-athletes, the findings revealed multi-oppressive systems; interactions with individual institutional agents (e.g., faculty, administration, athletic personnel, teammates); and connections with their families (e.g., relatives, community network, friends, former coaches) influenced and provoked the women's engagement of CCW. Most importantly, with an understanding of CCW (Yosso, 2005), the findings showed the women in this study brought to college "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (p. 77) that factored into their persistence. As a result, the findings showed the participants' positive academic outcomes were attributed to the forms of cultural capital they acquired from their home communities and brought to college to overcome challenges and to resist barriers to their academic success.

Development of CCW in Home Communities

As a basis to understand their engagement of five forms of cultural capital (aspirational, resistant, navigational, familial, social) to persist in college, the findings revealed how the women's development of CCW resulted from situations, interactions, teachings, traditions, and experiences they encountered prior to college. In association with the foundational premise of cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), the findings suggested environmental factors such as family background, education history, community, and sport experiences in their home communities influenced, shaped, and fostered how each participant developed CCW. Yosso (2005) explained students of color gain experiential and communal knowledge from their home environments, and those experiences, lessons,

and stories shape their perceptions and how they respond to life's situations. Likewise, irrespective of their pre-entry academic aptitudes and the anti-essentialism in their upbringing, the women in the study were able to engage forms of cultural capital to access resources, establish social networks, overcome challenges, resist multi-oppressive behaviors, and interact with family to persist to graduation.

Regarding the differences in their upbrings, the women in the study revealed their social positions, family backgrounds, education experiences, sport histories, encounters with multi-oppressive systems, and perceptions about attending a PWI as a Black woman basketball player molded how they were raised, inspired, and encouraged to use cultural capital to overcome challenges and persist in college. In respect to the unique ways the women acquired cultural capital, CRF (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Few, 2007) recognized anti-essentialism and intersectionality in their experiences and acknowledges how multi-oppressive systems including racism, sexism, and classism as well as social, historical, and cultural factors formed the attitudes and beliefs found in their home communities. Anti-essentialism was also recognized in the ways the women developed and deployed CCW to achieve positive academic outcomes, irrespective of their educational backgrounds and family postsecondary histories. The findings also showed the participants entered college with low to advanced academic skills and as first generation and continuing-generation college students. However, they experienced the same academic outcome of persisting to gradation at a PWI.

Engagement of CCW to Persist in College

Through descriptions of their experiences, the five women explained how social, cultural, and historical factors, and experiences with multi-oppressive systems shaped, influenced, and fostered their CCW development within their home communities. They shared how continuous connections with their families and the kinship relationships they developed while in college provided encouragement and support to achieve their academic goal and to overcome challenges. They also expressed their need to engage CCW to prove themselves as Black women students in the classroom, on campus, and in their roles as basketball players on the court during games and at practice. In addition, they revealed how their interactions with faculty warranted the need to engage CCW to foster their academic development; initiate and maintain socialization processes; establish viable social networks; and gain a sense of belonging on campus. They discussed the need to engage CCW to interact with athletic members such as coaches, players, personnel, and administrators to support their academic goals and gain a sense of belonging on campus. Though limited, the psychological impact of their experiences was also included in their responses to the research question.

Academic Goal Commitment

Although the participants in the study transitioned to college from multiple social locations and with diverse backgrounds that influenced their CCW development, the findings indicated a common characteristic that factored their success outcome. Each participant entered college with aspirations to pursue non-sport careers after they graduated from college. Regardless of their sport skills, academic aptitude, or social

positions, they also entered college on scholarships and with the sole purpose of using their basketball skills to earn a degree. With respect to Black athletes using their basketball skills to earn a degree, Simiyu (2012) and Cooper and Cooper (2015) determined that Black athletes with strong academic identities and those with intentions of achieving career goals go to college understanding how to leverage their athleticism to earn their degree. These women's goals and aspirations for a degree were also apparent in their descriptions of experiences associated with each theme in the findings.

Connection to the Literature

In chapter two, Figure 1 is introduced as the asset-based framework to show how Black women athletes' development of CCW is shaped by environmental factors in their home communities. The framework then illustrates how the participants engage the multiple forms of capital they brought from their home communities to interact within interlocking institutional systems to persist to graduation. This discussion follows the same pattern to situate findings and literature within the framework to first highlight the forms of cultural capital brought to college and engaged to persist. Then, the findings and literature are discussed in accordance with their positioning within institutional systems to examine how participants revealed their experiences were influenced by compositional diversity, institution climate and culture, and athletic culture.

In congruence with the literature, the former student-athletes described their families—including biological family and community members, former coaches, and friends—as constant sources of support that influenced their persistence. They revealed their aspirations were fueled directly or indirectly by their families, and interactions with

family encouraged them to push through challenges and overcome obstacles to graduate from college. The women also felt the continuous interactions with, and the presence of, their families helped them realize they were not alone in college.

Regarding family support, Ofoegbu et al. (2021) stated, "Family served as a source of influence and support before college, throughout college, and during their career transition. Families stressed to participants the importance of education and provided emotional and financial support when they could" (p. 31). Cooper et al. (2016) indicated that Black females reported their home communities as promoters of academics, moreover athletics, for college. Also, Carter-Francique (2013) identified Black student-athletes' families as being among the sources of off-campus support they received. The continuous engagement by their family also ties to the "ethics of care" dimension associated with an Afrocentric worldview that is recognized to exist in Black or African American communities (Collins 1990, 2000). Collins (1990, 2000) describes this dimension as centralizing the empowerment Black women gain through interactions within their social networks.

Associated with the literature, the forms of cultural capital the women in the study brought from their home communities provided them with skills and abilities to successfully negotiate interactions within institutional systems to persist to graduation. The women described how the environmental factors that shaped their development of cultural capital also influenced their engagement of multiple forms of capital that were essential to achieving their graduation outcome. The findings also revealed the women often connected their deployment of cultural capital in college to experiential knowledge,

teachings, and traditions they gained through pre-collegiate experiences in their home environments.

In their CCW application to athletics, Harry (2023) and Ofoegbu et al. (2021) explained the non-cognitive attributes of cultural capital Black student-athletes acquire from their home communities enable them to thrive and survive at PWIs. To further the idea of negotiating their interactions, Carter and Richardson (2015) indicated Black women have a broader range of agency and assertiveness that influence their college experiences because of their struggles, challenges, and experiences with multi-oppressive systems. Also, comparable to their unique development of cultural capital in their home communities, Carter-Francique et al. (2015), Carter-Francique and Richardson (2015), and Tierney (1999) asserted that anti-essentialism and intersectionality apply to the college experiences of Black women students.

Participants in the study also brought values of kinship relationships (e.g., church members, members of the community) and religious traditions from their home communities that were beneficial to their persistence. Regarding kinships, the findings paired literature that provided a historical context of how Black women college students established formative relationships with members of the local college community as a college student (Jackson-Coppin, 1913). Jackson-Coppin (1913) explained that these interactions positively influenced her college experience. Additionally, Porter and Davis (2015) concluded that African American women enter college hoping to reestablish kinships with other African American women like the relationships in their home communities.

Furthering thoughts on spirituality, Rosales and Person (2003) recognized because faith-based systems are established in their home communities, Black women students bring traditions and practices to college that allow them to persist in higher education. Parallel with the traditional religious values the study participants brought to college, Cooper and Jackson (2012) found Black women students viewed spirituality as a source of mental resistance to negative comments or messages and spirituality shaped their identity development. Carter-Francique and Hawkins (2011) found "talking, prayer and religion, awareness of context, and personal consciousness" (p. 80) were coping strategies employed by Black women athletes.

In the absence of compositional diversity, the women in the study gained a sense of belonging on campus with their teammates, coaches, and other members of their athletic communities. The literature proposes to discuss compositional diversity and a sense of belonging in relation to this finding.

Specific to the impact of compositional diversity, over the last two decades, scholars recognized the low compositional diversity of Black students at PWIs to have a psychological impact on Black women students at PWIs (Bernhard, 2014; Coakley, 2021; Rosales & Person, 2003). Also, Coakley (2021) explained feelings of alienation were intensified for Black student-athletes who transitioned to PWIs from low-income backgrounds. Relating specifically to Black women athletes, Ferguson (2015) suggested low numbers of Black women athletes at PWIs increase the chances of athletes feeling devalued or isolated from their undergraduate peers. Therefore, the findings are incongruent with the literature. The findings did not reveal the women in the study

thought low compositional diversity impacted their psychological well-being or mental health. Although the lack of a critical mass of Black students was not found to have a psychological impact on the women in this study, the literature supports the need to further examine how to recruit and implement holistic practices to support Black students at PWIs.

Relevant to a sense of belonging, Cooper (2013) indicated a critical mass of Black administrators, faculty, students, and staff fosters the holistic development of Black athletes and helps them gain a sense of belonging. Bernard (2014) suggested incongruencies in the number of Black students on campus hinder opportunities for Black women students to gain a sense of community. Harmon et al. (2012) and Meyer (1990) indicated that Black women athletes gained a sense of comfort in the positive relationships they established with their teammates. They also suggested the teammate relationships contributed to Black women athletes' academic success. In addition, Meyer (1990) found that relationships with teammates offered Black women athletes emotional, social, and academic support. Congruent with the literature, the women in the study gained a sense of belonging and found comfort and academic, emotional, and social support in relationships with their teammates.

Different from the literature, the former Black student-athletes in this study indicated campus activities relevant to their culture and interests were limited or not apparent to them during college. In respect to culturally relevant activities, Cooper (2013) identified institutional practices that included providing opportunities for student-athletes to gain quality educational experiences and engage in culturally relevant curriculum and

208

events that promote the holistic development of Black athletes. In 2014, the NCAA rebranded DII institutions under the umbrella of *Make It Yours* (NCAA, 2024). The primary purpose of the rebranding is to focus on personalized learning experiences and the holistic development of student-athletes. Additionally, Carter-Francique and Richardson (2015) suggested that institutions should garner feedback from Black women athletes to determine activities that interest them outside athletics. Also, Bernhard (2014) suggested campus life and activities at PWIs aimed to focus on the interests of their White peers.

In alignment with historical and contemporary literature, the women in this study reported incidents of oppression, microaggression, stereotyping, and negative classroom experiences through encounters with faculty. The literature discusses incidents of oppressive behaviors and negative interactions with faculty to show positive correlations with the findings.

Literature to record the earliest presence of Black women college students at a PWI showed the group's persistence experiences occurred on a campus with a fluctuating racial climate that changed from racial tolerance to overt racism and segregation (Fairchild,1883; Fletcher, 1943; Horton,1985). Contemporary scholars continue to describe how multiple forms of discrimination impact the experiences of Black women student-athletes (Cooper et al. 2016; Simiyu, 2012). Ofoegbu et al. (2021) indicated Black athletes engage forms of resistant capital to resist negative stereotypes.

Concerning negative encounters with faculty, in relation to their sport participation and academic commitment, Carter-Francique et al. (2015) and Harmon et al.

(2012) recognized student-athletes felt faculty were not responsive to their needs to fulfill their sport commitments. Weiss and Robinson (2013) found that student-athletes who departed from the DII institution in their study indicated low faculty engagement, despite smaller class sizes, was problematic. Parsons (2013) indicated, in situations highlighting negative interactions with faculty, DII student-athletes recalled receiving poorer grades or faculty making negative comments about their sport, sport participation, or student-athletes in general. Relevant to CCW, Harry (2023) explained student-athletes engage forms of capital to overcome challenges to achieve success outcomes when they maintain their focus on accomplishing their academic or athletic goals.

Consistent with the literature, positive faculty engagements and interactions were identified as important aspects of the former student-athletes' college experiences and subsequent career opportunities. Like the women in the study, in one of the earliest recordings of faculty engagement by one of America's first Black women college students, Jackson-Coppin (1913) described how positive interactions with faculty factored into her enjoyment of college and resulted in job opportunities after she graduated from Oberlin. Comeaux and Harrison (2011) found interactions with faculty and student-athletes' individual attributes had a positive impact on the student-athletes' academic outcome. Carter-Francique et al. (2015) and Harmon et al. (2012) also found a positive correlation between academic outcomes and faculty-student interactions, while Parsons (2013) found that DII student-athletes recalled positive interactions with faculty and felt their professors displayed positive attitudes towards them.

Notwithstanding institutional climate and culture, women in the study revealed they were dissatisfied with their initial choices for academic programs and changed their majors. In relation to the findings, Kramer's (2023) research on DII student-athletes also indicated student-athletes selected institutions based on their degree programs and the opportunities their degrees offer after graduation. Harmon et al. (2012) found Black women student-athletes in their study changed majors after they entered college. They explained the women either realized they were dissatisfied with their major or felt forced to change their major. Most relevant to the findings was the latter report to show participants were dissatisfied with their major or felt forced to change majors. In agreement with reviewed literature, findings revealed participants felt misled about their campus environment and ill-advised about their academic goals during recruitment and admissions processes. They also revealed that, because of ill-advisement, they were forced to declare or change their majors prior to graduation and had to extend their time in college. In support of the findings, Harmon et al. (2012) discussed how Black women athletes perceived they were deceived about the campus environment during their recruitment process. They additionally felt those depictions led to their selection decision and were the foundation of their disappointment with the campus.

In respect to coaches, women in the study indicated they experienced strained relationships with coaches and the relationships brought on mental health issues. The women also felt the primary focus for the coach was athletics instead of academics. The findings also revealed coaches fostered team cultures of academic success and promoted

positive graduation outcomes for players. Additionally, the findings revealed the former

athletes to have their athletic scholarship revoked without cause.

With a focus on strained coach-player relationships, Bruening et al. (2005)

reported Black women basketball players encountered coaches who failed to provide

them with a quality experience absent of physical and mental mistreatment, negative

reinforcement, and lack of opportunities of success. Also, Foster (2003) also found Black

women athletes encountered hyper-surveillance by coaches who stereotyped them as

immature, academically deficient, or sexually overactive because of their race.

Regarding the coaches' focus on athletics rather than academics, interest

convergence exists as the motivation behind recruitment (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Interest convergence looks at the opportunity to play sport on scholarship as a benefit to

the student-athlete, while simultaneously recognizing that it is in the best interest of the

institution to recruit top talent regardless of their preparedness for postsecondary

education.

Pertaining to scholarships being revoked, Foster (2003) indicated that Black

women athletes, unlike their White women athlete counterparts, received threats to have

their scholarships revoked if their behaviors were incongruent outside their sport or if

they received bad grades. Cooper and Cooper (2015) found Black men athletes who

favored their academic development felt their scholarships were a contract that allowed

them to negotiate their athletic services for a free education.

Specific to mental health issues, Bernhard (2014), Cooper et al. (2016), Sellers et

al. (1997) and Wei et al., (2011) indicated Black women student-athletes experience

anxiety, alienation, and stress at PWIs. Cooper et al. (2017) suggested Black women student-athletes experienced isolation and discriminatory treatment at PWIs.

The women in the study described positive interactions with athletic department personnel that resulted in career opportunity. In alignment with this finding, Cooper (2013) suggested the athletic culture at an institution should promote the same values that foster the holistic development of student-athletes to achieve positive psychological and academic outcomes. Also, Carter-Francique (2015) suggested that because of the competing demands for them to perform at high levels, academically and athletically, and their positions within multi-oppressive systems, Black women student-athletes are deserving of a nurturing environment that fosters their sense of belonging and promotes their well-being.

In association with the literature, the women in the study described time-demanding sport schedules that required them to find multiple ways (e.g., institutional tutors, peer support, faculty sessions, work on the road to games, extra courses during off season, summer classes) to meet their academic goals.

In relationship with this finding, Carter-Francique et al (2013) indicated that, regardless of the sport, student-athletes have demanding sport schedules that may impact their academic performance and cause them to feel isolated. Also, Harmon et al. (2012) and Scott et al. (2008) found Black women student-athletes take additional courses during the off season to manage their academic progress. Cooper et al. (2016) also indicated that Black women student-athletes prioritized and organized their schedule to handle their athletic demands.

Aligned with the literature, the women in the study felt their athletic department had limited academic resources (e.g., tutors, advisors, instructional labs) to support their academic development and their advisors were helpful. They also indicated that their advisors failed to provide sufficient advice to support their academic goal. The literature shows a correlation with the findings to illuminate the types of support on campus and to highlight advisor support.

Among the on-campus resources found to provide social support for Black college athletes, Carter-Francique et al. (2013), Cooper et al. (2016, 2017), and Foster (2003) identified academic advisors, tutors, coaches, peers, and teammates as sources of social support found to provide positive social support for Black student-athletes. They found these individuals offered informational and instructional support, such as assisting with schedules, supplying guidance on course selections, and helping athletes locate resources. Also, in alignment with the findings on advisor errors, Kamusoko and Pemberton (2013) revealed that advising errors were made when many student-athletes were assigned to a single advisor. Incongruent with literature, participants revealed they were required to drive their teammates to and from games. Although the literature did not address this specific issue, Bass et al. (2015) indicated that DII institutions operate with lower budgets due to lower operational costs. In consideration of lower operational budgets, funds to pay drivers may have been an issue for the institution. Current information revealed student-athletes are no longer required to transport players to and from games.

Implications for Practice

The college experiences of the women in this study spanned over 30 years, and their voices and experiences offer insight into the implications for improving institutional practices associated with the college experiences of Black women student-athletes. In alignment with the earliest experiences of Black women college students, the experiences of women in this study continued to illuminate (a) issues related to mistreatment by coaches, (b) incongruencies between institutional goals and realities related to compositional diversity and racial climate, (c) negative interactions with faculty, and (d) campus cultures that failed to foster their holistic development through culturally relevant curriculums, events, and activities. The following thoughts convey our collaborative thoughts on implications for improving these four areas of institutional practices.

The findings in this study were supported by literature to show Black women student-athletes experienced mistreatment by their coaches. To address this issue, athletic departments should establish and employ an annual process to garner players' feedback on relationships with their coaches and include players in processes to hire athletic personnel. The initial suggestions allow athletic directors to gauge whether players reveal they are encountering discrimination, mistreatment, or unethical practices. The latter fosters the athletic leadership of players and introduces them to higher education processes.

The findings in this study were supported by literature to show in the absence of compositional diversity, Black women athletes established relationships with their teammates and other members of the athletic department. This issue offers implications

for institutional administrators, student-affairs personnel, human resources, and athletic department personnel to enact concerted efforts to recruit and retain Black women students, staff, faculty, and administrators to help foster a sense of belonging for Black women student-athletes. Retention efforts should also include providing mentors and establishing inclusive institutional support structures to retain individuals at each of these levels. Training and development opportunities for faculty, staff, administrators, and athletic personnel should center equity-minded practices that support Black women student-athletes development in culturally responsive environments.

The findings in this study were supported by literature to show Black women student-athletes felt their campuses lacked resources and activities that fostered their holistic development. Administrators and students should examine how institutional practices, processes, and policies can be revised to maximize opportunities for Black women student-athletes to experience culturally relevant and quality education experiences that promote their holistic development. These opportunities should allow student-athletes to gain experiences outside their sport. In 2014, the NCAA launched *Make It Your Own* to rebrand DII institutions as learning institutions that foster student-athletes' holistic development. The document offers benchmarks for institutions to evaluate their current practices.

Implications for Research

After over 50 years of increased opportunities for Black women athletes to play collegiate sports at PWIs with NCAA membership, limited research exists to explore factors related to success outcomes for Black women athletes who graduate from PWIs or

to examine their experiences at institutions with DII membership. In alignment, the college experiences of the women in this study spanned 30 years. However, despite continued patterns of racism, incongruent campus composition, lack of academic resources, and barriers to their academic success, the women in this study graduated from PWIs. In respect, future research should focus on three areas illuminated by the findings.

The findings suggest future research should focus on replicating the current study across NCAA membership institutions. The findings for this study were limited by responses from participants who played basketball and attended PWIs in the southeastern part of the United States. A replication of this study across NCAA Division membership institutions and sports may offer alternate perspectives from institutions in regions beyond the southeast. Additionally, Black women athletes in other sports may offer additional perspectives on their experiences at PWIs.

The findings also suggest future research to investigate mental health issues associated with the college experiences of Black women students (athletes or non-athletes). The study review showed Black women student-athletes experienced greater incidents of mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, isolation, alienation) in comparison to their Black men and White women peers. Additionally, scholars recognized they experience encounters with multi-oppressive behaviors and negative stereotypes. However, limited research exists to show the effectiveness of institutions to address the issue or to support the mental well-being of Black women college students.

The findings suggest the need to explore how coaches and the academic culture in athletic impact and influence the success outcome of Black women student-athletes. The

aspects of athletic programs may provide rationales for student-athlete transfers and lower graduation outcomes for Black student-athletes in comparison to their peers. This research may inform policies related to institutional athletic programs. For DII institutions, the data from this study would also substantiate the effectiveness of *Make It Your Own*.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the voices of five former DII Black women basketball players who persisted to graduation at three different DII institutions. The goal was to determine how much the women engaged CCW (Yosso, 2005) or used multiple forms of cultural capital to overcome challenges and resist barriers to their persistence. The project also sought to explore how multiple systems of oppression, embedded in higher education culture and campus climate at PWIs, influenced the women's engagement of CCW. Lastly, the goal was to determine the extent to which the women sought and utilized apparent campus resources to achieve their academic outcomes. The women in this study provided rich discussions and invaluable insight on how they acquired CCW from their home communities and then how they engaged forms of CCW to persist in college. The interwoven themes for the project demonstrated the women's CCW engagement was a dynamic process that allowed them to overcome challenges and barriers to persist in college. The following summaries present an overview of the information in each chapter.

Chapter one provided a summary of literature to give a background for the study. Also, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions

were presented and offered a rationale to investigate how former DII Black women basketball players engaged CCW to persist to graduation at PWIs. The chapter also includes the research design and concludes with the significance of the study.

Chapter two provided an overview of key literature to examine factors relevant to the persistence experiences of former DII Black women basketball players who graduated from PWIs. The literature addressed the following: (a) a historical context to explore the postsecondary and sport history of Black women college athletes, (b) factors that influenced the experiences of contemporary Black women athletes and non-athletes, (c) contextual factors related to DII institutions, (d) perspectives on the characteristics of student-athletes, relevant factors of persistence models and theories, and (f) critical perspectives that support the use of CCW as the theoretical and analytical model for this project.

Chapter three focused on the research design for this project. Also, the chapter includes my extensive positionality statement, which situates my undergraduate experiences within the scope of the research. The chapter also includes the methodology and methods used to conduct the research, along with participant narrative and a table to show examples of CCW presumed to be illuminated in the participants' verbal data.

Chapter four presented the findings using a descriptive-interpretive approach and used CCW as the themes to show how the participants engaged CCW to persist in college.

Chapter five concludes this study with the discussion, implications for practice, implications for research, and a review of chapters.

References

Acevedo, N., & Solórzano, D. G. (2021). An overview of community cultural wealth: Toward a protective factor against racism. *Urban Education, 58*(7), 1470-1488. https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211016531

Allen, W. R. (1992). The color of success: African-American college student outcomes at predominantly White and historically Black public colleges and universities. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*(1), 26-45. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.62.1.wv5627665007v701

Amin, M. E. K., NØrgaard, L. S., Cavaco, A. M., Witry, M. J., Hillman, L., Cernasev, A., & Desselle, S. P. (2020). Establishing trustworthiness and authenticity in qualitative pharmacy research. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, *16*(10), 1472-1482. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2020.02.005

Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory in higher education. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*(5), 518-529. (Reprinted from *Journal of College Student Personnel,* 1984, *25*(4), 297-308.)

Banks, C. A. (2009). *Black women undergraduates, cultural capital, and college success*. Peter Lang.

Bass, J. R., Schaeperkoetter, C. C., & Bunds, K. S. (2015). The "front porch": Examining the increasing interconnection of university and athletic department funding. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, *41*(5), 1–103. https://doi.org/10.1002/aehe.20023

Baumann, R. M. (2010). *Constructing Black education at Oberlin College: A*

documentary history. Ohio University Press.

Bean, J. P. (1985). Interaction effects based on class level in an explanatory model of

college student dropout syndrome. *American Educational Research Journal, 22*(1), 35-

64. https://doi.org/10.2307/1162986

Beck, H. (2022, June 15). Lusia Harris is the nearly forgotten 'Queen of Basketball' and

Title IX pioneer. *Sports Illustrated.*

Bell, R. C. (2007). A history of women in sport prior to Title IX. *The Sport Journal,*

10(2), 1-8.

Bernhard, L. M. (2014). "Nowhere for me to go:" Black female student-athlete

experiences on a predominantly white campus. *Journal for the Study of Sports*

and Athletes in Education, *8*(2), 67-76.

https://doi.org/10.1179/1935739714Z.00000000019

Bigglestone, W. E. (1971). Oberlin College and the Negro student, 1865-1940. *The*

Journal of Negro History, 56(3), 198-219.

Bimper, A. Y. (2016). Capital matters: Social sustaining capital and the development of

Black student-athletes. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport, 9*(1), 106-128.

https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.2015-0001

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson, *Handbook of theory and*

research for the sociology of education (pp. 241-258). Greenwood Press.

Bower, B. L., & Martin, M. (1999). African American female basketball players: An

examination of alcohol and drug behaviors. *Journal of American College Health,*

48(3), 129-133.

Brandt, L. J. (1992). The evolution of women's intercollegiate athletics at Oberlin

    College. *Honors Papers.* https://digitalcommons.oberlin.edu/honors/565

Brown II, M. C., & Davis, J. E. (2001). The historically black college as social contract,

    social capital, and social equalizer. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *76*(1), 31-49.

    https://www.jstor.org/stable/1493004

Brown II, M. C. (2001). Collegiate desegregation and the public Black college: A new

    policy mandate. *The Journal of Higher Education, 72*(1), 46-64.

Bruening, J. E. (2005). Gender and racial analysis in sport: Are all the women White and

    all the Blacks men? *Quest, 57(3),* 330-349.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2005.10491861

Bruening, J. E., Armstrong, K. L., & Pastore, D. L. (2005). Listening to the voices: The

    experiences of African American female student athletes. *Research Quarterly for*

    Exercise and Sport, 76(1), 82-100.

Bruening, J. E., Pastore, D. L., & Armstrong, K. L. (2008a). Factors influencing the sport

    participation patterns of African American females. *The ICHPER-SD Journal of*

    Research in Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport & Dance, 3(1), 12-21.

Bruening, J. E., Borland, J. F., & Burton, L. J. (2008b). The impact of influential other on

    the sport participation patterns of African American female student-athletes.

    Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education, 2(3), 379-417.

    https://doi.org/10.1179/ssa.2008.2.3.379

Cabrera, A. F., Castaneda, M. B., Nora, A., & Hengstler, D. (1992). The convergence

    between two theories of college persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education,*

63(2), 143-164.

Carter, A. R. (2008). *Negotiating identities: Examining African American female collegiate athlete experiences in predominantly White institutions*. (Publication No. 9949334458602959) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia]. University of Georgia. https://esploro.libs.uga.edu/esploro/outputs/doctoral/Negotiating-identities-examining-African-American-female/9949334458602959

Carter-Francique, A. R. (2018). Is excellence inclusive? The benefits of fostering Black female college athletes' sense of belonging. *Journal of Higher Education & Athletics, 1*(3), 48-73. https://doi.org/10.15763/issn.2376-5267.2018.1.3.48-73

Carter-Francique, A. R. (2014). An ethic of care: Black female college athletes and development. In J. L. Conyer, Jr. (Ed.), *Race in American sports: Essays*. (pp. 35-58). McFarland and Company, Inc.

Carter-Francique, A. R., Dortch, D., & Carter-Phiri, K. (2017). Black female college athletes' perception of power in sport and society. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education, 11*(1), 18-45. https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2017.1285872

Carter-Francique, A. R., & Hart, A. (2010). Perspectives of mentoring: The Black female student-athlete. *Sport Management Review, 13*(4), 382-394. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2010.01.003

Carter-Francique, A. R., Hart, A., & Cheeks, G. (2015). Examining the values of social capital and social support for Black student-athletes' academic success. *Journal of*

African American Studies, 19(2), 157-177. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-015-9295-z

Carter-Francique, A. R., Hart, A., & Steward, A. (2013). Black college athletes' perceptions of academic success and the role of social support. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport, 6*, 231-246. https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.6.2.231

Carter-Francique, A. R., & Hawkins, B. (2011). Coping and the African American female collegiate athlete. In K. Hylton, A. Pilkington, P. Warmington, & S. Housee (Eds.), *Atlantic crossings: International dialogues on critical race theory* (pp. 61-92). Sociology, Anthropology, Politics (C-SAP), The Higher education Academy Network.

Carter-Francique, A. R., & Richardson, F. M. (2015). Black female athlete experiences at historically Black colleges and universities. In B. Hawkins, J. Cooper, A. Carter-Francique, & J.K. Cavil (Eds.), *The athletic experience at historically Black colleges and universities: Past, present, and persistence*. Roman & Littlefield.

Chalk, O. (1976). *Black college sport*. Dodd, Mead & Company.

Clark, B. R., & Trow, M. (1966). The organizational context. In T. M. Newcomb & E. K. Wilson (Eds.), *College peer groups: problems and prospects for research* (pp. 17-70). Aldine Publishing Company.

Clemson University (2010). *Clemson University enrollment by race and gender 1985-2009: Headcount of students reported as other than White*. https://www.clemson.edu/institutional-effectiveness/documents/oir/historical/Historical-Enrollment-Summary-Race-

1985-2009.pdf

Coakley, J. (2017). *Sports in society: Issues and controversies* (12th ed). McGraw-Hill

    Education.

Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of

    Black feminist thought. *Social Problems*, *33*(6), s14-s32.

Collins, P. H. (1989). The social construction of black feminist thought. *Signs: Journal of*

    Women in Culture and Society, 14(4), 745-773.

    https://www.jstor.org/stable/3174683

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics*

    of empowerment (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Comeaux, E., & Harrison, K. C. (2011). A conceptual model of academic success for

    student-athletes. *Educational Researcher*, *40*(5), 235-245.

    https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X11415260

Comeaux, E., Speer, L., Taustine, M., & Harrison, C. K. (2011). Purposeful engagement

    of first-year Division I student-athletes. *Journal of The First-Year Experience &*

    Students in Transition, 23(1), 35-52.

Cooper, J. N. (2013). A culture of collective uplift: The influence of a historically Black

    university/college on Black male student-athletes' experiences. *Journal of Issues*

    in Intercollegiate Athletics, 6(1), 306-331.

Cooper, A. J. (2017). *A voice from the south: By a black woman of the south*. University

    of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library.

Cooper, J. N., Cooper, J. E., & Baker, A. R. (2016). An anti-deficit perspective on Black

female scholar-athletes' achievement experiences at a Division I historically

White institution (HWI). *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in

Education, 10*(2), 109-131. https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2016.1218647

Cooper, J. N., & Jackson, D. D. (2019). "They think you should be able to do it all": An

examination of Black women college athletes' experiences with role conflict at a

Division I historically W institution (HWI). *Journal of Women and Gender in

Higher Education, 12*(3), 337-353.

https://doi.org/10.1080/26379112.2019.1677250

Cooper, J. N., Porter, C. J., & Davis, T. J. (2017). Success through community cultural

wealth: Reflections from Black female college athletes at historically Black

college/university (HBCU) and a historically White institution (HWI). *Journal of

Intercollegiate Sport, 10*(2), 129-156. https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.2017-0006

Creswell, J. W. & Clark, V. L. P. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods

research* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Davis, B. (2021, June 24). Delta State aluma Lusia "Lucy" Harris spotlighted in new

documentary, "The queen of basketball." *News and Events.*

https://www.deltastate.edu/news-and-events/2021/06/delta-state-alumna-lusia-

lucy-harris-spotlighted-in-new-documentary-the-queen-of-basketball/

Davis, J. W. (1938). The participation of Negro land-grant colleges in permanent federal

education funds. *The Journal of Negro Education, 7*(3), 282-291.

https://doi.org/10.2307/2291887

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.). NYU

Press.

Eckenrod, M. R., & Nam, B. H. (2021). Academic aspects of American intercollegiate

athletics: History, ideology, issues, and global prospects. *International Journal of*

Sport Policy and Politics, 13(1), 187-199.

https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2020.1853197

Elliott, R., & Timulak, L. (2021). *Descriptive-interpretive qualitative research: A generic*

approach. American Psychological Association.

Elliott, R., & Timulak, L. (2005). Descriptive and interpretive approaches to qualitative

research. *A Handbook of Research Methods for Clinical and Health*

Psychology, *1*(7), 147-159.

Evans, T. M. (1998). In the Title IX race toward gender equity, the black female athlete is

left to finish last: The lack of access for the invisible woman. *Howard Law*

Journal, 42(1), 105-128.

Farmer, E., Hilton, A. A., & Reneau, F. H. (2016). Variables that contribute to retention

and graduation of Black American females at an historically Black university.

Negro Educational Review, 67(1-4), 133-148.

Fairchild, J. H. (1883). *Oberlin: The colony and the college, 1833-1883*. E. J. Goodrich.

Few, A. L. (2007). Integrating black consciousness and critical race feminism into family

studies research. *Journal of Family Issues*, *28*(4), 452-473.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X06297330

Few-Demo, A. L. (2014). Intersectionality as the "new" critical approach in feminist

family studies: Evolving racial/ethnic feminisms and critical race theories.

Journal of Family Theory & Review, 6(2), 169-183.

https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12039

Fletcher, R. S. (1943). *A history of Oberlin College: From its foundation through the Civil War*. Oberlin College. https://archive.org/details/historyofoberlin02flet

Flowers, R. (2007). "Win one for the gipper": Organizational foundations of intercollegiate athletics. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education, 1*(2), 121-140. https://doi.org/10.1179/ssa.2007.1.2.121

Foster, K. M. (2008). Panopticonics: The control and surveillance of Black female athletes in a collegiate athletic program. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *34*(3), 300-323. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3196002

Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed). Pearson.

Graham, P. A. (1978). Expansion and exclusion: A history of women in American higher education. *Signs, 3*(4), 759-773.

Grundy, P., & Shackelford, S. (2005). *Shattering the glass: The remarkable history of women's basketball*. University of North Carolina Press.

Gohn, L.A., & Albin, G. R. (2006). Introduction to college students: Generations, stereotypes, and subpopulations. In L. A. Gohn & G. R. Albin (Eds.), *Understanding college student subpopulations: A guide for student affairs professionals* (pp. 1-23). NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology*, *29*(2), 75–91.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219811

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.

K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-

117). Sage Publications, Inc.

http://www.jbposgrado.org/icuali/Guba%20y%20Linconl.pdf

Harmon, N., Doss, K., & Donahoo, S. (2012). The culture of competition: Identifying the

unique experiences of domestic and international Black student-athletes. In C.

Renée Chambers & R.Vonshay Sharpe (Eds.), *Black female undergraduates on*

campus: Successes and challenges (pp. 113-134). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Harper, S. R., Patton, L. D., & Wooden, O. S. (2009). Access and equity for African

American students in higher education: A critical race historical analysis of policy

efforts. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *80*(4), 389-414.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2009.11779022

Harry, M. (2023). Expanding Yosso's community cultural wealth to intercollegiate

athletics. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics, 16*, 40-59.

Haynes, B. (2006). Black undergraduates in higher education: An historical

perspective. *Metropolitan Universities*, *17*(2), 8-21.

Heath, S., & Myers, M. (2023, December 6). Student-athletes continue to graduate at

record highs. NCAA. Retrieved [July 17, 2023], from

https://www.ncaa.org/news/2023/12/6/media-center-student-athletes-graduate-at-

record-highs.aspx

Hewitt, P. M. (2009). The recruiting process: The experiences of student-athletes. In D.

B. Kissinger & M. T. Miller (Eds.), *College student-athletes: Challenges, opportunities, and policy implications* (pp. 37-54). Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Hines, W.C. (2018). *South Carolina State University: A Black land-grant college in Jim Crow America*. The University of South Carolina Press.

History.com Editors. (2021, August 19). Trailblazing Black women in sports. Retrieved [May 8, 2021], from https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-women-in-sports

Hofer, B. K. (2002). Personal epistemology as a psychological and educational construct: An introduction. In B. K. Hofer & P. R. Pintrich (Eds.), *Personal epistemology: The psychology of beliefs about knowledge and knowing* (pp. 3-14). Routledge.

Hoffman, L. (with Baumann, R.) (n.d.-a). *Libguides: Minority student records at Oberlin College: introductions.* Retrieved [April 8, 2024], from https://libguides.oberlin.edu/minority-student-records

Hoffman, L. (n.d.-b). *Libguides: Minority student records at Oberlin College: summary of black graduates, 1844-1972*. Retrieved [April 8, 2024], from https://libguides.oberlin.edu/c.php?g=1395168&p=10328067

Hoffman, L. (n.d.-c). *Libguides: Minority student records at Oberlin College: "catalogue and record of colored students, 1835-1862," females*. Retrieved [April 8, 2024], from https://libguides.oberlin.edu/c.php?g=1395168&p=10328026

Holland, J. R. (Ed.) (1974). *AIAW handbook of policies and operating procedures, 1974-1975*. AAHPER Publications.

Horger, M. (1996). Basketball and athletic control at Oberlin College, 1896-1915.

    Journal of Sport History, 23(3), 256-283. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43609600

Horton, J. O. (1985). Black education at Oberlin College: A controversial commitment.

    The Journal of Negro Education, 54(4), 477-499.

Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (2003). Theoretical frameworks for African American women.

    New Directions for Student Service, 2003(104), 19-27.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.104

Hughey, M. W. (2007). [Review of the book *Critical race theory in education, all God's*

    children got a song, by A. D. Dixson & C. K. Rousseau]. *Souls, 9*(4), 369–372.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940701703885

Hyatt, R. (2003). Barriers to persistence among African American intercollegiate

    athletes: A literature review of non-cognitive variables. *College Student Journal,*

    37(2), 260-276.

Jackson, L. R. (1998). The influence of both race and gender on the experiences of

    African American college women. *The Review of Higher Education, 21*(4), 359-

    375. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.1998.0009

Jackson-Coppin, F. (1913). *Reminiscences of school life, and hints on teaching*. A. M. E.

    Book Concern.

Jenks, C. E. (1994). A ten year social history of school desegregation in McCormick,

    South Carolina. (ED382499). ERIC.

    https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED382499.pdf

Johnson, C. S. (1938). *The negro college graduate.* The University of North Carolina

Press.

The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (JBHE) (with Titcomb, C.) (n.d.). *Major*

landmarks in the progress of African Americans in higher education. Retrieved

[March 8, 2021], from https://www.jbhe.com/chronology/

Kamusoko, S. D., & Pemberton, C. L. A. (2013). Student-athlete wellbeing and

persistence: An in-depth look at student-athlete perceptions. *Journal for the Study*

of Sports and Athletes in Education, 7(1), 41-61.

https://doi.org/10.1179/1935739713Z.0000000003

Kelly, G. J. (2006). Epistemology and educational research. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, &

P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research*

(pp. 33-55). Routledge, Inc.

Kissinger, D. B., & Miller, M. T. (2009). The contemporary college student athlete as a

subpopulation. In D. B. Kissinger & M. T. Miller (Eds.), *College student-athletes:*

Challenges, opportunities, and policy implications (pp. 1-7). Information Age

Publishing.

Knight Foundation (1999). *Reports of the Knight commission on intercollegiate athletics*.

https://www.knightcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/1991-

93_kcia_report.pdf

Kouyoumdjian, C., Guzman, B. L., Garcia, N. M., & Talavera-Bustillos, V. (2017). A

community cultural wealth examination of sources of support and challenges

among Latino first- and second-generation college students at a Hispanic serving

institution. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 16*(1), 61-76.

232

Kramer, E. G. (2023). Decisions, decisions: Analyzing college choice amongst NCAA

    Division II transfer and non-transfer athletes. *Journal of Athletic Development*

    and Experience, 5(12), 75-89. https://doi.org/10.25035/jade.05.02.01

Kuh, G. D., & Love, P. G. (2000). A cultural perspective on student

    departure. *Reworking the student departure puzzle*, *1*, 196-212.

Kusbner, K. E., & Morrow, R. (2003). Grounded theory, feminist theory, critical theory:

    Toward theoretical triangulation. *Advance in Nursing Science, 26*(1), 30-43.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2003). It's your world, I'm just trying to explain it: Understanding

    our epistemological and methodological challenges. *Qualitative Inquiry, 9*(1), 5-

    12. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800402239333

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice

    field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*,

    11(1), 7-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education.

    Teachers College Record, 97(1), 47-68.

Lasser, C. (n.d). Beyond coeducation: Oberlin College and women's history. Retrieved

    [April 8, 2024], from

    https://www2.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/womenshist/women.html

Lee, G. C. (1963). The Morrill Act and education. *British Journal of Educational Studies,*

    12(1), 19-40.

Liberti, R. (2003). "We were ladies, we just played like boys" African American

    womanhood and competitive basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942. In P.B.

Miller & D.K. Wiggins (Eds.), *Sport and the color line: Black athletes and race relations in twentieth century America* (pp. 99-119). Taylor & Francis Group.

Liberti, R. (2014). "As girls see it": Writing sport on the margins of the black press. In J.L. Conyers Jr. (Ed.), *Race in American sports: Essays* (pp. 5-20). McFarland & Company Inc. Publishers.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 163-188). Sage.

Lochmiller, C. R., & Lester, J. N. (2017). *An introduction to educational research connecting methods to practice*. Sage.

López, G. R., & Burciaga, R. (2014). The troublesome legacy of Brown v. Board of Education. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(5), 796-811. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X14551410

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. Family Health International.

Mathewson, A. D. (2012). Remediating discrimination against African American female athletes at the intersection of Title IX and Title VI. *Wake Forest Journal of Law & Policy*, *2*, 295-319. https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/law_facultyscholarship/379

McClain, K. S., & Perry, A. (2017). Where did they go: Retention rates for students of color at predominantly White institutions. *College Student Affairs Leadership*, *4*(1). https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/csal/vol4/iss1/3/

Mertens, M. (2022, May 19). 50 years of Title IX: How one law changed women's sports forever. *Sports Illustrated.* https://www.si.com/college/2022/05/19/title-ix-50th-anniversary-womens-sports-impact-daily-cover

Meyer, B. B. (1990). From idealism to actualization: the academic performance of female collegiate athletes. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 7*, 44-57.

Moses, Y. T. (1989). Black women in academe: Issues and strategies. (ED311817). ERIC. https://eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED311817.pdf

Murty, K. S., Roebuck, J. B., & Jr., McCamey, J. D. (2014). Race and class exploitation: A study of Black male student athletes (BMSA) on White campuses. *Race, Gender & Class (21)*3/4, 154-173.

Museus, S. D. & Quaye, S. J. (2009). Toward an intercultural perspective of racial and ethnic minority college student persistence. *The Review of Higher Education, 33*(1), 67-94. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.0.0107

National College Athletic Association (2024). *Division II strategic platform*. https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2014/5/21/division-ii-strategic-positioning-platform.aspx

National College Athletic Association (2023). *2022-23 NCAA Division II manual*. https://www.ncaapublications.com/p-4658-2022-2023-ncaa-division-ii-manual.aspx

National Collegiate Athletic Association (n.d.). *Academic success rate trends and division aggregate reports.* https://web3.ncaa.org/aprsearch/asrsearch

National Collegiate Athletic Association (2021, December). *NCAA demographics database.* https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2018/12/13/ncaa-demographics-database.aspx

National Collegiate Athletic Association (2022a). *NCAA sports sponsorship and participation rates report (1956-57 through 2020-21).* https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/research/sportpart/2021RES_SportsSponsorshipParticipationRatesReport.pdf

National Collegiate Athletics Association. (2022b, December). *Trends in NCAA Division II graduation rates.* NCAA. https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/research/gradrates/2022/2022D2RES_ASRTrends.pdf

Newnham, N. (Director) (2022). *37 Words (Part II) These are our bodies* [Film]. FIFTY/50 & ESPN.

Nite, C. (2012). Challenge for supporting student-athlete development: Perspectives from an NCAA Division II athletic department. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics, 5*, 1-14.

Oberlin College (1909). Seventy-fifth anniversary: General catalogue of Oberlin College 1833-1908. Oberlin. https://archive.org/details/generalcatalogue00oberrich/page/n9/mode/2up

Ofoegbu, E., Gaston-Gayles, J., & Weight, E. (2021). "More than an athlete": How Black student-athletes use navigational capital to transition to life after sport. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education, 16*(1), 23-44.

https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2021.1924561

Ortlipp, M. (2008). Keeping and using reflective journals in the qualitative research process. *The Qualitative Report, 13*(4), 695-705.

Ortega, G., & Grafnetterova, N. (2022). Examining the development of graduate school aspirations among Latinx college athletes. *Innovative Higher Education, 47*(2), 347-365. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-021-09578-2

Oseguera, L., Merson, D., Harrison, C. K., & Rankin, S. (2018). Beyond the Black/White binary: A multi-institutional study of campus climate and the academic success of college athletes of different racial backgrounds. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *35*(2), 119-131. https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2016-0175

Padgett, D. K. (2012). *Qualitative and mixed methods in public health*. Sage.

Parham, W. D. (1993). The intercollegiate athlete: A 1990s profile. *The Counseling Psychologist, 21*(3), 411-429. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000093213005

Parsons, J. (2013). Student athlete perceptions of academic success and athlete stereotypes on campus. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, *36*(4).

Patterson, J. T. (2001). *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights milestone and its troubled legacy*. Oxford University Press, Inc.

Perkins, L. M. (2015). "Bound to them by a common sorrow": African American women, higher education, and collective advancement. *The Journal of African American History, 100*(4), 721-747.

Person, D. R., Benson-Quaziena, M., & Rogers, A. M. (2001). Female student athletes and student athletes of color. *New Directions for Student Services, 2001*(93), 55-

64. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.5

Porter, C. J., & Dean, L. A. (2015). Making meaning: Identity development of Black undergraduate women. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education, 8*(2), 125-139. https://doi.org/10.1080/19407882.2015.1057164

Porter, D. (Director) (2022). *37 Words (Part I) Too pushy for a woman* [Film]. FIFTY/50 & ESPN.

Post, L., & Kelly, M. (2018). Student-athlete mental health. In L. W. Roberts (Ed.), *Student mental health: A guide for psychiatrists, psychologists, and leaders serving in higher education* (pp. 381-389). American Psychiatric Association Publishing.

Prickett, M. W., Dawkins, M. P., & Braddock, J. H. (2012). Race and gender equity in sports: Have White and African American females benefited equally from Title IX? *American Behavioral Scientist, 56*(11), 1583-1603. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764212458282

Proudfoot, B. (Director) (2021). The queen of basketball [Film]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/vPFkcoTfr7g

Ramsook, L. (2018). A methodological approach to hermeneutic phenomenology. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 10*(1), 14-24.

Rosales, A. M., & Person, D. R. (2003). Programming needs and student services for African American women. *New Directions for Student Services, 2003*(104), 53-65.

Rubin, L. M., & Moses, R. A. (2017). Athletic subculture within student-athlete academic

centers. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 34*(4), 317-328.

https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2016-0138

Rudolph, F. (1991). *American college and university: A history*. University of Georgia

Press.

Ryan, H., Gayles, J. G., & Bell, L. (2018). Student-athletes and mental health

experiences. *New Directions for Student Services, 2018*(163), 67-79.

https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20271

Ryu, D. & Thompson, A. (2018). Students of color. In L. W. Roberts (Ed.), *Student*

mental health: A guide for psychiatrists, psychologists, and leaders serving in

higher education (pp. 348-357). American Psychiatric Association Publishing.

Sack, A. L., & Staurowsky, E. J. (1998). *College athletes for hire*. Praeger Publishers.

Schwandt, T. A., Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2007). Judging interpretations. *New*

Directions Evaluations, 2007(114), 11-25. https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.223

Scott, B. M., Paskus, T. S., Miranda, M., Petr, T. A., & McArdle, J. J. (2008). In-season

vs. out-of-season academic performance of college student-athletes. *Journal of*

Intercollegiate Sport, *1*(2), 202–226. https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.1.2.202

Sealy-Ruiz, Y. (2012). A way of making it: Black reentry females' success and

challenges to undergraduate education. In C.R. Chambers, R.V. Sharpe, & H.T.

Frierson (Eds.), *Black female undergraduates on campus: Successes and*

challenges (pp. 97-111). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in*

education and the social sciences (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Sellers, R.M., Kuperminc, G.P., & Damas, Jr., A. (1997). The college life experiences of

    African American women athletes. *American Journal of Community Psychology*,

    25(5), 669-720.

Simien, E. M., Arinze, N., & McGarry, J. (2019). A portrait of marginality in sport and

    education: Toward a theory of intersectionality and race-gendered experiences for

    Black female college athletes. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy, 40*(3), 409-

    427. https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2019.1614865

Simiyu, W. W. N. (2012). Challenges of being a Black student athlete on U.S. college

    campuses. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics, 5,* 40-63.

    https://scholarworks.uttyler.edu/hkdept_fac/9

Slater, R. B. (1994). The Blacks who first entered the world of White higher education.

    The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 4, 47-56.

Smith, B., & Caddick, N. (2012). Qualitative methods in sport: A concise overview for

    guiding social scientific sport research. *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social

    Science*, *1*(1) 60-73. http://doi.org/10.1080/21640599.2012.701373

Smith, M. P., Clark, L. D., & Harrison, Jr., L. H. (2014). The historical hypocrisy of the

    black student-athlete. *Race, Gender & Class, 21*(1-2), 220-235.

Smedley, B. D., Meyers, H. F., & Harrell, S. P. (1993). Minority-status stresses and the

    college adjustment of ethnic minority freshman. *Journal of Higher Education

    64*(4), 434-452. https://doi.org/10.2307/2960051

South Carolina Department of Education (n.d.). *South Carolina district report cards:

    View report cards [McCormick School District].* https://screportcards.com/

Terrell, M. C. (2005). *A colored woman in a White world*. Humanity Books.

Theune, F. (2019). Brown, Title IX and the impact of race and sex segregation on sports

participation opportunities for Black females. *Sociology Compass*, *13*(3), 1-11.

https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12661

Tierney, W. G. (1999). Models of minority college-going and retention: Cultural integrity

versus cultural suicide. *The Journal of Negro Education, 68*(1), 80-91.

Timulak, L., & Elliott, R. (2019). Taking stock of descriptive–interpretative qualitative

psychotherapy research: Issues and observations from the front line. *Counselling

and Psychotherapy Research*, *19*(1), 8-15. https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12197

Tinto, V. (1998). Colleges as communities: Taking research on student persistence

seriously. *The Review of Higher Education 21*(2), 167-177.

https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.1998.a30046

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*

(2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent

research. *Review of Educational Research, 45*(1), 89-125.

https://doi.org/10.2307/1170024

Twale, D.J., & Korn, K.A. (2009). Tracing historical research trends in higher education.

In D.B. Kissinger & M.T. Miller (Eds.), *College student-athletes: Challenges,

opportunities, and policy implications* (pp. 9-19). Information Age Publishing.

U. S. Courts (n.d.). *History – Brown v. Board of Education re-enactment.* Retrieved

[March 12, 2021], from https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-

resources/educational-activities/history-brown-v-board-education-re-enactment

U. S. Department of Commerce (2020). *Type of college and year enrolled for college students: October 2020* [Table 5]. Retrieved [March 12, 2021], from https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/demo/school-enrollment/2020-cps.htm

U. S. Department of Commerce (1977). *School enrollment – social and economic characteristics of students: October 1976 (Advance Report)*. Retrieved [March 12, 2021], from https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1977/demo/p20-309.html

U. S. Department of Commerce (1973). S*chool enrollment in the United States: October 1972 (Advance data)*. Retrieved [March 12, 2021], from https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1973/demo/p20-247.html

U. S. Department of Commerce (1972). *Fall college enrollment: October 1972* [Table 5]. Retrieved [March 12, 2021], from https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/school-enrollment/1972/p20-260/tab05.pdf

U. S. Department of Education (2023). *Equity in athletics data analysis: Data for academic year 2022-2023*. Retrieved [July 17, 2024], from https://ope.ed.gov/athletics/#/datafile/list

U. S. Department of Education (2021). *Title IX and sex discrimination*. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html

U. S. Department of Education (2015). *Equity in athletics data analysis: Data for academic year 2014-2015*. https://ope.ed.gov/athletics/#/datafile/list

Vertinsky, P., & Captain, G. (1998). More myth than history: American culture and

representation of the black female's athletic ability. *Journal of Sport History, 25*(3), 532-561.

Waite, C. L. (2001). The segregation of Black students at Oberlin College after reconstruction. *History of Education Quarterly, 41*(3), 344-364.

Watson, J. C., & Kissinger, D. B. (2007). Athletic participation and wellness: Implications for counseling college student-athletes. *Journal of College Counseling, 10*,(2), 153-162.

Weatherly, M., & Chen, Y. (2019). Predictors of academic motivation: The role of career self-efficacy among NCAA division II student-athletes. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics, 2019*(12), 521-541. https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/jiia/vol12/iss1/19

Wei, M., Ku, T., & Liao, K.Y. (2011). Minority stress and college persistence attitudes among African American, Asian American, and Latino students: Perception of university environment as a mediator. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 17*(2), 195-203. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023359

Weiss, S. M., & Robinson, T. L. (2013). An investigation of factors relating to retention of student-athletes participating in NCAA Division II athletics. *Interchange*, *44*(1-2), 83-104. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-013-9198-7

Wenglinsky, H. H. (1996). The educational justification of historically Black colleges and universities: A policy response to the U. S. Supreme Court. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *18*(1), 91-103. https://doi.org/10.2307/1164232

Wilson, R. (1990). Can Black colleges solve the problem of access for Black students?

American Journal of Education, *98*(4), 443-457.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/1085326

Winkle-Wagener, R. (2015). Having their lives narrowed down? The state of Black

women's college success. *Review of Educational Research, 85*(2), 171-204.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/24434255

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of

community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91.

https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006

Young, R. A., & Collin, A. (2004). Introduction: Constructivism and social

constructionism in the career field. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 64*(3), 373-

388. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2003.12.005