

Experiences of Black Canadian Male Student-Athletes

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Abstract

The goals of this study were to centralize the voices of Black Canadian male student-athletes by investigating their experiences as students, athletes, Black males and children of immigrant parents, and examining how these experiences might contextualize their transition out of university sport. Qualitative interviews with 20 former and current Black Canadian student-athletes were conducted using Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a methodological framework. Several of the participants described the racial, athletic and academic stereotypes that shaped their experiences, illustrating, in some cases, the influence of the Black American culture on Black Canadians.

The analysis focused on how the interview participants interpreted their experiences and how stereotypes were used to make sense of their university and transition experiences. Some participants rejected the stereotypes evoked, some challenged them in an attempt to prove them wrong, while others used them to “act more Black”. Furthermore, the degree to which these stereotypes interacted with their transition experiences centered around autonomy, the emulation of role models and of developing career opportunities highlighted the initiative displayed by most of these student-athletes. The intersection of these factors, combined with their immigrant parents’ inexperience navigating the Canadian university system, forced most of these young men to transition out of university and varsity athletics on their own.

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Dedication

To the pillars of strength in my life...

...my parents...

...Seth and Martha Nartey

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The racial, athletic, and academic experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes tend to be influenced by the Black American culture. As we shall see, stereotypes of Black American athletic and academic abilities have fostered similar assumptions and generalizations regarding athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority. According to Hoberman (1992), the use of racial differences to explain athletic or genetic advantages ignores the historical context of anthropological discourses on race. This leads to an examination of the Black body, when the real issue is an examination of White mythologies ascribed to the Black body. Stereotypes of presumed physical advantage result in Black North American youth living in a paradox where they are told to focus on sports in order to achieve success, even though, generally, social mobility is primarily obtained through education (Ford, 1993). This is particularly worrisome and conflicting for Black Canadian student-athletes who are told that “the student” comes before “the athlete” yet are pushed towards excelling in sports at the expense of academic achievement (James, 2010). Despite the similarities between the Black Canadian and Black American cultures, it is important to remember that institutional differences contextualize and individualize the transition experiences out of university athletics for Black Canadian male student-athletes.

In using Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a methodological framework to inform the overall study, my goal was to make an empirical contribution by focusing on how participants describe and make sense of their lived experiences. To accomplish this, I drew on the Canadian and American literature about stereotypes, on the American studies describing the “acting White” hypothesis, and I also turned to Canadian and American research on the role of transitions. These concepts are outlined throughout the literature review chapter where I also

outline what we already know of the application of these concepts that aid in a greater comprehension of Black Canadian male student-athlete experiences.

Contextualizing Blackness in Canada

Black Canadian culture is often imagined as a reproduction of Black American culture, which generates labels of Blacks as athletes, unintelligent, thugs, criminals, and troublemakers. This racialization of Black people is influenced by the media and characterized by Black Canadian youth associating their sense of identity with Black American culture (May, 2009; Wilson & Sparks, 1996). According to James (2012), labels such as troublemaker exist only because Black youth are too demonstrative in their reaction to a school system that does not attend to their needs, interests, or aspirations, leading to an increase in frustration and dissatisfaction with the Canadian education system. Specifically, taking Toronto as his site of research, James (2012) argued that assumptions made about the academic potential and behaviour of Torontonians Black youth are based on skin colour, clothing, and neighbourhoods, illustrating that forms of racial stereotyping are at the core of many of the educational problems of Black Canadian youth. These problems extend beyond the schooling system, with some Black students feeling uneasy around authority figures because of assumptions about their skin colour that sometimes lead to an increase in unwarranted hostile situations (James & Taylor, 2010).

Wilson (1997) used concepts of “enlightened racism” and the “floating racial signifier” to show that subtle forms of racism still exist in Canadian sports and society, even if they are not acknowledged (p. 177). Enlightened racism was first used by Jhally and Lewis (1992) to refer to the subtle way that successes and failures of African-Americans are attributed to their ability or inability to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. Hence, the failure to achieve social mobility is blamed on individual characteristics, rather than structural inequalities. McKay

(1995) argued that media advertisements during the mid-1990s aggrandized individualism and meritocracy, allowing White audiences to deny the existence of institutional racism in sports and American society. Conversely, floating racial signifiers are the different forms of social texts, identities, and meanings that are present in society and characterize African-American otherness (Andrews, 1996). Wilson (1997) found that the presence of the floating racial signifier in Canada, enabled the Toronto media to stereotype Black professional basketball players as either “good” or “bad”, with their Blackness floating from one behaviour to another. When Black players are portrayed as good, their race is invisible. They are perceived as race-neutral by the media since this is viewed as less-threatening and closer to the tamer White cultural model. However, when Black players are portrayed as bad, subtle but powerful associations with the inner-city, gangs, and crime are evident, despite the absence of explicit references to race (Wilson, 1997).

These categorizations of Blackness stem from the social construction of race that places value on certain skin colours, leading to real consequences for minorities (Lynn & Parker, 2006). To disregard Black fears of discrimination, racialization, and marginalization would be to possess a societal privilege that prevents an understanding of the social inequalities that continue to plague marginalized groups in school, in sport, and society. Walcott (2001) argued that in Canada, the grouping of Blacks emphasizes sameness and disregards cultural ethnicity that differentiates Blacks from each other. Ibrahim (2004) found that the descriptor “Black” is meaningless to continental Africans, who before coming to North America used other adjectives to describe themselves such as “tall”, “Sudanese”, “academic”, or “basketball player” (p. 78). The descriptor “Black” strips away the variations between Black cultures, leaving them to be imagined, constructed, and grouped based on skin colour. Hence, the categorization of the

body/person as “Black” erases the heterogeneity of Black experiences (Allahar, 2010; Ibrahim, 2004). It is this racialization of Blacks as the collective other that invites a deeper analysis into Blackness and gives them a sense of identity (Crenshaw, 2002), in a Canadian nation that too often places them in the category of “other”.

Contextualizing the Canadian Student-Athlete Experience

The Canadian university sport system frames the university experiences of Black Canadian student-athletes. According to Geiger (2013), the Canadian university sport system, formerly known as the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), now referred to as University Sports (U SPORTS), differs from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) of the United States of America (USA) in terms of access, quality, and funding. These differences, which are difficult for Canadian student-athletes to overlook, include attending an American university with a higher athletic prestige (except for Simon Fraser University, which is a Canadian university but in Division II of the NCAA), being recognized as an accomplished athlete in the highly competitive arena of USA intercollegiate sports, and being geographically closer to North American scouts (Dyck, 2006; James, 2012).

The NCAA generated USD 1.06 billion in revenue during the 2016-2017 school year across its three divisions of sports through media coverage, television deals, advertising, and maximum attendance at their games and events (Rovell, 2018). Concerning scholarships, NCAA Divisions I and II schools provide more than USD 2.9 billion in athletic scholarships annually to more than 150,000 student-athletes, while Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2017). Conversely, based on the 2013-2014 academic school year available, Canadian universities spent a total of CAD 15,981,189 in athletic scholarships (U SPORTS, 2018). The discrepancy in athletic scholarship funding can be

attributed to the reduced revenue generated from television, advertising, media coverage and attendance at games at Canadian universities (Miller & Kerr, 2002). U SPORTS does not exist to compete with NCAA Division I athletics. Instead, where Canadian universities compete is from the student-athlete experience, as the academic rigor at a Canadian university is comparable to that of Harvard, Duke, or Stanford (Moyo & Jones, 2015). In other words, Canadian universities are not structured to compete with American universities in terms of athletics, but rather they strive for the complete student-athlete experience. This means that Canadian universities emphasize academic responsibilities to the same degree, if not more than athletic responsibilities. Additionally, tuition fees in Canada range from CAD 5,000 – CAD 20,000 per year but start from about CAD 23,000 for undergraduate programs in the USA (International Education Consultancy, 2018). This sizeable financial discrepancy aids schools in the USA in attracting the best athletes in the world to their institutions where their talents are developed so that they can compete in some of the top sports leagues such as the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the National Football League (NFL). However, the lower tuition fees for Canadian universities and the prioritizing of a balance between sports and education separate U SPORTS from the NCAA, providing an alternative destination for Canadian student-athletes who desire the complete university experience (Miller & Kerr, 2002).

This complete university experience, centered around a level of exclusivity, distinguishes the varsity student-athlete from their non-student-athlete campus peers. Like every other student they attend classes and aim to complete their degree, but they are among the select few students that show elite sporting ability which allows them to participate in both academic and athletic pursuits (Fletcher, Benschhoff, & Richburg, 2003). Student-athletes who attend a Canadian university are thus buoyed by the fact that U SPORTS focuses on balancing athletics with

academic studies via policies on athletic scholarships. Canadian university student-athletes are eligible for athletic scholarships only if they meet certain academic standards, that are above the minimum requirements to remain eligible to compete. Failure to maintain these academic standards of performance results in the removal of the athletic scholarship (Athlete's Guide, 2015).

Conversely, American athletic scholarships are based primarily on athletic performance. The only academic requirement is that students meet the minimum academic standards to be admitted to an institution and achieve at least the minimum Grade Point Averages (GPA) in subsequent years to remain eligible to compete (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2015). Hence, Dyck (2006) argued that the decision of Canadian student-athletes to enter the NCAA has less to do with education and more to do with athletics. Similarly, James (2005) examined the ambition of Black Canadian male youths to win athletic scholarships to the USA by conducting qualitative interviews with participants from the Greater Toronto Area. He described the aspiration to win American athletic scholarships in the context of the working-class Black suburban Toronto male subculture, which he claims is influenced by marginalization, racialization, and assimilative structures (James, 2005). He determined that coaches and teachers play a pivotal role in preparing students both academically and athletically, for the post-secondary scholarships they wish to achieve. Mainly, educators' encouragement of Black students into sporting achievements reinforces forms of marginalization and racialization, inferring that the acquisition of American athletic scholarships is likely the best way for Black Canadian male youth to achieve educational and occupational success (James, 2005).

Despite the remote odds of Canadian high school athletes receiving an NCAA athletic scholarship, Black Canadian student-athletes continue to strive towards this goal. James (2005)

suggested that being racialized as the “other” or as a Canadian “outsider” likely fuels Black Canadian student-athletes to think that the best way for them to achieve their sport aspirations exists elsewhere, or in this case in the USA. As a result, many Black Canadian student-athletes believe they have an equal chance of earning scholarships to the USA since it is assumed that there are only minor differences between themselves and their American counterparts. Others are drawn to the aura of obtaining an American athletic scholarship and the perks associated with such an acquisition (James, 2003). Obtaining an athletic scholarship to the USA, therefore, became the preferred option for some Canadian student-athletes to access post-secondary education, compete at a high athletic level, and receive other NCAA perks (Wells, 2012).

Contextualizing Transition Experiences Out of University Sport

Transitions are found to contain both positive and negative outcomes, depending on the context in which the athlete leaves the sport (Lavallee, Gordon and Grove, 1997). Scholars have stopped analyzing transitions from the athlete perspective, choosing instead to focus on the entire lifespan of the individual, both inside and outside of sports (Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler, & Cote, 2009). An investigation into athletic identity, coping strategies, support networks, role models, and career opportunities is necessary when examining the transition experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes out of university athletics. When assessed together, these factors nuance the experiences of each student-athlete and form the basis for moving from a micro-analysis of sport, which focuses on the contributions made to an athlete’s career development by parents, coaches, and peers, to a macro-analysis of social factors that explores the influence that the sport system, culture, and stereotypes have on the development of athletes (Stambulova et al., 2009).

The lack of research on Black Canadian male student-athletes' transitions out of Canadian university athletics means that one needs to draw on broader American and Canadian literature to gain a sense of the transition landscape pertaining to life after varsity sport. Stereotypes centered on academic achievement, athletic pursuits, race, and immigrant status, frame the university experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes. The concurrent circulation of these stereotypes impacts the learning processes of these student-athletes, racializes them as the "other" and complicates their transition experiences out of university sport. Specifically, the lack of knowledge of the Canadian school system of immigrant parents is a hurdle that they and their children need to overcome. Unfamiliarity with the Canadian educational system is a source of frustration for immigrant parents, which leads to feelings of powerlessness and/or distrust towards school officials that is often reciprocated by their children (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004).

As a result, Codjoe (2007) implored Canadian schools to be places where immigrant parents, particularly Black immigrant parents, are welcomed and valued, in the same way that White parents are welcomed and valued. He suggested that ethnic/racial sensitivity needs to be incorporated in school policies, programs, and practices because the relationships that some teachers have with some Black parents unfairly negatively impacts their assessment of academic work from Black students. Consequently, cultural capital, which is the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts that are acquired and used by minorities to resist forms of oppression, is needed to help Black Canadian immigrant students successfully navigate the inequitable Canadian educational system (James, 2005; Yosso, 2005).

Why Should We Care?

The Afrocentric identities of African-Canadian high school students tend to reproduce the image of Blacks in Canada as outsiders (Codjoe, 2007). According to James (2012), this is primarily due to the inequitable Canadian school system that uses a Eurocentric curriculum, failing to recognize the diversity among its student population. Hence, Ibrahim and Abdi (2016) surmise that the Canadian educational system does not have the best interests of its African-Canadian students. The result is a curriculum, school programs, educational materials, and teaching styles that combine to marginalize the experiences of Black Canadians, leading to poor educational performances and very few attending college or university (Codjoe, 2001). Athletics are therefore promoted extensively because Canadian administrators, educators, and coaches believe placing priority on athletics is the best way to keep Black youths engaged (James, 2003). However, in so doing, these authority figures risk limiting the potential of Black students by excluding all other options, subsequently hindering their opportunity for upward social mobility (James, 2011).

Although Canadian teachers tend to have good intentions, their encouragement of Black youth to partake in athletics at the expense of academic success increases the pressure felt by many Black youths to excel athletically at the expense of their educational studies (Henry, 1994). Moreover, the message often conveyed by the media is that Black athletic success is the result of “natural” athletic ability, while White athletic success is the result of hard work (Floyd, 1998). Such messages reinforce the belief that Black youth do not need to engage in rigorous training to achieve athletic success, creating a false sense of security (Saul & James, 2006). Since Blacks are expected to excel athletically, failure to do so often perpetuates a self-hatred of Blackness and feelings of inferiority. However, the literature on university student-athletes suggests that

unlike their high school counterparts who use sports to justify their schooling identities, Canadian university student-athletes are more conscious about balancing athletics goals with academic responsibilities (Saul & James, 2006). In this investigation of the university experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes, the goal is to learn if and how their university experiences influence their transition experiences out of university sport. Therefore, an examination into the following two research questions are needed:

1. How are Black Canadian male student-athletes experiencing university?
2. How are these experiences in university influencing Black Canadian male student-athletes' transitions out of university athletics?

The literature on the university experiences of student-athletes revolves around the stereotypes about students, athletes, Black males, and immigrants. The literature on the transition experiences out of university athletics is marked by athletic identity, coping strategies, social support, role models, and career opportunities. The interconnectedness of these issues allows for a greater understanding of the influence that the university experiences of Black Canadian student-athletes has on their transition experiences out of university sport. Since little is known about this topic, the above-mentioned research questions provide a specific area of focus that situates this study as a progression of Carl James's work (2003, 2010, 2012) on Black Canadian high school athletes, as this study seeks to frame the experiences of Black Canadian university student-athletes within the Canadian university context.

Chapter one provides a brief introduction into the subject area. Chapter two is the literature review, separated into two sections. The first section provides literature pertinent to understanding stereotypes of students, athletes, Black males, immigrants and the "acting White hypothesis". In the second section on transition experiences, issues centered around athletic

identity, coping strategies, support networks, role models and career opportunities are reviewed, ending with a synthesis of the intersection of the two sections. Chapter three describes my methodological approach. First, the theoretical framework (based on the concepts of Critical Race Theory) that guided this research is explained. The study design, participant recruitment and data analysis procedures are then outlined. Chapter four and five highlight my findings. Chapter four's aim is to answer the first research question by paying particular attention to the development of stereotypes, separated into three distinct areas of athletics and academics, race and athletics, and race and academics. This chapter concludes with a description of the participants' understanding of their own Blackness. Chapter five seeks to answer the second research question on the role the participants' experiences have played in their transition out of university athletics. Chapter six concludes the thesis by reflecting on the importance of the study, what we learn from the data, where the participants are now, the limitations of the study and future lines of inquiry.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review outlines research on Canadian and American sports, education and society to provide background on the university experiences of Black Canadian student-athletes and how these experiences influence their transition experiences out of university sport. An examination of the literature on the broader themes of university experiences reveals that issues of stereotypes about students, athletes, Black males, and immigrant families characterize the university experiences of Black Canadian student-athletes. In the second section of the review of literature, the broader theme of transition experiences out of sports that are marked by athletic identity, coping strategies, support networks, role models, and career opportunities of Black Canadian male student-athletes are explored. Together, the two sections of this literature review provide insight and guidance to the overall study.

Stereotypes of the Black Canadian Male Student-Athlete

Allport (1954) defines stereotypes as incomplete and overgeneralized beliefs a person holds toward a particular social group. More recent research describes stereotypes as creating substantial concern and discomfort for individual members of a stigmatized group, because of the significant threat to self-regard (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998). Stereotypes rooted in social or factual knowledge and not used to make inferences on individual group members usually pose few problems (Harrison Jr., 2001). Stereotypes based on fallacious, misleading, or limited information become problematic when the target of the stereotype views the stereotype as truth (Hodge et al., 2008).

The understanding of stereotypes situated within the dichotomy of the student and athlete roles are accentuated when the individual is Black. Specifically, stereotypes about Black

Canadian youth as students, athletes, Blacks, and from immigrant families are primarily based on race and contribute to their thinking of racialization and marginalization, which impacts their learning processes, social opportunities, life chances, and educational outcomes (James, 2012). In sports, Black athletes are often viewed as threatening the superiority complex of White males (Duncan & Messner, 1998). Depictions of the Black athlete reinforce traditional stereotypes of their animal-like nature, aggressiveness, physical power, and hypersexuality. Hence, the racial difference in sports discourse assumes Black men are naturally more athletic than White men, due to a greater focus on the physicality of the Black body. Despite much evidence to the contrary, the myth of Black genetic advantages disseminates assumptions about Black athletic superiority that are difficult to dispel (Coakley, 2006; Graves, 2004). The concern here is that the success of Blacks in sports reinforces racialized images, ideas, and social practices of Blacks as superior athletes and inferior students (Hartmann, 2000). Gilroy (1993) suggested that feelings of inequality and racialization found in the Black American culture tend to influence other cultures, primarily Blacks in Canada and even Blacks in Britain. Through music, clothing, speech, and attitude, the influence of the Black American culture leads many Black Canadian youths to associate their sense of identity with that of the Black America culture (May, 2009; Ibrahim, 2014). Thus, one area of focus for this study is to learn how the intersection of these different components are understood by these young men.

As students.

The overt nature of racism that was prevalent in the past has dissipated to the point that now, racism in the form of stereotypes, is much more difficult to identify. Subtle comments about Black athletic superiority are designed to mask the racist suggestions that Blacks are intellectually inferior (Winant, 2000). Steele and Aronson (1995) coined the term “stereotype

threat” (p. 797) to describe the underwhelming performance of any group considered to be deficient in some ability. The presumed area of deficiency for Blacks is intelligence, with the implication being that they are incapable of succeeding academically. This stereotype of Black intellectual inferiority has been found to negatively affect the academic potential of some Black youth within the Western world, resulting in lowered expectations regarding their academic success (Hodge, Burden Jr., Robinson, & Bennett III, 2008). Consequently, when Black youth are not exposed to Black intellectuals who have achieved social mobility through education, they are less likely to pursue careers in medicine, law or academia. Thus, the conclusion drawn is that Black Canadian youth as a collective are academic underachievers who display no motivation for education (Smith, Schneider, and Ruck, 2005).

Similarly, Green and Winters (2006) found that while the national graduation rate in the USA was 70%, 78% of White students and 72% of Asians students graduated from the 2003 class. However, only 53% of Hispanics and 55% of African-American students graduated from that same class. Hispanic females graduated at a rate of 58%, while Hispanic males graduated at a rate of 49% (difference of 9%). At only 48%, African-American males reported the lowest graduation rate of any subgroup and the largest division within their racial category, as 59% of African-American females graduated (difference of 11%) (Greene & Winters, 2006). Statistics such as these are often used to generalize the academic capabilities of Black Canadian males, which are rooted in the influence of the Black American culture (Codjoe, 2006).

Such assumptions about Black intellectual capability elicits questions about their legitimate presence in university. James and Taylor (2008) found that some Black Canadian students reconceptualized their university access program as a scholarship program, as a way of affirming their place in university. This access program gave students a chance to attend

university, who due to institutional, cultural, social, or financial circumstances, may not have had the chance to attend otherwise. This program was not a transition program, as students were required to meet the university's admission criteria for their desired program. These participants believed that by exercising agency and taking responsibility for their schooling, their education would work to their benefit. They reconceptualized their access program as a way of instilling in themselves a sense of pride in being university students, which stemmed from an obligation to their immigrant parents and a desire to give back to their communities through educational achievements (James & Taylor, 2008).

Even though some Black Canadian students make sound educational choices, supported by their parents' encouragement in their school activities, the belief that Black Canadians display no motivation for school continues to exist. Some educators and researchers have gone as far as to conclude that the Black culture is responsible for Blacks being dumb, lazy, athletic, inferior, dangerous, deviant, and stupid (Collins, 2004). Despite these negative conclusions, Codjoe (2007) identified a supportive family environment as being the most significant factor for academic success. He found that African-Canadian youth who are better integrated into their home culture are also better students, regardless of structural barriers (Codjoe, 2007). However, this idea of home culture put forth by Codjoe (2007) incorrectly assumes that all Blacks identified as immigrants, which reinforces the stereotype of Blacks as outsiders. Applying this immigrant mentality to all Blacks is theoretically done to show that immigrants place greater emphasis on education than non-immigrants (Anisef, Poteet, Anisef, Farr, Poirier, & Wang, 2005).

Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges, and Jennings (2010) found that teachers in the USA attribute Black American students' academic failures to a lack of assimilation. Blame is placed

on the students themselves and their communities, with the source of the problem being the parents, who instill in their children cultural norms and values that are inconsistent with what is taught in school (Lynn et al., 2010). As a result, the expectations of Blacks by educators is very low, which helps to maintain the Black-White achievement gap (Ferguson, 1998). James and Haig-Brown (2001) found that the negative attitude towards Black students is also adopted by some Canadian educators who have low academic expectations of Black students and encourage them to take non-university path programs, believing that they either do not have the capacity for university education or that their best opportunity for social mobility resides in college education or sports. In contrast, James (2010) later found that Black students who work hard to dismantle the stereotype of Black underachievement endear themselves to their teachers, particularly their White teachers, who value students who take their education seriously. Since White teachers are more inclined to treat Black and non-Black students equally, Black students are more likely to grow academically. In contrast, he found that Black teachers are more likely to coddle Black students because they can sympathize with their situations, resulting in Black students being less likely to reach their full potential (James, 2010). This is likely because Black teachers, like Black students, are merely trying to fit in, so they are less likely to challenge Black students academically. White teachers are not concerned with fitting in; they can encourage students to “push the envelope” per se and pursue topics that challenge them intellectually (James, 2010).

Using a critical race perspective, Hodge et al. (2008) analyzed the social and psychological construction of race, racism, and stereotypes that influence Black male student-athletes' academic experiences. Negative stereotypes about intellectual ability hinder performance, causing the individual to confirm the negative stereotype (Cheryan &

Bodenhausen, 2000). Steele and Aronson (1995) found that when intellectual tests are described as tests of ability, or when negative intellectual stereotypes of African-Americans are made salient, Black participants underperform. Equally, Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, and Darley (1999) found that when a golf task was framed as an assessment of sports intelligence (positive White stereotype, negative Black stereotype), Whites performed significantly better than Blacks. When the same task was framed as an assessment of natural athletic ability (positive Black stereotype, negative White stereotype), or when the test was framed as a measure of a non-stereotyped characteristic, Blacks significantly outperformed Whites (Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, & Darley, 1999). The poor performance by Blacks on these intelligence tasks increases the likelihood of confirming negative stereotypes regarding Black intellectual ability, which often leads both Blacks and non-Blacks to attribute intellectual achievement with Whiteness (Steele & Aronson, 1995). However, Sanders (1997) and Moore, Madison-Colmore, and Smith (2003) acknowledged that the presence of negative stereotypes does not always hinder performance. In some cases, negative stereotypes are used as motivation by Black youth to prove the stereotype false.

Henry (1993) recommended that a change to the Canadian school curriculum take place that emphasizes multicultural education because the Canadian school system is failing Black children by downgrading their educational potential in favour of their athletic prowess. A renewed approach to learning is a welcome addition for students, parents, and communities because it dismantles the stereotypes of Black athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority, shifting the focus to the lived experiences in which Black boys are to become Black men and productive members of society (James, 2012). Thus, Canadian schools need to develop a model of parent and community education and advocacy, instead of focusing on deficit theories,

policies, programs, and the continued practice of blaming Black students, their families, and their communities for educational failure (Codjoe, 2007).

As athletes.

The examination of the stereotype of Black Canadian males as athletes requires greater attention because this stereotype separates university student-athletes from their peers. All admitted members to a university are considered students, but only a select group are also athletes. It is the inclusion in this exclusive elite dual category that produces the unique athlete stereotype. Due to the athletic success and significant interest in sports demonstrated by Blacks, sports are often considered to be a branch of Blackness and the Black race (James, 2003). Therefore, identifying as Black brings the added responsibility of having to find success in sports. Hence, some Black youths think sports exist to provide them with the opportunity to be rich and famous, reproducing the stereotype of sports being the primary method of social mobility for Black youth (Duda, 1989). It is through this stereotype of Black athletic superiority but intellectual inferiority that the concept of stacking emerged. This concept is rooted in the overrepresentation of Blacks in sports that led some Blacks to change their positions since it was assumed that they were athletic enough to thrive in multiple positions, but not smart enough to be in positions of leadership or importance (Anderson, 2010). Particularly in the sport of gridiron football, Blacks are more likely to change from cerebral positions such as quarterback to more athletic positions such as running back. Although not as common anymore, this stereotype was prevalent in constraining Black quarterbacks, who often had to change positions because it was believed they did not have the necessary intellectual capacity nor leadership abilities to direct a team (Billings, 2004). Due to the social construction of race, positions deemed to require more athleticism were occupied by minorities, while positions viewed as requiring more thinking were

occupied by Whites (Billings, 2012). Hence the basis for the athletic stereotype that praises White athletes for their effort and intelligence, and Black athletes for their natural athletic abilities (Billings, 2012).

Some Black Canadian youth use the pressure of having to be an athlete first to validate themselves through their success in sports. Saul and James (2006) studied the coverage of 18 Canadian male student-athletes after they were individually featured in the “High School Report”, a section on local high school athletes in the Toronto Star newspaper. Photos were included in the coverage, which the researchers used to classify the students by race. All the Black students featured in the report aspired to careers in professional sports and/or athletic scholarships to the USA, whereas less than half of the White athletes featured were described as having aspirations towards the acquisition of NCAA scholarships. Indeed, for many of the White athletes, no speculation was made about their athletic futures, which Saul and James (2006) concluded was likely due to their depiction as high academic achievers rather than “natural” athletes.

In the report, the White participants conceded that they were not as good as the Black participants in some sports. The Black participants embraced this idea of athletic superiority to confirm their schooling identities, with several of them prioritizing their athletic role at the expense of other areas of their education (Saul & James, 2006). Specifically, coverage of a Black high school athlete in the “High School Report” described him as never being in the weight room yet possessing the strength to bench press 300 pounds without breaking a sweat. In the same report, a White baseball player was described as having improved himself athletically because of hard work and effort in the gym, highlighting the difference between race-based athletic characteristics (Saul & James, 2006). Descriptions of White student-athletes as high academic

achievers as well as hard-working athletes, provides them with a greater array of possibilities for their futures in comparison to Blacks who are seen as strictly “natural” athletes. According to the authors, the biased media coverage that continues to depict Black athletes as naturally athletic contributes to their defining their schooling success through their athletic, rather than academic achievements (Saul & James, 2006). Consequently, by ignoring the structural inequalities that Black student-athletes face, the media is contributing to popular discourses that frame educational opportunities as limited for Black male students (Saul & James, 2006).

Evidence of the increased value placed on the athlete role over the student role is best signified by the American legal case known as Taylor vs. Wake Forest University in 1972. In this famous case, Gregg Taylor, a Black former gridiron football player, alleged a breach of contract against the university in 1972 (Taylor vs Wake Forest, Opinion, p. 2). Taylor’s scholarship was terminated because the school felt he was not participating in the athletic activities necessary to retain his scholarship. It was Taylor’s contention that the team’s practice interfered with his academic studies. Taylor argued that the school had verbally agreed that participation in athletic activities could be reduced or eliminated if it hindered academic progress. However, his case was dismissed as the courts sided with the school, claiming that his absence from athletic activities for any reason other than injury did not meet the contractual obligation he had made with the university, forcing Taylor to bear all financial responsibilities to continue his education (Taylor vs. Wake Forest, Opinion, p. 2). The pressure to win, particularly at an American institution, means coaches and administrators are less likely to support activities that take away from students’ time and focus on sport (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996). The irony in all this is that, even at an institution of higher learning, student-athletes are not permitted to prioritize their academic responsibilities over their athletic responsibilities (Donnor, 2005).

Historically, sports in the USA were designed with the expectation that when Blacks and Whites competed against each other, Whites were to win. Where this could not be guaranteed, rules were implemented that handicapped Blacks, hence the emergence of the superior Black athlete stereotype. This stereotype led to an association between sports and Black masculinity, as competition between Blacks and Whites quickly became a symbolic contest of masculinity and racial pride (Carrington, 1998). According to Carrington (1998), sport sociologists view sports as the gateway to masculinity whereby sports function to train young boys to display learned behaviours that avoid the wider social processes of feminization. In other words, sports are used to define men and their masculinity and to keep them from becoming feminine. His use of the Caribbean Cricket Club's defeat of a White male cricket team in the 1970s shows that Black masculinity and the Black race are not inferior identities (Carrington, 1998). Subsequently, there is an intertwining of Black masculinity and athletics, highlighted by behaviours that display "macho" qualities, such as choosing to attend a school for athletic reasons, not wanting to attend an all-boys school, or an expectation to have multiple sexual conquests (James, 2003).

These behaviours associated with Blackness have come to be understood and characterized by athleticism, poor academic performance, and a desire to be seen as "cool" (Davis, 2003). Wilson (1999) described "cool pose" as both positive and negative behaviours that Black Canadians use to carry themselves in the face of oppression, institutionalized racism, and limited opportunities. This approach to societal structures has become so ingrained in the Black culture that the heterosexuality and Blackness of those who do not follow this masculine code of conduct are put in doubt (Walcott, 2009). Hence, the push towards sports at the expense of academic excellence demonstrates Black males' identification with sports as the fulfillment of a masculine identity because of societal values of aggression, competition, and winning (Saul &

James, 2006). Therefore, participating in post-secondary athletics is seen as almost necessary, with the acquisition of an NCAA scholarship preferred over participating in U SPORTS (James, 2003). Moreover, those with serious professional sport aspirations are more inclined to choose the NCAA path since it provides the most direct path to the top North American professional sports leagues.

Blacks from working-class backgrounds are more likely to view the acquisition of athletic scholarships to the USA as an opportunity to enhance their upward social mobility (James, 2003). As Won (2017) noted, Canadian university athletic programs are comparable to NCAA Division II programs. Therefore, it is not realistic to expect top-level Canadian talent to stay in Canada, particularly if they have the opportunity to attend an NCAA Division I program (Won, 2017). Furthermore, the acquisition of an athletic scholarship to the USA provides several advantages that can be used to entice Canadian student-athletes to pursue their education and athletic competition in the NCAA, the least of which is a level of elitism and exclusivity that most Canadian students do not experience (Dyck, 2006; Wells, 2012). According to the sports column VICE, in 2015 only 6% of the American population were Black males, yet they were the most visible race in professional gridiron football (70%) and basketball (80%) (Moore, 2015; Rogers, 2011). These two sports are the highest revenue-generating sports in the NCAA, suggesting that Black Canadian gridiron football and basketball student-athletes with high professional sport aspirations may be better off leaving Canada to enter the NCAA since their chances of entering the professional ranks from the NCAA would be significantly higher (Wells, 2012).

Student-athletes who choose to remain in Canada do so with the understanding that policies and procedures within U SPORTS promote education along with athletics. According to

the Athlete's Guide (2015), student-athletes are eligible to receive an athletic scholarship at the beginning of the school year (September) only if they enter university with at least an 80% high school average. In Ontario, student-athletes are eligible to receive an athletic scholarship at the beginning of subsequent years if they receive at least a 70% university average the previous school year. All student-athletes at universities outside of Ontario are eligible to receive scholarships at the beginning of the school year if they achieve a minimum of 65% university average the previous school year. They are also required to maintain full-time status by completing a minimum of three full credit courses, six half-credit courses, or 18 semester hours within an academic year (U SPORTS, 2018). Therefore, with the limited professional sports opportunities available in Canada and the greater emphasis on balancing athletic and academic responsibilities, Canadian student-athletes are taught that sports are not the only, nor are they always the best way, to achieve upward social mobility (Won, 2017).

However, racial stereotypes applied to sports are found to be advantageous for some Black athletes. James (2003) addressed this issue using a focus group with five working-class high school Black male basketball players. Kevin, one of James' participants, claimed that the White kids at the basketball camp stereotyped him by thinking he was better at basketball than he actually was because he is Black. However, Kevin also stereotyped the White kids, suggesting that their White race precluded them from possessing basketball abilities, insinuating that basketball is for Blacks because Blacks are the better athletes (James, 2003). Similarly, James (2011) described Amir, who was not selected for the high school basketball team, despite his Black Canadian peers being selected. Due to racial stereotypes that foster images of South Asian children succeeding in the classroom but not on the basketball court, the basketball coach expected Amir to acquire an academic scholarship because he thought of him as intelligent

instead of athletic (James, 2011). The implication is that Black students belong on the basketball court and need basketball to keep them engaged in school since basketball provides them with an opportunity to achieve upward social mobility. Alternatively, non-Black students, particularly South Asian students such as Amir, are believed to have other avenues such as education, where they can achieve upward social mobility (James, 2011). Since basketball is stereotyped as a Black sport, the Black basketball players in both cases are looked upon favourably, whereas the non-Black basketball players are looked upon unfavourably (James, 2012).

Emerging from the relationship between stereotypes of athletic pursuits and academic achievement is the “dumb jock” stereotype. The “dumb jock” stereotype suggests that athletic ability is inversely proportional to intellectual ability (Hoberman, 1997). Jameson, Diehl, and Danso (2007) found that an athlete’s intellectual performance is negatively affected by the “dumb jock” stereotype if the stereotype implies that they are given preferential treatment during their college admissions. Stereotypes such as these make it difficult for Black American youths to enter non-sporting realms because of the assumption that sport is all they know and all they can do (Hoberman, 1997).

In the Canadian university sport system, there is little evidence suggesting that preferential treatment exists for Canadian student-athletes to the same degree that it exists for American student-athletes (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Rarely is there a report of a Canadian student-athlete receiving improper financial benefits for their athletic prowess or gaining admission to a university without meeting the entrance requirements. Entry into a Canadian university is based on merit, illustrated through the earning of the necessary grades to warrant acceptance into a post-secondary institution, regardless of athletic potential. The relationship between academic performance and athletic scholarships for U SPORTS student-athletes leads to a celebration of

academic goals and accomplishments within the athletic university subculture (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Whereas American universities may consider the athletic capabilities of the student in determining admission, Canadian universities regularly implement a blind admission policy, wherein admission is based on grades and having completed pre-requisite courses (Pastine & Pastine, 2011). Therefore, student-athletes must meet the same academic requirements for admission as non-student-athletes (Athlete's Guide, 2015).

As Black males.

The student and athlete stereotypes of Canadian student-athletes are magnified when those stereotypes intersect with the racial component of Blackness. Stereotypes about Black males creates an apparent need to classify them as “at-risk”, or in this case, “at-risk students”. Levin (2004) defined “at-risk” students as those whose past and present circumstances are associated with a greater probability of failing to obtain desired life outcomes. These desirable life outcomes, however, are propagated on socially constructed educational factors that are needed for social mobility. Hence, the “at-risk” designation is attributed more to the social disadvantages that make learning difficult for these students (Wotherspoon & Schissel, 2001).

Fine (1993) viewed risk as a tangible construct, not in the mold of race or gender, but one that assesses individuals, groups, and communities based on factors that are deemed valuable by dominant groups. Youth who have not acquired these valued qualities, or who have characteristics that are deemed to be unbecoming, are subsequently classified as “at-risk”, because their behaviours and dispositions are more likely to jeopardize their futures (Kelly, 2000). One of the features that put Black males “at-risk” is the higher rate of fatherlessness in the Black home. Statistics Canada reported that in 2006 visible minority women were more likely to be single/lone parents than visible minority men (Chui & Maheux, 2015). Specifically, Black

visible minority women had the largest share of being lone parents among visible minority groups (24%), followed by Latin American women (14%), Southeast Asian women (12%), and West Asian women (10%) (Chui & Maheux, 2015). In 2011, it was found that visible minority women were also more likely to be lone parents than non-visible minority women (10.1 vs. 8.1). By comparison, non-visible minority men were more likely to be lone parents (2.4%) than visible minority men (2.0%) (Hudon, 2016). Thus, it could be concluded that more children of Black women were raised by single mothers than raised by single mothers of other ethnicities, or single fathers.

The stereotype that accompanies the single parent household is one where the children are judged to be problematic. James (2012) argued that the perception of the Black family structure in Canada is one where single-motherhood is the norm. As such, the lack of presence from Black fathers, combined with higher rates of poverty and unemployment in the Black community, leads to an unstable environment that puts Black children at a starting disadvantage (Booth, Scott, & King, 2010). Ibrahim and Abdi (2016) add to this, citing the significant power of socioeconomic status, wherein a low socioeconomic status is connected to failure in educational outcomes for students. Milan and Tran (2004) found that in 2001, the unemployment rate for immigrant Blacks was 9.6%. The unemployment rate for Canadian-born Blacks was 7.9%. Comparatively, the unemployment rate for non-Black immigrants was 7.0%, while the unemployment rate for non-Blacks born in Canada was 6.0% (Milan & Tran, 2004). These statistics suggest that Blacks are at a disadvantage in terms of employment opportunities, and the additional loss of social capital due to the absence of the Black father is said to result in the poor academic performance, delinquency, violence, substance abuse, depression, and low self-esteem of Black youth (Booth et al., 2010). However, this is not to say that all Black fathers are absent,

nor is it to say that single-mother households cannot thrive. Instead, this is to stress the importance of Black fathers in the development, nurture, and success of their children and to demonstrate that the stereotype of the broken home is another obstacle that some Black youths need to overcome in their efforts to achieve social mobility.

Adding to the challenges of overcoming obstacles for Black men is the influence that the White media has in constructing the meaning of race that normalizes Whiteness to maintain a societal privilege or White hegemony (Welch, 2007). Visual representations are used to depict Black males as criminals, dangerous, or “at-risk” if their lifestyles or behaviours do not coincide with those of the White racial majority (Entman, 1992). Kelly (2000) argued that the danger in categorizing Black youth as “at-risk” creates the impression that such individuals are to be feared, leading to an increase in surveillance and intervention of young people’s lives by authority figures. In Canadian urban schools, educators and administrators take precautions they consider to be necessary to ensure the safety of all students (James & Taylor, 2010). However, some deem the presence of police officers, security guards, security camera, school uniforms, hall monitors, and the locking of outside doors while classes are in session as unnecessary because they make urban schools appear more like prisons (James & Taylor, 2010). Thus, the implementation of these practices, which often take place in urban or inner-city schools where there is a significant racial minority population, may be the consequence of prevailing stereotypes about the Black race (Welch, 2007).

As immigrants.

The assumption that Blacks do not belong to Canada is rooted in their apparent failure to assimilate (James, 2012; Walcott, 2001), leading to questions of, “No, where are you *really* from?” According to Boatswain and Lalonde (2000), this form of exclusion creates pressure to

assimilate, pushing Black Canadians to identify more with the Black American culture. Sealy (2000) echoed this sentiment, arguing in Rinaldo Walcott's edited book, *Rude*, that it is difficult for Blacks to identify with Canada because Canada is not seen as a nation where Blacks are prominent. This apparently makes it impossible to be both Black and Canadian, since Canada has garnered an image of being a place without Black people, or more accurately, a place where Black people are always deemed to be from elsewhere (Walcott, 2000).

In Canada, Blacks are likely to be racialized as “the other” because as of 2016, they comprised only 3.4% of Canada's population of 35,151,728 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Comparatively, Blacks in the USA comprise 12.6% of the total population of 308,745,538 (US Census Bureau, 2013). The smaller number of Blacks in Canada is often used to paint Canada as a safer nation because Black Americans are viewed as dangerous and a threat to Whites (Ibrahim, 1999; Ibrahim, 2014). However, at 15.6%, Blacks comprise the third largest percentage of visible minority groups behind South Asians (25%) and Chinese (20.5%) (Ibrahim & Abdi, 2016; Statistics Canada, 2016). Their sizeable percentage as a visible minority group facilitates forms of racialization (James, 2005). Evidence of this was seen in 2007-2008 when 114 Black Jamaican students and migrant workers entered the Okanagan Valley via a recruitment initiative organized by the Okanagan College, the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, and the Jamaican Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Aguiar, McKinnon, & Sookraj, 2010). The purpose of the “Caribbean initiative” was to train students in the culinary arts, body shop work, and business programs available at Okanagan College while also adding international student fees to the college's operating budget (Leung, 2018). Their arrival was stereotyped by coverage of the local media, with Black Jamaican males, in particular, categorized as “the other” (Koroscil, 2008). The implication was that Black Jamaicans were

unpredictable, pot smokers, and menaces to White women and White society. Thus, curfews were enforced with the aim of controlling Blacks and protecting Whites who felt fearful or threatened (Aguiar, Mckinnon, & Sookraj, 2010). Stereotypes of hypersexuality, animalistic properties, and a lack of intelligence were also attributed to their Blackness, but the editors proclaimed that they were “colourblind” and did not see racial differences. Regardless, the students felt excluded from community life and due to the neoliberal market that perceived economics above all other aspects of human life, the Black Jamaican migrant workers felt like a resource to be used and discarded because their cultural, spiritual, and social human components were ignored (Aguiar et al., 2010).

The racialization of Jamaicans within the Okanagan Valley as troublemakers makes it easy to place that same label on the larger Black Canadian population (Aguiar et al., 2010). The problem with this generalized conclusion is that, although Jamaicans migrated to the Okanagan Valley in 2007-2008, Jamaicans are more likely to settle in the Toronto area. However, Blacks from French-speaking nations are more likely to reside in French-speaking cities such as Montreal or Ottawa, illustrating the diversity among Black Canadian immigrants. Houle and Corbeil (2015) noted that a large population of Canada’s French-speaking migrants come from Africa. In 2006 it was reported that Black migrants comprised 26% of the French-speaking immigrants, compared to 5% of Asian and Latin American speaking French groups (Ibrahim, 2014). Therefore, the treatment of Blacks as the racialized “other” homogenizes Black people, discounts the diversity among them, and ignores the historical presence of Blacks in Canada despite the settlements of Black Loyalists since the 18th century (Ibrahim & Abdi, 2016; Smith et al., 2005).

The assessment of Blacks as a heterogeneous group can be separated into autonomous, immigrant/voluntary, and caste-like/involuntary minority groups (Ogbu, 2004). Recognizing each of these minority group statuses is necessary for comprehending cultural diversity and learning in the USA (Ogbu, 1992b) and clarifies the Canadian dynamic as well. Autonomous minorities are considered minorities simply due to being few in number, such as Mormons or the Amish. Immigrant/voluntary minorities are people who come to the USA of their own accord, voluntarily, to seek political freedom, economic well-being, or greater opportunities. Caste-like/involuntary minorities were brought or integrated into the USA by force, against their will, through slavery, conquest, or colonization (Ogbu, 2004). Voluntary minorities are further separated by primary cultural differences and involuntary minorities by secondary cultural differences. Primary cultural differences involve behaviours and attitudes such as language, religion, way of dressing, and child-rearing, that a group possesses before that group meets another group, such as before immigrant minorities came to the USA. Secondary cultural differences are differences in behaviours and attitudes that arise after two groups come into contact (Ogbu, 1992b). This form of cultural immersion produces a residual effect of subordination, characteristic of Black involuntary minorities integration into the host culture of the USA. Specifically, involuntary minorities adopt an oppositional social identity that views engaging in behaviours, events, or institutions such as schools, that are controlled by the majority White population as inappropriate, because they are characteristic of a White America (Mehan, Hubbard & Villanueva, 1994). In contrast, voluntary minorities interpret the cultural differences they encounter as barriers to overcome to achieve their goals of school success, which can be used to obtain future employment and integration into the dominant society (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

The results from the 2000 Youth in Transition Survey of 15-year-old students showed that visible minority Canadian immigrants have higher educational aspirations than native-born visible minority students, demonstrating the difference in immigrant group statuses that can be explained by sociodemographic and social psychological factors as well as school performance (Krahn & Taylor, 2005). James (1993) argued that parents of Black Canadian youth pass onto their children the belief that people are rewarded for their hard work and individual effort. Many immigrant parents encourage their children to overcome the difficulties they face in school because the educational opportunities in Canada are superior to those available in their home countries (Anisef, Poteet, Anisef, Farr, Poirier, & Wang, 2005). This neoliberal mentality implies that immigrant parents are motivated to work harder than non-immigrant parents. They endured economic and social hardships in their homelands and thus pass onto their children strong convictions that education is the key to upward social mobility (James, 2010). So, although Canadian non-visible minorities have high postsecondary aspirations, Canadian visible minorities and Canadian youth from immigrant families have exceptionally high postsecondary aspirations (Krahn & Taylor, 2005). It is this approach towards education that separates voluntary from involuntary migrant minorities, supporting Ogbu and Simons' (1998) theory that most voluntary minority groups excel academically, despite language barriers and racial discrimination (Ogbu, 1992a).

Waters (1994) found that second-generation Caribbean Black students in New York adopt different identities depending on their perspective of discrimination. Similar to the concept of voluntary and involuntary minorities described by Ogbu (1992a) and Ogbu and Simon (1998), those who identify with their Caribbean heritage (voluntary minorities) adopt their parents' beliefs that perseverance in the face of racism will yield success. Conversely, those who identify

with Black Americans (involuntary minorities) reject this notion and adopt an oppositional social identity towards education and school authority.

Steinberg, Dornbusch and Brown (1992) found that feelings of racialization and marginalization produce an all-or-nothing mindset among minorities that cause them to either assimilate into their host country or maintain an oppositional social identity. However, this is an overly simplified perspective. Although some voluntary migrants do not assimilate at all into the culture of their host nation, there are those who assimilate and seemingly lose their ethnic identities, and those who are able to integrate into the social identity of White American culture without losing their ethnic identities (Gibson, 1988). Known as “accommodating without assimilating”, Gibson (1988) observed that Sikh voluntary American immigrants incorporate aspects of White culture, without losing their ethnic identities because they have not adopted an oppositional social identity fostered from a long history of racialization and marginalization (p. 24). Ogbu and Simons (1998) argued that the lack of an oppositional social identity is buoyed by a positive dual frame of reference. This dual frame of reference enables voluntary minorities to compare their progress in the USA with that of their homeland, concluding that greater opportunities for economic success reside in the USA, even if it means receiving less than equal treatment (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Involuntary minorities on the other hand, who are descendants of slaves or have been in the USA for many generations, struggle with this dual frame of reference. They compare their progress to that of White Americans, concluding that they are worse off than they should be, subsequently blaming Whites and the institutions controlled by Whites for their struggles (Ogbu, 1992a). Involuntary minorities are therefore less likely to value education, due to a social identity that is in opposition to the values of White Americans, resulting in their academic struggles (Ogbu, 1992b).

Issues of collective identity and feelings of belonging are possible explanations for the divide between Black Americans and White Americans, but they are also found to be relevant to the separation of Black Canadians and White Canadians (Ogbu, 2004; Walcott, 2001). Due to the familiarity with the Black American culture, the boundary between Canada and the USA is blurred, leading many Black Canadian youth to think they are a part of the Black American culture. Negative depictions of Black Canadians manifest themselves from the presumption that they do not belong to Canada and Canada does not belong to them, leading to the adoption of an outsider mentality (Walcott, 2001), marked by an apparent inability or refusal to assimilate into the Canadian culture (James, 2012). Evidence of this is seen with his Francophone African-Canadian participants who formulate their Black identities based on others who are “like them”, and with whom they share similarities of race, culture, and lifestyle (Ibrahim, 1999). Their apprehension to assimilating into White Canadian culture supports James’s (2012) and Codjoe’s (2006) assessment that Black immigrants are less likely to assimilate when they feel like outsiders. Moreover, their display of primary cultural differences not only keeps them from integrating into the host Canadian culture but emphasizes a collective identity among North American Blacks that is used to distinguish them from the White racial majority group (Phinney, 1990; Ogbu, 2004). Thus, Ibrahim (1999) argued that Blackness is a learned trait that these immigrant youths need to adopt because they are not considered Black in their homelands. Learning to become Black in Canada involves an acquisition of Black popular culture from the USA, such as rap and hip-hop, that is used for Black identification in Canada.

According to Sefa Dei and James (1998), Black Canadians desire to belong and connect with other Blacks, while at the same time be distinct from other ethnic groups. However, wanting to be separate from other ethnic groups leads to the foreign cultures of Black Canadians being

blamed for their poor academic performances and disciplinary problems. Whites on the other hand rarely have their heritage or cultural identity questioned, regardless of their behaviours (James, 2012). Codjoe (2006) argued that the pressure to assimilate for African-Canadians is the leading cause of their academic struggles because of a Eurocentric education system that from the outset puts Black youth at a disadvantage. The rationale is that a focus on the home culture would reinforce knowledge and pride in Black culture and identity, equipping Black students with the tools needed to deal with structural barriers in a Canadian school system that is the most significant source of assimilation (Codjoe, 2007; Henry, 1993). However, Thiessen (2009) argued that the Eurocentric curriculum in the Canadian school system does not necessarily hinder Black educational success. James' (2010) participants, Conrad and Kendra, who became a corporate lawyer and high school teacher respectively, demonstrate this by successfully negotiating social, economic, cultural, and community barriers to attain success from their own skills and abilities. However, their effort and success as Black immigrants may paradoxically contribute to the stereotype that their Black peers are lazy, unintelligent, and uninterested in school. Nevertheless, their achievements support the argument that the Eurocentric school curriculum may perhaps enable the academic success for both Whites and Blacks, if the individual students devote the effort to conform and meet the requirements (James, 2010; James, 2012). This is not to say that the current school system is the best model, or that efforts to design a better model are not warranted, but Black students can learn how to navigate the system and use its resources to facilitate their own upward social mobility. Despite the unique challenges Black students must overcome, the examples of Conrad and Kendra reveal that these challenges are not insurmountable (James, 2010).

In sports, the racialization of Black athletes is seen with minority athletes being adopted by their host country when they achieve athletic success but regarded as outsiders when they experience failure. Former Olympic sprinter Ben Johnson exemplifies such an athlete. Having won gold at the 1988 Olympics with a world record time of 9.79 seconds, Ben Johnson was hailed a Canadian national hero (Cole, 2013). Before his ascension, Johnson was viewed as a Jamaican immigrant. Through his rise to fame, his “otherness” was reconceptualized as Jamaican-Canadian. His gold medal triumph at the 1988 Olympics cemented his status as a Canadian, without any qualifiers (Jackson, 1998). When he was caught using performance-enhancing steroids and stripped of his gold medal, the outpouring of support Johnson received quickly dissipated. Many in the media no longer described him as “Canadian Olympic sprinter Ben Johnson”, but as “Jamaican-Canadian Olympic sprinter Ben Johnson” (Cole, 2013). Jackson and Ponc (2001) argued that the hyphenation in “Jamaican-Canadian” is especially powerful because of the national and racial connotations that it possesses. This signifier implies that one is not fully Jamaican, nor fully Canadian. Further disparaging of the Jamaican-Canadian hyphenation is that in Canada, “Jamaican” is used as a euphemism for “Black”, where someone described as a Jamaican-Canadian is otherwise known as a Black-Canadian (Jackson & Ponc, 2001).

Contrasting the depiction of Ben Johnson was the media coverage of Donovan Bailey, who won an Olympic gold medal at the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta. Despite not being embroiled in a cheating scandal like Johnson, Bailey, who was also hailed as an Olympic hero, was imagined as the “other” within the Canadian discourse (Jackson, 2004). In 1997, Bailey raced and beat fellow sprinter Michael Johnson to settle the debate about who was truly the world’s fastest human. Canada’s claim to the world’s fastest man quickly changed to a narrative

of Bailey being “un-Canadian” because of the shame he allegedly brought on Canada with his comments and actions towards Johnson post-race (Jackson, 2004).

The analyses of Ben Johnson and Donovan Bailey invite a broader debate about racial and national identity within the Canadian discourse (Jackson, 2004). It is therefore not surprising that Canada, like most nations, capitalizes on the opportunity to highlight the achievements of their internationally successful athletes, especially racial/ethnic minorities (Jackson, 1998). Due to the multifaceted processes of sports that intersect conceptions of national identity, sports are used by the media to reproduce an exclusionist sense of national identity. This framing of national identity depicts some people as Canadians and others as the racialized “other”, who do not belong to Canada (Hargreaves, 1994; Walcott, 2001).

The “acting White” hypothesis

Discussions of race are often centered around Black and White issues, with both races expected to act or “perform” in certain ways (Ibrahim, 2014). Simone de Beauvoir’s (1953) claim that a woman is not born but rather matures to become a woman, implies that gender is not a stable identity, but one that is fluid and malleable. However, feminist scholars and a large body of research in biology and the social sciences have disputed de Beauvoir’s claim, arguing that some innate sexual differences exist that separate men and women (Blum, 1998; Geary, 1998; Fausto-Sterling, 2008; Mikkola, 2011). Nevertheless, like many other scholars who consider that gender identities are the product of social construction, Butler (1988) contends that gender identity is developed through repeated actions over a set period of time. As such, gender can be viewed as a performative act in a culturally restricted space. This means that there are appropriate ways to behave regarding gender. Performing one’s gender correctly provides assurance that things are the way they are supposed to be. Conversely, performing one’s gender

incorrectly leads to questions regarding the validity of the individual (Butler, 1988). Therefore, while innate biological components are essential to race-based classifications, I do concede that the social construction of race is also manifested through repeated actions of different racial groups.

These performance-like behaviours centered around race and Blackness are especially noticeable when analyzing the “acting White” hypothesis. This American based term attributes Black students’ academic struggles to a disconnect between their academic effort and success (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). This stems from White Americans’ refusal to acknowledge Black Americans’ intellect, causing Black Americans to doubt themselves and their intellectual ability. Consequently, Black Americans define academic success as a White person’s privilege, discouraging their Black peers, whether consciously or unconsciously, from emulating the academic pursuits of White people (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Hence, generations of Black children are taught that being Black in America means they “have to be twice as good to get half as far” (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, p. 177). This message is understood by members of the Black community as an indication of the societal barriers that exist that limit the social mobility of Blacks. This type of cultural orientation that expects Blacks to be twice as good to get half as far, defines academic learning as “acting White”, and academic success as a privilege associated with White Americans (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Horvat and Lewis (2002) observed that efforts to excel intellectually evoke feelings of resistance from Black and non-Blacks who claim that such actions are “acting White” and subsequently less Black. Therefore, Black students who excel academically are categorized as “sell-outs”, because they seemingly disengage from their Black culture and assimilate into the dominant White culture in order to achieve success (Fordham, 1991). Bergin and Cooks (2002)

found that the anxiety associated with accusations of “acting White” causes an internal conflict among some Black American high school students. Whereas acting Black is understood as a source of empowerment or taking pride in one’s culture, “acting White”, while conducive for academic success, has negative connotations attached to it for Blacks, through its association with White Americans and stereotypes that attribute intelligence to Whiteness (Ogbu, 1992a). Striving for academic success while attempting to maintain an authentic Black identity creates the “burden of “acting White”, which is responsible for the devaluation of education and low achievement in school among Black Americans. This “paradox of underachievement” might prevent Black American students from reaching their full academic potential, even though many of them hold positive views about school success and achievement (Ford, 1993). Those with positive views about school are thus willing to sacrifice their ethnic identity since Blackness does not seem to be valued academically by the dominant White culture (Bergin & Cooks, 2002). Others suppress their academic abilities out of fear of being accused of “selling out”, culminating in the failure to reach their potential, even though they are intellectually capable (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). This internal conflict arises because the “acting White” hypothesis presupposes that based on race, Blacks are to behave in stereotypical ways, and any attempts to distinguish oneself from the stereotypical Black culture leads to doubts about one’s Blackness, and by default, accusations that they are “acting White” (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Ferguson, 2001).

This has led some educators to conclude that the fear of accusations of “acting White” is responsible for the avoidance of high achievement among Black students (Fryer & Torelli, 2010; Bergin & Cooks, 2002). This was exemplified when a high school in Washington, DC, tried to coax academic effort by paying students USD \$100 for straight “A”s. The cheques were awarded during school assemblies, but after a few assemblies, students were jeered with comments of

“Nerd!”, “Geek!”, “Egghead!”, and “Whitey!”. The hazing of these honor students continued in the months after, with fewer students receiving straight “A”s (Suskind, 1998). Some teachers, principals, and counselors noted that it is not “cool” for minority students to be smart, suggesting that Black students are actually embarrassed about their strong intellectual abilities (Tyson et al., 2005). Other administrators claim that the underrepresentation of Blacks in advanced courses is due to the lack of value placed on education within the Black community. Some Black American youths admitted that they are less likely to value educational success because it is a characteristic of Whiteness and constitutes “betraying their brothers” (Tyson et al., 2005, p. 594). Horvat and Lewis (2003) cited feelings of resistance from Blacks and non-Blacks who use the belief that academic achievement is “acting White” and subsequently less Black, as a possible explanation for the poor intellectual performances of Blacks. The young women in their study demonstrated that Blackness and intelligence are not incongruent and that having the support of like-minded peers is important in navigating Black peer groups.

Despite the “acting White” hypothesis being an achievement issue, Davis (2003) found that Black American males develop masculine codes of conduct characterized by athleticism and physical activity, the pursuit of romantic or sexual relationships with female students, a focus on being perceived as “cool”, and various attitudinal and behavioural norms that do not focus on academic achievement. Such actions are more characteristic of low achievers who are likely to follow these behavioural norms of stereotypical Black masculinity because they apparently exemplify Blackness, whereas high-achieving Blacks are less likely to comply. Failure to comply often leads to ridicule and exclusion from Black male networks (Davis, 2001). The result is an invalidation by others within the group, and an opting for priorities and values that are in opposition to those of White privileged groups, such as a lack of interest in school and a disdain

for white-collar jobs (Jones, 2000). This internalized racism occurs when stigmatized groups accept and recycle negative messages regarding their own aptitude, abilities, and societal place (Jones, 2000). This is characterized by Blacks not believing in themselves or in others who look like them, opting instead to embrace forms of Whiteness (use of hair straighteners or bleaching creams), self-devaluation (using racial slurs as nicknames), and helplessness or hopelessness (dropping out of school or engaging in risky health practices) (Jones, 2000).

The communication of counterproductive and racist messages by group members endorses the ideas of the oppressor, making the negative attitudes toward in-group members the norm (Harper, 2006). High-achieving Black students associate with high achievers from other ethnicities, particularly White students, leading to accusations of “acting White” or being a “sell-out” (Fryer & Torelli, 2010; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). These accusations are often the result of low-achieving Black American students upstaging high-achieving Black American students by making them feel inferior and suggesting that they have rejected their culture and ethnicity. Questions of “Aren’t we good enough for you?” asked by low achievers are not born out of frustration or jealousy of the successes of high achievers, but rather the perceived rejection of culture and ethnicity by high achievers who appear to distance themselves from the Black race through enrollment in private school or entering advanced placement courses (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Tyson et al., 2005). As a result, some high-achieving Black students do not live up to their academic potential, succumbing to the peer pressure of low-achieving Black students. Hence, the low academic achievement of some Black students is likely due to the negative peer pressure they receive from their fellow Black students, who attempt to undermine and thwart their academic effort, than due to a lack of educational aspirations (Horvat & Lewis, 2003).

Despite the racial component of the “acting White” hypothesis, Kao, Tienda, and Schneider (1996) discount the idea that the burden of “acting White” is solely a Black issue. They argued that the “acting White” hypothesis comprises more than racial and ethnic variations in academic performance. Tyson, Darity, and Castellino (2005) supported this notion stating that there is little empirical evidence to substantiate the claim that the burden of “acting White” only afflicts Black students, as the “acting White” hypothesis is not specific to Black culture or American culture, but rather to the academic divide between high- and low-achieving students, regardless of race. While I agree that there is little empirical evidence to support this claim, it does not take away from the fact that Black Canadian students may still be called out for not being Black enough because of their academic inclination. The value ascribed to race, and academic capacity attributing the lowest levels of intelligence to Blacks and the highest to Whites has conditioned some Black and White youth to associate academic success with Whiteness (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Therefore, if academic achievement is strictly associated with Whiteness and being White, and not an expectation of Blackness, Black youth who value education and put effort in academic achievement will be perceived as “acting White” for not conforming to the norms of their peer group.

Transitioning Out of Competitive University Athletics

Stereotypes about students, athletes, Black males, and immigrant families contextualize the university experiences of Black Canadian student-athletes. These university experiences lead to distinct transition experiences out of university sport for Black Canadian male student-athletes, centered around athletic identity, coping strategies, support networks, role models, and career opportunities. Schlossberg (1981) defined a transition as an event or non-event that results in a change in assumptions about one’s worldview, leading to a corresponding change in that

individual's behaviour or relationships. Focusing on current life situations helps us understand how athletes make sense of their lives within the process of change and transition (Gabriel, 2006). Narrowing that focus of research to just sport-related transitions and omitting non-sport-related transitions is unjust since an athlete's identity is not limited to sport alone (Erpič, Wylleman, & Zupančič, 2004).

The scarcity of professional sports opportunities in Canada, whether as players or in management, makes it essential for student-athletes to consider both a school's athletic and academic programs in preparation for careers outside of sports (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Such opportunities are so scarce that increased pressure is placed on parents, teachers, coaches, and counselors to ensure that Black student-athletes, who are more likely to prioritize athletics, are making appropriate post-secondary choices since the commitment and dedication needed to excel in sports restricts opportunities to engage in other activities (James, 2011). Admittedly, this is a concern for all student-athletes, but a focus is placed on Black student-athletes and their families because they tend to express a greater affinity for careers in professional sports (Connely, Cukier, Grant, Neuman-Bremang, & Wisdon, 2014; Duda, 1989; Saul & James, 2006). As a result, U SPORTS offers student-athletes the opportunity to seek an athletic and academic balance at Canadian institutions over the heavy athletic demands of the NCAA. A lack of literature on this topic means that when assessing the transition experiences out of university sport for Black Canadian male student-athletes, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the transition experiences of elite athletes, women, and Black Americans. The hope is that their transition experiences can be used to draw similar comparisons to the transition experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes, which helps to illuminate an athlete's career development that is influenced by both individual and social factors (Stambulova et al., 2009).

Athletic identity.

Although there is little research in Canada about the transition experiences of Blacks, the transition experiences of other groups of athletes can be used to make a comparative model. In a cross-sectional survey of 179 undergraduate students, Phoenix, Faulkner, and Sparkes (2005) identified athletic identity as the most influential factor in an athlete's life. Athletic identity is defined as the degree to which athletes identify themselves within the athlete role. Since athletic identity develops at an early age, athletes are less likely to consider other career, educational, or lifestyle options, putting them at an increased risk of emotional disturbance upon career termination (Baillie & Danish, 1992). Career termination results in feelings of emptiness and loss, particularly for those with a strong athletic identity that was once used as a resource but is now used as a barrier during the termination phase (Stambulova et al., 2009). Individuals who are heavily invested in their sport have stronger athletic identities, which likely leads to them developing a self-concept that is limited to their athletic role (Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997).

Indeed, Green and Weinberg (2001) found that individuals with higher levels of athletic identity reported lower levels of self-esteem post-injury. In other words, athletic identity is significantly related to physical conditioning, indicating that those with a high athletic identity value their athletic status to such a degree that it interferes with their self-esteem when they do not maintain their previous level of fitness.

Among American intercollegiate athletes, athletic identity is found to be inversely related to career maturity (Lavalley et al., 1997). Athletes with strong athletic identities struggle with self-identification, which makes their transition out of university sport more difficult (Murphy et al., 1996). The search for an identity outside of sports leads to more autonomous behaviour and less reliance on parental support (Dusek, 1987). As young athletes become and remain involved

in high-level competitive sports through adolescence, their self-identity becomes exclusively based on athletic performance (Coakley, 1993). Therefore, since sports do not last forever, developing a self-identity outside of sports is crucial for adolescent development because they need to identify with something after their playing careers end.

Coping strategies.

Coping strategies help to counter a strong athletic identity and make the transition out of university sport easier for student-athletes. Coping strategies are divided into two processes: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotion-focused coping controls the emotional responses to the problem through distancing, avoidance, or selective attention. Problem-focused coping fixes the problem that is causing the distress by employing techniques such as defining the problem, generating alternative solutions, weighing the alternatives, and choosing a solution (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping strategies are particularly useful in managing the distress associated with the transition out of sports, particularly among those with a high athletic identity (Lavalley et al., 1997). Athletes with a strong athletic identity lack the necessary coping skills to transition out of sports (Gordon, 1995). As a result, they experience a greater adjustment to life after sport than those who have a weaker athletic identity, necessitating the need for greater coping skills (Grove, Lavalley, & Gordon, 1997).

Erpilč et al. (2004) found that athletes who possess a high athletic identity tend to lack self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem in activities other than sports. These increased feelings of incompetence fill their post-sports lives as they experience more frequent and severe occupational difficulties because they evaluate their transition to life after sport as more negative than their peers (Erpilč et al.).

Lavallee et al. (1997) found that the retirement from sports and the loss of athletic identity suggests that factors associated with sport retirement are similar to other types of loss outside of sports. Their results indicate that there is a considerable benefit to making an account of one's experiences following a traumatic event, in the same way that account-making is used outside of sports. Specifically, the reporting of emotions and feelings associated with retirement from sports is beneficial in a therapeutic sense to the overall adjustment process (Lavallee et al., 1997; Murray, Lamnin, & Carver, 1989). For instance, the relationship with coaches and teammates that is often lost upon career termination forces many athletes to make an account of their transition experiences as a means of coping with the distress of transitioning out of sports (Lavallee et al., 1997; Pennebaker, 1989). Despite what we know about transitions, more information is needed on the extent to which specific transitions out of sports impact athletes and influence non-athletic transitions. This would help to understand the development of athletic careers at the psychological, psychosocial, academic, and occupational levels.

Support networks.

One specific type of coping strategy that helps athletes deal with these difficult adjustment periods is related to support networks. Social support networks in the form of teammates, coaches, family, and friends are used to provide advice, information, or resources to manage the termination process (Green & Weinberg, 2001). Student-athletes especially value support networks because they tend to spend most of their time with their teammates in class, at practice, at games, and while living together (Donnor, 2005). Theberge (1995) argued that the camaraderie built among teammates makes it easier for athletes to handle different life scenarios since their teammates have experienced or are experiencing many of the same issues.

Lavallee et al. (1997) found that retired male and female American athletes who competed on the national and/or international levels were prone to experiencing feelings of emptiness or loss when separated from coaches or teammates during their sports transition. Survey questionnaires and autobiographical accounts found that the loss of primary support groups (teammates, coaches) upon retirement from competitive sports elicits feelings of vulnerability in former athletes. The presence of teammates and coaches who share in their pain and can thus provide relevant social support is a calming influence for many athletes. Once their careers end, the lack of these support networks creates feelings of despair for many athletes (Lavallee & Anderson, 2000). It is this lack of support, or the failure to develop meaningful relationships outside of sports, that increases the pressure many athletes place on themselves to be self-reliant once their sports careers end (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007).

Falls and Wilson (2012) examined the need to be self-reliant in interviews with 12 Canadian female student-athletes who played soccer at the university level in the NCAA. Participants were selected based on their status as Canadian intercollegiate female student-athletes who had graduated from an American university but were residing in British Columbia at the time of the interviews (Falls & Wilson, 2012). Convenience and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants who varied between the ages of 23 to 30 and were of Caucasian ethnicity. Although the use of such a homogeneous sample in terms of same gender, class, ethnicity, and background limits the ability to compare across groups, it allows for an analysis of richer descriptions of the experiences of those occupying a similar social location (Falls & Wilson, 2012).

Falls and Wilson (2012) found that the experiences of their participants were divided into three phases: moving into university, the impact of the team on their transition experience, and

transitioning out of the student-athlete life. The women interviewed described their decision-making processes in individualized terms as processes of individualization and detraditionalization. Individualization is the belief that one needs to overcome adversity on their own, due to the lack of support networks such as family, ethnic communities, or religion. Detraditionalization involves choosing less predictable pathways to upward social mobility due to the instability or lack of reference points (Beck & Willms, 2004). Since individualization and self-sufficiency are encouraged in schools and the media, young people regard decision-making and its consequences as a product of their control, ignoring the influence of structural conditions (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). Bauman (2001) added that the way people talk about their lives results in a lack of comprehension regarding the way structure constrains or facilitates their life choices. Thus, during the first and last phases of the women's careers, their individualized language led them to believe they acted autonomously and independently throughout their lives, rather than their lives being impacted by outside social constructions (Falls & Wilson, 2012).

Despite being influenced by social constructions, it is this combination of detraditionalization and individualization that creates reflexive modernity, which enhances agency to remove the victim label and ensure that young people are still able to make their own decisions and be accountable for their decisions (James & Taylor, 2008). Unbeknownst to these women are the structural conditions that are associated with reflexive modernity and transition-related anxieties that exacerbate an understanding of contemporary social and cultural life (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). According to Furlong and Cartmel (2007), it is the anxiety from these transition-related experiences in this modern world that exposes youth to a greater range of options and possibilities. This type of transition acknowledges the limits and contradictions of

the modern world that augment but do not replace traditional social practices, leading to the formulation of new avenues for individuals to re-evaluate and alter their daily lives (Giddens, 1999). However, agency enhanced by reflexive modernity is found to be problematic, as the many options available to those transitioning is a source of confusion since there rarely is a clear and obvious “right” choice when pursuing athletics, education, or personal goals (Giddens, 2013). The many new options available for upward social mobility means athletes are free to chart their own paths and enter post-playing careers that have little if anything to do with sports (Giddens, 1999). Hence, many athletes look to role models when transitioning, and Black Canadian male student-athletes are no different.

Role models.

Edwards (2000) found that the heavy interest in sports by Black youth is rooted in structural inequalities that limit their opportunities. Many Black youths and their families are left thinking that their only recourse to upward social mobility is to pursue a career in athletics (Harris, 1994). Unfortunately, and coincidentally, doing so further limits their potential, as there are only a limited number of such sports positions available (Carrington, 1986; Hoberman, 1997). In the USA, the message often conveyed by the media is that Black social mobility is best achieved through the sport and entertainment industries since successful Black role models are rarely seen outside of these domains (Harris, 1994). The residual effect of such pursuits is symptomatic of the personal and cultural underdevelopment of some Black youths, characterized by an inability to excel outside of sports. Moreover, occupational development is also affected, as the talent filtered toward sports leaves careers in medicine, law, economics, politics, education, and technical fields diminished of Black personnel (Edwards, 2000).

Shakib and Veliz (2012) argued that the encouragement to pursue sports is directly related to Black America's triumphs in sports and the perception that Blacks are naturally more athletic than other races and ethnicities. This encouragement creates an idealistic view that a career in professional sports is a promising avenue to obtain social mobility for Black Americans (Azzarito & Harrison Jr., 2008). As a result, the faith that Black American families put into sports at the expense of other areas of development for their children creates further issues within the Black American community (Edwards, 2000). These issues extend to Canada, with the visibility of Black entertainers, particularly Black athletes, leading many Black youths to conclude that a career in sports is attainable. A more accurate explanation is that a career through education is viewed as unattainable, since the invisibility of successful learned Blacks makes it more difficult for Black youth to envision themselves in careers obtained through education, such as a doctor, lawyer or professor (Wilson & Sparks, 2001). Media portrayals of Black athletic success that highlight rags to riches stories but rarely show athletes who have failed, lead many Black youths to believe they also have a chance to "make it" athletically (Wells, 2012).

This tempered mindset toward professional sports does not mean Black youth should not be supported in their athletic endeavours. Their athletic endeavours should be supported, but not to the detriment of other opportunities, because this sends the message that Blacks are valued only for entertainment purposes (Lomax, 2000). James and Taylor (2012) found that when Black students successfully negotiate social, economic, cultural, and community barriers to attain educational and occupational success based on their own skills and abilities, they are looked to as role models by younger Blacks. Role models who look like Black youth provide them with the motivation to successfully navigate the Canadian education system and the labour market, with

the realization that social mobility can be achieved through avenues other than sports (James & Taylor, 2012).

Career opportunities.

The career opportunities for Black athletes are often limited due to the increased value they, their families, and non-kin place on athletics. Coakley (1983) explained that from a social status perspective, American athletes from lower social status groups often have a more challenging time adjusting to life after sport because they do not have the necessary social networks to make their transition period easier. Specifically, Black Americans are described as not having the same opportunities as their White counterparts to progress once they leave sport (Coakley, 1983). Due to structures rooted in racialization that work to foster inequality that privileges Whiteness, while oppressing those who display characteristics of Blackness, sports such as soccer, golf, hockey, and tennis that have a higher representation of Whites, tend to provide these athletes with opportunities to develop social contacts with non-athletes (Coakley, 1983). Conversely, sports such as gridiron football, basketball, and track-and-field that have a higher Black representation do not provide Black athletes with those same opportunities.

Similarly, the lack of opportunities for Black athletes also applies to Black coaches. A media report in the St. Louis American reported that Black Collegiate Division I gridiron football coaches in the NCAA are unlikely to receive a second chance at a head coaching position after being fired. Black coaches receive only one chance to succeed, whereas White coaches benefit from multiple opportunities to succeed (Reid, 2015). The limited managerial opportunities for Blacks are further evidence of the racial imbalance within the decision-making positions in sports. Whereas Whites are likely to move into upper-management positions when their playing careers end, such opportunities are not as likely for Blacks (Murphy et al., 1996).

As a result, Miller and Kerr (2002) suggested that the onus of preparation for life after sport be placed on the adults in the lives of student-athletes. Canadian parents, teachers, coaches, and counselors need to ensure student-athletes are making appropriate academic choices by placing a greater priority on education than on athletics. Student-athletes with professional sport aspirations are more likely to have their opportunities to engage in other activities restricted because of the commitment and dedication needed to excel in sports (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Although the athletic skills of Black Canadians are highly cultivated, their academic abilities also need to be molded so that a more diverse range of opportunities can be presented as plausible future options (Wells, 2012). Thus, prioritizing a balance between athletics and education is necessary for Black Canadian student-athletes because it leaves all options open and does not confine a person to only one path (Hoberman, 1997; Milan & Tran, 2004).

Conclusion.

The aspiration by Blacks to acquire athletic scholarships to the USA is largely related to a subculture of marginalization, racialization, and the assimilative structure of schools and society (James, 2003). Specifically, athletic abilities and skills are constructed as signifiers of Blackness, masculinity, and a means of gaining respect, prestige, and acknowledgment, which many Black youths expect to use to achieve their educational, occupation, and career goals. As a result, their strategies for success oppose the alienation and disempowerment they experience within the school system (James, 2003). Their ability to exercise agency rather than taking on the label of “victim”, is used to make their own decisions in ensuring that their schooling provides them with what they need to attain their aspirations (Hylton, 2010; Saul & James, 2006).

Based on the literature reviewed above, it is surmised that Black Canadian male student-athletes are more comfortable placing the responsibility of their futures in their own hands.

Doing so seemingly eliminates the reliance on others, as these student-athletes prepare for their inevitable transition out of university athletics. Lavalley and Anderson (2000) found that athletes who make a genuine effort to prepare for their transition out of sports experience a significant decrease in distress related to their athletic termination. Therefore, focusing on the athletic, psychological, social, academic, and vocational development of student-athletes provides insight into their progress, which is used to understand the holistic nature of the individual during their transition out of sports (Wylleman & Lavalley, 2004).

This literature review analyzed the relevance of stereotypes from both the American and Canadian perspectives and used them to frame the experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes transitioning out of university athletics. As a result, more specific questions guide this study. First, how are stereotypes about students, athletes, and Black males experienced by participants? Second, how do these stereotypes of Black Canadian male student-athletes intersect and influence their transition experiences out of university sport which are characterized by individual and social factors of athletic identity, coping strategies, support networks, role models, and career opportunities? Although I introduced literature above on stereotypes constructing Blacks as being from immigrant families, I did not consult this literature prior to starting this project. Once I started the data collection and analysis process, the fact that participants came from immigrant families emerged as significant. Similarly, the “acting White” hypothesis emerged from the data as an intersection of the stereotypes about students and Black males. These two concepts were therefore not included in the formulation of the specific research questions that guided the development of the interview. The following chapter provides more detail on the design and process of this research.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Methods

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach that guided this research project, my positionality as a researcher, some ethical considerations and the data collection and analysis processes. Methodology can be understood as the guiding principle behind the data collection that influences the analysis. It is the “how and why” research was collected, and therefore the justification or epistemology for using a specific research method (Howell, 2013). In other words, methodology is the study of, and reasoning behind why a particular method was used. Therefore, the methodology section in any research serves the purpose of explaining the ways in which results are obtained, leading to differing conclusions (Kahn, 1991).

There are several different methodologies that one may adopt as their “lens” through which their research questions are evaluated, including but not limited to positivism and post-positivism, constructivism, and critical theory (Wilson, 2001). Among these more dominant Western paradigms, my methodology closely aligns with that of Critical theorists, who believe that reality is fluid and dependent on sex, culture, and social class. The intersection of these factors combine to influence this fluid reality, altering it based on my background and experience as a researcher and the context in which it is presented (Deetz, 2005; Wilson, 2001).

Critical race theory.

A Critical Race Theory (CRT) approach was used as the methodological framework to guide and inform this overall study because of its ability to examine the relationship between race, racism and power (Delgado, 2002). CRT challenges convention, closed-minded thinking, and under-theorized approaches of race relations in the USA. CRT examines the social construction of race and racial power associated with privilege, Whiteness, and upper-class status, contrasting it with the disadvantages associated with Blackness and lower-class status (Crenshaw, 2002). Although CRT was developed in the American context, its guiding principles remain useful to think about how Black Canadians interpret the effects of racialization and marginalization they experience in a context where they are influenced by Black American culture (James, 2012). CRT guided the empirical contribution of this research project by focusing on the participants' experiences as a means of highlighting their knowledge, skills and abilities (Yosso, 2005). This framed their overall university and transition experiences, and not just the negative dimensions of being racialized and marginalized on campus. Furthermore, my inspiration to use CRT stems from the works of other scholars (Connely, Cukier, Grant, Neuman-Bremang, & Wisdom, 2014; James, 2012; James & Taylor, 2008), whose research focuses on race and sport, and who have also used CRT to investigate the experiences of Black Canadian students.

One of the fundamental principles of CRT is that race is a social construction based on the meaning assigned to race (Lynn & Parker, 2006). Race as a biological concept does not exist, but rather the material reality of skin colour exists. When value is placed on skin colour and certain skin colours are prioritized over others, race and its related social effects are subsequently constructed. In other words, if social value is not attributed to skin colour, the processes of

marginalization associated with race would disappear. Hence, the persisting processes of marginalization, racialization, and discrimination frame the social experiences of many minorities in their quest to overcome the stigma associated with their skin colour (Haney-Lopez, 1994). Drawing on this influence, CRT is used to situate Black Canadian student-athletes in a Canadian landscape that views them as the “other”, although in some cases they view themselves as the “other”. Thus, it is through this understanding of the racialized “other” that CRT thrives, as its five tenets help to explain the experiences of racial minorities (Delgado, 2002).

Although CRT advocates for equality among races and ethnicities, it remains skeptical of whether true equality can be achieved, since change enacted through efforts of CRT comes into effect only if it coincides or converges with the interests of Whites, otherwise known as interest-convergence (Bell, 1980; Hylton, 2010). When it does not, divergent interests of Blacks and Whites ensue, resulting in racialized social structures that reinforce White privilege, helping Whites benefit from the social order (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Thus, CRT is used because of its ability to examine the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado, 2002), all of which are significant in how Black youth experience their transition out of university sport.

Five tenets of CRT.

The five tenets of CRT that emerged from the critical analysis of race relations guide scholars who study sport and leisure from a CRT perspective (Hylton, 2005). When race and racism are the focal points of analysis on social relations, it allows for a new way of viewing the world, enhancing the overall knowledge related to race, while uncovering assumptions about socially constructed groups (Bulmer & Solomos, 2004; Gunaratnam 2003; Hylton, 2009).

Although the five tenets below guided the entire process of the research, tenets one, three and four were the most influential.

1st tenet.

The first tenet is that race must be the principal component, but it must not be understood in isolation (Parker, 1998). From a CRT viewpoint, race cannot be theorized in a vacuum. It is therefore imperative to recognize CRT's ability to centralize race in conjunction with other forms of oppression and subordination such as gender, class, and age (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Even though race and racism are significant areas of study, CRT scholars are urged to do more than acknowledge this fact (Anthias, 1998). Stanfield II (1993) requested that researchers focus less on methodology and more on causation in order to provide a more accurate picture of the Black experience in society. Carrington (2013) noted that the intersectionality of race, gender, and class is something that needs to be examined further, as there exists limited discussion on intersections of class and gender and even less on sexuality and disability. As such, my investigation on the transition experiences out of university sport for Black Canadian male student-athletes is categorized by the intersection of race, with components of gender, class, nation, academic status, athletic status, and immigrant status that dismantle the homogeneous assumption that all Blacks are the same. Although this study design does not support causal relationships, it does point to links between the participants' experiences and specific forms of transitions.

Although I focused on Black voices, this first tenet encouraged me to ask qualitative interview questions that would broaden the analysis beyond race and examine their experiences in conjunction with the stereotypes of athletic status, academic status, immigrant status and familial status. This allowed me to uncover how race intersects with perceptions of academic and athletic ability but also with other sociodemographic factors that may alter the way in which Black Canadian student-athletes and others interpret their existence in the world. This tenet

influenced the research by ensuring that I did not take race for granted. As a result, I structured my interview guide so that questions pertaining to race would be left until the end, because I wanted the participants' experiences centered around race to emerge from their stories when they answered questions about being students and athletes. Furthermore, when recruiting participants, I relied on visual confirmation that they were Black, as well as purposely asking them in my recruitment letter if they identified as Black (self-confirmation), since race is not a biological concept, but a social concept. In the analysis, I did not assume that their experiences were the result of their race, but instead tried to decipher through their individual stories if and how they experienced being racialized in Canada.

2nd tenet.

In the second tenet, CRT challenges traditional dominant ideologies and convention that work to foster inequality (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). The use of CRT allows for the dismantling of concepts and policies such as colourblindness objectivity, meritocracy, race-neutrality, and equal opportunity because CRT does not believe that these concepts truly exist (Nebeker, 1998). Merit and colourblindness are understood to be code words often used by lawmakers to advance the political and economic interests of the upper White class (Donnor, 2005). Ladson-Billings (1998) argued that in the USA, Whites have been the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation through programs such as affirmative action that were designed to aid minorities but ended up benefitting those already privileged. Specifically, White women were found to be the greatest recipients of the affirmative action policy, and since White women use the money they receive to support households where White men and White children reside, Whites in general ultimately become the beneficiaries of the policy (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

An issue that arises with the second tenet is that the implementation of change is based on addressing the concerns of people of colour, yet most educators, administrators, and policymakers are not people of colour (Hylton, 2009). It is to be noted that there are no publicly recorded instances of dubious behaviour that would entail a Black student receiving inappropriate admission to a university based on athletic status. Across Canada, admission for all students, regardless of athletic status or colour is based on meeting the admission requirements (Athlete's Guide, 2015). Yet, the current "blind" admission process privileges those who have access to the best primary and secondary schools and gain an academic advantage to get higher grades and thus admission to university. In this context, there are also provisions to ensure inclusive admission based on marginalization of minority groups (Casas & Meghan, 1995; Pastine & Pastine, 2011).

3rd tenet.

The third tenet concerns a commitment to social justice and offers freedom from racial, gender, and class oppression (Matsuda, 1991). Parker (1998) asserted that the unsatisfactory nature of social structures perpetuates racial inequality. Within education, the goal of CRT scholars is to promote social justice in the form of equitable access to quality education for all students of colour (Donnor, 2005). According to Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995), the unequal distribution of power and resources disproportionately marginalizes Black peoples' position in society, sport, local government, and other major social structures. In the USA, demands to make the inferior Black segregated schools equal to White schools, led only to the facilities being made equal, not the resources (Bell, 1992b). The same was true of Canadian schools, as Black Canadians were also kept in segregated, under-funded, poorly equipped

schools, with the parents of these children objecting strongly to these conditions, demanding that their children receive the educational opportunities afforded to everyone else (Hill, 1993).

Magnet schools were created in the USA to desegregate certain schools by designating them as specialty schools (math, science, technology, etc.) to attract White students (Ladson-Billings, 2004). In cases where Whites attend magnet schools, these schools become a school within a school. The area that houses the magnet program often becomes exclusively White and maintains possession of most of the school's resources, leaving the other areas of the school to be populated by minorities (Ladson-Billings, 2004). The presence of African-Americans at these schools is not necessarily indicative of their overall achievement since they are often underrepresented in the advanced placement programs and courses (Solarzano & Ornelas, 2004). In 2001/2002, Latin-American students comprised 66% of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) high school enrollment, but only 49% of their advanced placement enrollment. African-Americans comprised 14% of the high school enrollment, but only 8% of the advanced placement enrollment. Conversely, Asians comprised 9% of student enrollment and 21% of advanced placement enrollment, while Whites comprised 12% of student enrollment and 22% of advanced placement enrollment (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2001). Therefore, Blacks enrolled in these advanced courses are often accused of "acting White" due to the belief that they are not supposed to be in these advanced courses.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002a) envision social justice research as (a) the elimination of racism, sexism and poverty and (b) empowering subordinated minority groups. They argued that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their ability to oppress and marginalize combining with their potential to emancipate and empower. In this respect, my research shows the impact that circulating stereotypes within the Canadian university system

have in racializing Black Canadian student-athletes. At the same time, the educational and athletic balance at Canadian universities empowers Black student-athletes to demonstrate resiliency and challenge the conception that they are marginalized and racialized as the “other”, resigned to achieving success only through sports (James, 2012; Stone, Perry & Darley, 1997).

4th tenet.

The fourth tenet states that CRT centralizes the marginalized and oppressed voice (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). CRT scholars emphasize that CRT does not favor any one social group. Instead, it recognizes that certain groups are at a greater disadvantage than others. Therefore, using CRT provides a platform to hear the opinions, perspectives, and life experiences of those who are not in a position of power within the social hierarchy (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). This social hierarchy stems from privilege, with Whites said to be at an advantage because of the societal constructs associated with Whiteness and privilege (Gillborn, 2005). CRT scholars contest privilege since privilege places some groups of people in more advantageous positions than other groups. Although one can be objective from the position of privilege, many CRT scholars question the authenticity of an individual in this outsider position (Gillborn, 2010). Delgado (1989) argued that those disadvantaged need a voice because although story-telling is a useful commodity for racial reform, it often tells only one side of the story. Consequently, counter-stories are needed to contest conventional wisdom and provide a voice to those who are oppressed or marginalized (Delgado, 1989). Being able to hear stories of Blacks, by Blacks, is significant and powerful because it sometimes contradicts the same stories told by Whites and other races (Hylton, 2005). Other scholars support the notion of asking Black people about their experiences of being the racialized “other”, because it may contradict the popular narrative by removing any assumptions or conclusions drawn, providing an alternative to making sense of

racialized experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, Yosso, Solorzano, & Parker, 2002).

Providing a voice to both immigrant and non-immigrant Black student-athletes provides insight into their university experiences and the effect that these experiences have on their eventual transition out of university athletics. However, Hylton (2009) cautioned CRT scholars to be careful of suggesting that the “Black voice” represents the experiences of all Black people because that would question the validity and reliability of the representations.

The 4th tenet describes giving the marginalized a voice which can be transformed into a source of strength. According to Pizzaro (1998), educational research tends to undervalue the voices of the marginalized by focusing too much on their failures. CRT emphasizes the triumphs of racialized individuals rather than dwelling on their failures (Yosso, 2005). My project was about centralizing Black voices and the heterogeneity amongst my participants by highlighting their different experiences, circumstances and aspirations. I went directly to the source, by inviting Black Canadian male student-athletes to tell me about their experiences. Thus, the 4th tenet encouraged the implementation of qualitative interviews as the method of choice to centralize the voices of Black Canadian male student-athletes as a means to learn how they understand their university experiences. The positive experiences outlined by the participants shows that those that make it to university and persist as student-athletes are experiencing forms of success in Canada. At the same time their negative experiences centered around racialization and at times marginalization do show that on Canadian campuses, sports and society are not colourblind.

5th tenet.

The fifth and final tenet refutes the idea that CRT is focused only on the law and education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). The transdisciplinary approach to CRT means that it is

flexible enough to incorporate a variety of disciplines and contexts to formulate its ideas, as it does not rely on any one system in particular (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Drawing on transdisciplinary knowledge of sociology, cultural studies, psychology, and education, CRT helps us better understand various forms of discrimination (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002a). The criticism levied against this tenet, however, is that CRT writers need to be wary of engaging in conventional thinking that employs only common approaches because those approaches are likely to limit their explanation of past and present matters (Hylton, 2009). Moreover, McDonald and Birrell (1999) emphasize the need for CRT writers to continue to test themselves intellectually to broaden their theoretical and methodological horizons.

In short, CRT encouraged the use of qualitative research, and more specifically narrative analysis, to understand the racial dimension of experiences in educational institutions (Parker, 1998). This is significant since narratives of the self and others illustrate the historical and current effects of racial issues and concerns (Denzin, 1997). Qualitative researchers drawing on CRT to focus on race are thus better equipped to comprehend and challenge racial policies and practices (Parker, 1998).

Researching the researcher.

The emphasis of the researcher as an active tool of instrumentation in research as opposed to simply an expert (Patton, 2002), was a catalyst to my desire to use a qualitative research methodology. Being active in the research means recognizing the different meanings within the data, but also being aware of personal biases that may influence the interpretation of the data. As I prepared to conduct interviews regarding the university and transition experiences out of university sport with current and former undergraduate students, I expected that my position as a Black male and former student-athlete would aid in my ability to connect with

them. Such expectations seemed reasonable, based on scholarly works that suggest that people tend to gravitate toward those with whom they share some level of commonality (Cabrera & Nora, 1994; Chang, 2002; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001). This indeed seemed to be the case, as some of my participants specifically stated that they accepted to participate in this research because I am Black and a former student-athlete. Others even went as far as to mention that it was refreshing to see a Black male pursuing a doctorate degree because they always thought of graduate studies as something more suited to non-Blacks.

Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Lee, Ntseane and Muhamed (2001) described positionality as being determined by where one stands in relation to the other. As a Black man and former student-athlete, I recruited and solicited the stories of Black current and former student-athletes, highlighting the voices often ignored and positioned in relation to other non-Black students and athletes. I might have taken my positionality for granted when approaching Black students to engage in discussions centered around race. I contacted 122 Black Canadian student-athletes but in the end recruited 20 student-athletes for the interviews. This could be explained by a lack of interest or lack of time by the prospective participants. It is also possible that some of them did not conceptualize their life experiences as being centered around race, ascribing other factors such as socioeconomic status, athletic status or immigrant status as being more significant. This understanding of the life factors that shaped their experiences might have eliminated forms of authenticity, trust or access that I believed I could draw on because of our shared Blackness of being an immigrant, completing high school in Canada, being a former student-athlete and successfully transitioning out of undergraduate studies. While I identify as a Black immigrant male and former student-athlete from a two-parent household, my story is more nuanced to the point that it complicates the category of Blackness. I was born in Ghana and my

family immigrated to Canada when I was three years old. I progressed through the Canadian education system where I was the last cohort to complete the Ontario Academic Credit (O.A.C) year, commonly known as grade 13. From there I was admitted to the University of Waterloo where I played football. Upon graduation, I worked for three years before moving to the USA to complete a two-year Master's degree at Georgia Southern University. While in the USA, I was encouraged to pursue a doctoral degree and was accepted to the University of Ottawa's Human Kinetics program where I am in my final year as a Ph.D. candidate. The culmination of my experiences has mediated each aspect of this research and the lens through which I view the world. I am critical of the influence of the Black American culture on Canadians that categorizes how others view individuals they categorize as Black, but maybe more importantly how these categorized individuals view themselves.

Therefore, while I am aware that my life trajectory may have influenced the questions I asked and how I asked them due to the shared characteristics with my participants, I do not claim to have the same experiences as other Black student-athletes simply because we are Black and participated in varsity sports at the university level. As Graneheim and Lundman (2004) explain, interpreting qualitative data is a balancing act since there always exists the opportunity for the researcher to add their own biases to the phenomena being studied. Differences in life experiences pertaining to socioeconomic status, ethnic culture, immigrant status, language, relationships, education, age, etc., impact how we perceive the world and how the world perceives us. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to recognize that when speaking to Black Canadian male student-athletes about their university experiences, each individual experience cannot be generalized to all Black people, all Black Canadian student-athletes, or even to all participants in this study.

Methods

In contrast to methodology that refers to the broader principles guiding the overall research, methods are more specific and refer to “what” was done to conduct the research (Harding, 1989). Methods are the tools, resources, and/or procedures used to perform the study, thus they represent vital components that allow for the replication of the research project (Kothari, 2004).

Narrative analysis, a staple in the social sciences discipline, is one such technique or method used in this research. This is the crux of the fourth tenet of CRT, which was particularly important to me in my use of a CRT framework. Delgado (1989) argued that counter-narratives are a method of telling the stories of those experiences often ignored (those on the margins of society), as well as a tool for analyzing and challenging the narratives of those in positions of power, whose stories have become a part of the dominant discourse. While a narrative can support the dominant story, a counter-narrative by default challenges the “bundle of presuppositions, perceived wisdoms, and shared cultural understandings persons in the dominant race bring to the discussion of race” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, p. 462). The use of counter-stories as a method can serve at least four theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical functions: (1) humanize educational theory and practice to build community among those at the margins of society; (2) to challenge the knowledge of those in power by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems; (3) show the potential possibilities to those living in the margins and demonstrate to them that they are not alone in their positions; (4) teach others that by merging elements of their experiences and reality, they can create a world that is better off than either of those elements alone (Delgado, 1989; Lawson, 1995).

Therefore, the differences between research methodology and research methods can be outlined more succinctly on the following grounds: research methodology is defined as the principles the researcher applies in undertaking research. It is the science behind the analysis and the way the research is conducted. Research methods are the system of methods, tools or resources used to solve a research problem (Parker & Lynn, 2002). Whereas research methodology is concerned with learning and reflecting on the principles that underpin the various techniques which can be applied to the performance of experiments, tests or surveys, research methods involves the carrying out those experiments, tests, surveys, interviews, etc. (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002b). In the end research methodology aspires to apply appropriate procedures to ascertain solutions. In contrast, research methods intend to determine how best to answer the problem at hand (Noy, 2008). Despite these distinctions, methodology and methods are interconnected (American Psychological Association, 2010).

Study Design.

In undertaking this project, I sought to identify factors impacting the university experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes to determine if and how these factors were influencing their transition experiences out of Canadian university athletics. This research project was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How were Black Canadian male student-athletes experiencing university?
 - 1a) How did they experience and deal with stereotypes about students, athletes, Black males, and being from immigrant families?
- 2) How did the university experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes influence their transitions out of university athletics?

- 2a) How did athletic identity, coping strategies, support networks, role models, and career opportunities impact their transition experiences out of university athletics?

A qualitative approach was used to gather, interpret, and analyze the study data, recognizing how individuals understand and construct the world in which they live. Unlike quantitative research that answers “what” questions, the fluidity of qualitative research addresses “why and how” questions, allowing multiple interpretations to be made of the social experiences (Merriam, 2002). As a result, when utilizing a qualitative approach, the researcher needs to be an active tool of instrumentation, as opposed to merely an expert (Patton, 2002). Compared to a quantitative methodological approach, a qualitative methodological approach incorporates more complex and holistic methods that depict fuller, richer descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants (Marshall, 1996). Therefore, the onus falls on the researcher to be cognizant of letting the text speak for itself, by not creating assumptions or drawing conclusions that are not supported by the data (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). This methodological approach encouraged dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee, permitting the researcher to delve deeper into personal and social matters (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Diccio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), when focusing on the lived experiences of the participants (Merriam, 2002). The role of semi-structured interviews was to elicit deep thought among the participants, leading to the identification of “themes” or patterns from the respondents’ answers (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Other Canadian studies successfully used a qualitative approach, employing semi-structured interviews in their research designs to explore the experiences of Canadian student-athletes. Falls and Wilson (2012) used semi-structured interviews when conducting their study of the transition experiences out of sports for Canadian female soccer players at American institutions. James (2003) used semi-structured interviews in his attempt to learn about the schooling and basketball

experiences of Black Canadian student-athletes in their attempt to acquire NCAA scholarships. Miller and Kerr (2002) also used semi-structured interviews with senior male and female student-athletes to examine the athletic, academic, and social experiences of Canadian student-athletes.

A bracketing interview was conducted to highlight or bring to my attention any biases that I may have held. The bracketing interview did not remove my biases. Rather, it allowed me to become aware of my personal thoughts and feelings, so as not to guide or influence the participants, which could have become a larger validity issue (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). A colleague of mine conducted this interview using my student-athlete interview guide to ask me the same questions that I planned to ask participants. Through this process I learned that I still favored the student-athlete mentality. My experience with, and understanding of some of the struggles of students, athletes, and Black males caused me to categorize some of their difficulties as normal or expected. This led to the modification of my interview guide where I changed the order of the questions, removed some questions, added other questions, and added probing questions so that the uniqueness of my participants' experiences could be told through their perspectives.

The use of an interview guide was crucial in identifying a list of questions (see Appendix C), guiding the overall direction of the interviews, and offering a level of flexibility that allowed for probing questions following participant responses. The questions included in the interview guide were developed from deductive reasoning from the literature and inductive reasoning from the interviews. Deductive reasoning can be understood as a top-down approach wherein generalized conclusions are narrowed down to a specific conclusion (Arthur, 1994). Inductive reasoning is the opposite. It is moving from the bottom, more specific instances, to a generalized

conclusion (Heit, 2000). Deductive reasoning was used to develop questions of stereotypes specific to the student role, athlete role, and Blackness. Deductive reasoning was also used to develop questions about the transition experiences out of university athletics for Black Canadian male student-athletes. These questions focused on concepts of athletic identity, coping strategies, support networks, role models, and career opportunities. Questions centered around student and athlete experiences were positioned at the front end of the interview guide. Questions pertaining to race were purposely positioned at the end of the interview guide to allow allusions to race to emerge spontaneously when participants discussed their academic and athletic experiences. This strategy relates to the first CRT tenet, the intersection of race with other factors, allowing the participants to identify the factors they felt were most relevant to make sense of their academic and athletic experiences (i.e. race, immigrant status, socioeconomic conditions, coming from a single-parent household, mixed-raced background and the “dumb jock” stereotype). Open-ended questions ensured that participants could express themselves. Probing questions also invited the participants to clarify or expand on statements made, with the hopes of making the entire interview feel more like a conversation rather than a rigid interview.

Participant recruitment.

I sought to recruit a minimum of 20 Black Canadian male current and former student-athletes for my study. The student-athletes I was looking to interview were basketball, gridiron football, and track-and-field athletes because those were the sports deemed to be most valued by Blacks (Sheldon, Jayaratne, & Petty, 2007; Spaaij, Farquharson, & Marjoribanks, 2015). Although these student-athletes could have been considered elite athletes, some of the track-and-field athletes did not fall into this category because their respective teams did not exclude members, nor did they hold tryouts. Anybody could have been a member of those teams, but

only those considered the best were selected to go to the track-and-field meets. Additional selection criteria included identifying participants who had completed high school in Canada. This was necessary because it ensured that they had experienced racialization and marginalization within the Canadian educational context prior to their university experiences.

The inclusion criteria were initially set to include gridiron football, basketball, and track-and-field athletes who were either one year removed from participating in U SPORTS, or one year away from finishing their university sport careers. However, other student-athletes expressed interest in participating, even though they did not fit the original inclusion criteria. These included some soccer players and some student-athletes who were two years away from completing their university careers. My initial reservation about including soccer players was that U SPORTS athletes were considered ineligible for the Major League Soccer (MLS) draft and were seen as too old after graduating from university to sign with an MLS team. Their unlikely transition into the professional ranks limits their transition to a lower tier or semi-pro soccer leagues (Major League Soccer, 2018). Therefore, it was assumed that the lack of professional athletic opportunities would have changed the transition dynamic for Canadian university soccer players.

The purpose of the pre-post time frame was to ensure that a more complete picture of the transitioning process out of university sport was observed. It guaranteed that those yet to transition were exposed to the intercollegiate culture for a significant period, where insight into their transition preparation could be observed. Conversely, those who had already transitioned were better able to recall their university experiences and how they managed their transitions since their transitions were still recent and relevant. Although I wanted participants who were either gridiron football, basketball or track and field athletes and one-year pre-post, I was content

with conducting interviews with soccer players and those who were two-years pre-post, as a way of ensuring that I reached my participant target goal. Therefore, I officially amended the inclusion criteria and included soccer players and those who were two years away from finishing their university sport careers or two years removed from competition.

Table 1

Student-athlete demographic breakdown

	U of O	UW	Carleton	WLU	McMaster	UWO	York	U of T	MacEwen	Queen's	Totals
Sport											
(Gridiron)Football	1		2	2			1	1		1	8
Basketball	1	2			2						5
Track-and-Field	4										4
Soccer		1				1			1		3
Place of Birth											
Canada	3	3	2	2	2	1	1		1	1	16
Nigeria	1							1			2
Congo	1										1
Senegal	1										1
Ages											
20		1									1
21	2				1				1		4
22			1	2	1			1		1	6
23	1										1
24	2	1	1				1				5
25	1					1					2
26		1									1
In university	3	2	2	2	2				1		12
Out of university	3	1				1	1	1		1	8

U of O = University of Ottawa; UW = University of Waterloo; Carleton = Carleton University; WLU = Wilfred Laurier

University; McMaster = McMaster University; UWO = University of Western Ontario; York = York University; U of T =

University of Toronto; MacEwen = MacEwen University; Queen's = Queen's University

Table 2

List of participants at time of interview

Participant	Sport	Age	Program (most recent, previous)	U SPORT eligibility	Birthplace	Family structure	Parents' origin
Nicholas (Black mother, Black father)	Track-and-Field	25	Sport Management (graduate program), Faculty of Education, Human Kinetics (undergraduate program)	1 year out	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Haiti Father-Haiti
Denzel (Black mother, Black father)	Track-and-Field	24	Social Sciences	1 year out	Canada	Single mother	Mother- Trinidad Father-Jamaica
Flash (White mother, Black father)	Soccer	25	Faculty of Law (professional degree), Political Science (undergraduate program)	2 years out	Canada	Single mother	Mother-Canada Father-Canada
Fred (Black mother, Black father)	Gridiron Football	22	Kinesiology (graduate program), Kinesiology (undergraduate program)	1 year out	Nigeria	Single mother (father deceased)	Mother-Nigeria Father-Nigeria
Victor (Black mother, Black father)	Basketball	26	Political Science	1 year out	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Jamaica Father-Jamaica
John (Black mother, Black father)	Basketball	22	Economics	4 th year	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Grenada Father-Grenada
Kenny (Black mother, Black father)	Track-and-Field	21	Criminology	4 th year	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Congo Father-Congo
Carter (Black mother, Black father)	Basketball	21	Economics	5 th year	Nigeria	Single mother	Mother-Nigeria Father-Nigeria
Mike (Black mother, Black father)	Gridiron Football	22	Computing	1 year out	Canada	Single mother	Mother-Canadian Father-Nigeria
Bob (Black mother, Black father)	Track-and-Field	23	Psychology	1 year out	Congo	Two parents	Mother-Congo Father-Congo
William (Black mother, Black father)	Basketball	24	English	5 th year	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Jamaica Father-Jamaica
Riley (Black mother, Black father)	Soccer	20	Accounting & Finance	4 th year	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Ghana Father-Ghana
Yusuf (Black mother, Black father)	Soccer	21	Criminology	4 th year	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Congo Father-Congo
Kevin (Black mother, Black father)	Gridiron Football	24	Psychology	4 th year	Canada	Single mother	Mother-Canada Father-USA
Jamal (Israeli mother, Black father)	Gridiron Football	22	Communications	4 th year	Canada	Single mother	Mother-Israel Father-Jamaica
Gordon (Black mother, Black father)	Gridiron Football	24	Sociology	1 year out	Canada	Single mother	Mother-Jamaica Father-Jamaica
James (Black mother, Black father)	Gridiron Football	24	History	3 rd year	Senegal	Two parents	Mother-Senegal Father-Senegal
Mark (Black mother, White father)	Basketball	21	Kinesiology	3 rd year	Canada	Single mother (father deceased)	Mother-Jamaica Father-Canada
Jay (Black mother, Black father)	Gridiron Football	22	Environmental Studies	4 th year	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Canada Father-USA
Frank (Black mother, Black father)	Gridiron Football	22	Communications	4 th year	Canada	Two parents	Mother-Congo Father-Congo

Recruitment for this study was completed primarily through Facebook, email, and snowball sampling. Those who were considered Black based on skin colour, were identified through their university's athletic web pages, which showed photos of the players' faces and provided names, sport participation, year of eligibility, and program of study. Questions regarding cultural identity were also asked of the participants during the interviews to further delineate Black identity. This form of participant selection acknowledged physiological and/or biological components as necessary in identifying participants who might have experienced processes of racialization, marginalization, or discrimination as Black men. Contact through Facebook was achieved using pre-determined messages to gauge participant interest. Of the 20 participants, 17 responded to the initial Facebook message stating their interest in participating. The remaining three participants indicated their level of interest through email or text message after they were recruited to participate by other participants. Indeed, snowball sampling was also used in this study as a complementary recruitment strategy through participants' personal networks because of the difficulty in identifying and communicating with potential participants. Snowball sampling is one of the most widely employed methods of participant recruitment in qualitative research, wherein research participants recruit other participants to partake in the study (Noy, 2008).

The participants ranged in age from 20 to 26, with 12 of them still in university at the time of the interviews. All but one participant attended a post-secondary institution in Ontario. That student attended university in Alberta and was recruited through snowball recruitment. A total of 122 student-athletes were contacted, with 20 confirming their participation. Although preference was for an increased number of participants, I was satisfied with reaching my original goal of recruiting 20 student-athletes for participation. Many of the 102 non-participants did not

respond to my initial Facebook message. Of those who did respond, some indicated an interest in participating but found that the one-hour time frame was too long, or they were too busy with school, their sport, or preparing for the CFL draft, subsequently declining to participate. Others offered to participate for 10 minutes, but that was not feasible, so I had to decline. Some of the participants who transitioned out of university sport, also transitioned out of university, as the end of their sport eligibility was a natural point to exit university life. Others transitioned out of university sport but remained in university, enrolling in either a graduate or professional program. There was also a wide range of program variability, with two of the eight graduated students pursuing graduate degrees, and one participant enrolled in a professional program in the Faculty of Law. All but one of the participants had at least one parent who immigrated to Canada. Both parents of 17 of the participants were immigrants. Two of the remaining three participants had a Canadian-born mother and an immigrant father, while it was the reverse for the final participant. The parents of the participants, as well as the participants themselves, identified as Blacks from African nations (Ghana, Nigeria, Democratic of Congo and Senegal), Caribbean nations (Jamaica, Trinidad, Haiti, Grenada), and Canada.

The majority of the participants in this study came from two-parent households. However, nine participants¹ (Denzel, Flash, Fred, Carter, Mike, Kevin, Jamal, Gordon and Mark) came from single parent households. In each of those cases, their mother was the head of the household, but in Fred's and Mark's cases, this was following the death of their fathers, as opposed to other circumstances leading to lone parenting. The parents of Jamal, Flash, and Mark were each in interracial relationships; thus, they are of mixed racial heritage. The mothers of Flash, Jamal, and Carter all attended university in Canada. Flash's mother was born in Canada and completed her undergraduate degree at a Canadian university. Jamal's mother was not born

¹ All participant names are pseudonyms.

in Canada but emigrated from Israel to Canada at an early age and completed her undergraduate degree in Canada. Carter's mother immigrated to Canada from Nigeria, but she did not complete her undergraduate degree in Canada. Instead, she obtained her doctoral degree while Carter was completing his undergraduate studies.

All the participants aspired to be professional athletes, regardless of the sport in which they participated. However, many of them recognized that coming from a Canadian university, the likelihood of achieving that goal was limited. Nevertheless, they were content with the prospect of playing professional sports in European basketball leagues, the Canadian Football League (CFL), lower tier professional soccer leagues, and track-and-field leagues around the world.

I originally wanted to include a focus group discussion in this study because I thought it would provide an atmosphere where participants who were shy during their individual interviews could express themselves. It was anticipated that the structure of the focus group would present different talking points or shared experiences that could provide greater context to supplement the individual interviews. However, trying to get a few participants together to conduct the focus group interview proved impossible. Five participants expressed interest in participating in the focus group, but an agreed upon day and time could not be established, so the focus group idea was cancelled.

Another shift in the research was related to the interests of the participants at the time of the interviews. Only eight of them had transitioned out of university sport while the remaining twelve participants were still in school and none of them were actively thinking about their forthcoming transition out of varsity athletics. Therefore, despite my original intention to focus on the transition experiences of these student-athletes, the limited number of participants who

had thought or planned for their upcoming transition or had already transitioned meant that little data on transition experiences was available. In hindsight, recruiting student-athletes up to two years away from graduation was not an adequate strategy to focus on transition experiences. They were too far away from completing their academic program and varsity sport career. It did however offer valuable and rich data on the broader experiences of Black Canadian student-athletes.

In addition to the student-athletes, three parents (Percy, Ms. Bee, and Jane) and two coaches (Mike McSmith and Max) were recruited through the student-athletes. The student-athlete participants were invited to identify individuals who they felt played a supportive role and influenced their transition out of university sport, such as family members (parents) or coaches. The parents were asked about their role in raising their children, along with their experience of being a parent to a Black Canadian male student-athlete and the effect that having to navigate forms of racialization, marginalization, and stereotypes may have had on them and their sons. The coaches were asked about the U SPORTS experience and what they do to support their Black athletes throughout the transition process and in preparation for life after university sport.

Repeated follow-up reminders were sent to the participants who stated that they would gauge their parents' and coaches' interest in participating in the study and communicate that information to me. Many of them did not respond to these reminders, which proved very frustrating since it was difficult to engage in follow-up communication with many of the student-athletes. I concluded that the lack of a response meant that either the parent, coach, or student-athlete were no longer interested in that section of the study. All student-athlete, parent, and coach interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for data analysis, in a password-protected Microsoft Word document.

The data were collected between June 29, 2016, and June 28, 2017. Interviews were conducted according to participant preferences in a quiet area of a library, my university office, or another university meeting room, and in some cases via telephone. The average length of the student interviews was 2 hours (1 hour, 59 minutes, 34 seconds), with the shortest interview being 1:12:41 and the longest being 2:27:21. Preference was for all the interviews to be conducted in-person, but due to distance and time constraints, 10 of the student-athlete interviews were conducted in person at various locations across Ontario, with the remaining 10 interviews conducted via telephone. Three parents and two coaches were interviewed, and each of their interviews was conducted by telephone. The average length of the parent interviews was 1 hour and 30 minutes (1 hour, 30 minutes, 20 seconds). The shortest interview was 1:17:18, and the longest interview was 1:37:46. The average length of the coach interviews was 1 hour and 30 minutes (1 hour, 32 minutes, 22 seconds). The shortest coach interview was 1:24:41, and the longest coach interview was 1:40:02.

Each interview began with an explanation of the study, a revising and signing of the consent form, and the opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions. Before each interview, I sent the consent form and study information by email for the participants to review. Participants scheduled for a telephone interview were asked to return the signed consent form to me via email, which they all did. If an in-person interview was scheduled, I ensured that I had copies of the consent form for the participants to review and sign prior to the start of the interview. During the in-person interviews, a primary recording device and a backup recording device were used to record the conversation. However, this approach could not be duplicated with the telephone interviews. Instead, a telephone recording app was downloaded onto my smartphone that

recorded my voice as well as the voice of the caller on the other end, for a clear and more accurate recording.

At the end of each interview, I sent the recording to a transcription company for transcribing. While each recording was with the transcription company, I prepared for my next interview. The first transcription company I found was relatively cheap and did a serviceable job. Errors were present, which I expected, so I cleaned up the transcripts by verifying accuracy with the audio recordings. The turn-around time, which was the time between sending the recording and receiving the transcript was about a week, so I continued to send more audio-recordings to this transcription company. However, by the time I sent my sixth audio-recording, problems began to arise. Namely, the turn-around time was over 2 months long. They stated that they got backed up with numerous transcripts, but I never received an update to explain the issue, even though I contacted them several times.

Once I received the sixth transcript, I began to look for other transcription companies. I found another one, but it was much more expensive. I used them on my next interview, before deciding that I could not afford to continue using them. I did some more research and found a transcription software program online. This transcription software program was significantly cheaper, and the turn-around time was less than 1 hour because it involved uploading my recording to their website, waiting for it to process, and then downloading the completed transcript. I used them on my eighth and ninth interviews, but the eighth transcript had a lot more errors than I expected, forcing me to spend extra time cleaning it up. The ninth transcript was unreadable and after speaking with the customer support team, I was informed that the algorithm used to convert the recording into text failed. I was frustrated at this point and felt that I had no other choice but to manually transcribe the interviews myself.

I listened to the recordings of the ninth interview and transcribed it myself, verbatim, without the aid of a software program. Punctuation such as commas were inserted into the transcription when the speaker took a slight pause. Periods were inserted when long pauses were detected, while question marks were inserted when sentences began with question words, or inflection was observed in the speakers' voices. This was an overly tedious process with roughly one hour of recording taking approximately six hours to transcribe. Fortunately, my smartphone had a notepad app that was voice activated. I decided that it was easier to simply listen to the recording and recite the words that both I and my participant spoke. I turned on the voice activation and recited the entire interview using the app. This dramatically cut down my transcription time, as one hour of recording took roughly two hours to transcribe. Errors were still present, but they were mostly minor, as in punctuation and the spelling of names. I then emailed the completed transcripts to myself and downloaded them onto my password-protected computer. Transcribing the interviews on my own helped to keep me abreast of the participants' experiences and made the process of creating themes and linking the interviews to broader concepts easier.

Ethical considerations.

This research project followed all the Research Ethics Board requirements. It was conducted in compliance with the guidelines established by the University of Ottawa's Health Science and Sciences Research Ethics Board (HSSREB). A copy of the HSSREB approval letter is attached as Appendix A.

Some of the ethical issues that were considered for this study include informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Informed consent was required from each student-athlete participant, parent, and coach. The informed consent form was a written confirmation that the

participant had voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. All participants involved in the study read and signed the informed consent form before commencing the interview. The purpose of the informed consent was to ensure that the participants were aware of the nature and purpose of the project, the scope of the questions, and their rights as voluntary participants. These rights included: the right to complete anonymity and confidentiality in the final report, the right to not respond to a question or discuss any subject and the right to terminate the interview and/or withdraw from the study without prejudice. Subsequent events in the study occurred only if the participant agreed to them, demonstrating that informed consent was an ongoing process that continued throughout the duration of the interviews. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and express any concerns they had regarding their participation in this study. To provide the participants with anonymity and protect their identity, each participant chose their own unique pseudonym, as required by the university's Office of Research Ethics and Integrity. Furthermore, the transcription companies used were required to sign a confidentiality agreement form indicating that they were not to disclose either verbally or in writing, the information in the recordings and/or transcripts to anyone.

Data analysis.

In analyzing the data via thematic analysis, tables were created for each participant with separate columns indicating the question asked, the response given, and the corresponding theme. This allowed for themes and subthemes to be more easily identified, so that the responses to each question could be compared across all the participants. This type of analysis helped with clustering participant responses to identify and compare similar ideas expressed across participants.

The analysis of the interviews led to the categorization of two major themes and their subthemes via deductive processes and two subthemes via inductive processes. The first major theme concerned stereotypes, which was separated into the “dumb jock” stereotype, the superior Black athlete stereotype and the Black intellectual inferiority stereotype. Through deductive reasoning from the literature, and my own experiences as a Black student-athlete, I knew that these ideas would be prominent. Yet, I did not know which of them would come to the forefront. Therefore, questions were formulated in anticipation of the participants’ experiences of such stereotypes. The second major theme of transitions was also developed from deductive reasoning. Questions were purposely designed to focus on issues of autonomy, emulating role models and developing career opportunities from the review of literature. For example, Fuligni and Tseng (1999) suggested that intrinsic motivation comes from a shared sense of family obligation that partially accounts for the greater academic motivation among immigrant youth. As most of the participants were 1st- and 2nd-generation immigrant visible minorities, it was important to learn if these student-athletes would confirm or reject this assumption as they navigated through university and varsity sport.

Two more subthemes emerged inductively from the narrative analysis. I had not predicted that feeling of “not being Black enough” would emerge from the participants’ description of their university experiences. This led me to go back to the literature to read more about it and I came across studies on the “acting White” hypothesis that helped to understand and complicate the stereotype of the intellectually inferior Black student. Questions were not specifically asked about the “acting White” hypothesis, yet the idea of not fully conforming to assumptions about Blackness emerged from the data in response to discussions on what are appropriate aspirations, practices or behaviours of Black student-athletes.

A second subtheme pertaining to the construction of Blacks as being from immigrant families also emerged via inductive reasoning. I had not foreseen that the immigrant status of participants would be significant in how they described their experiences. Indeed, I did not know whether the participants would be from immigrant or non-immigrant families at the outset of the research. This subtheme emerged from the participants' responses about the value of education and when they spoke of feeling as though they were outsiders. Had this study taken place in the province of Nova Scotia instead of Ontario, this assumption of Blacks coming from immigrant families might not have emerged since many of the Blacks in Nova Scotia have been settled there for generations (Smith et al., 2005). Looking back, with 19 of the 20 participants residing in Ontario, the high rate of participants from more recent immigrant families should not have been a surprise. I am myself an immigrant to Ontario from Ghana and did all my schooling in Canada, except for two years of my Master's degree done in the USA, albeit not as an NCAA athlete.

The analysis that follows is meant to highlight the participants' individuality and challenge the homogenization of people of colour. The exploration of how the themes and subthemes emerged in the narratives of their student-athlete experiences shows the similarities among participants, but also points to the fact that they are different people, with their own set of circumstances, that have shaped their sense of self and how they interpret their academic and university sport trajectories.

Chapter 4

Experiences of Black Canadian Male Student-Athletes

The following chapter illustrates the similarities among the participants' stories, but it also highlights how the differences that emerge distinguish student-athlete experiences based on personal circumstances. There is not one singular Black Canadian male student-athlete story, but rather diverse narratives. Since most of the research so far has focused on Black American student-athletes, the experiences of Black Canadian student-athletes have mostly been unexplored (James, 2012). This chapter attempts to make an empirical contribution and start to fill the gap in the literature by presenting how Black Canadian male student-athletes describe their experiences and understanding of the stereotypes they face that shape their academic and athletic endeavours.

The Black Canadian young men interviewed successfully managed to balance their full-time academic workload with their sport commitment to remain eligible to participate in university athletics. The unique challenges of obtaining the necessary high school averages for university admission, the minimum university average to be allowed to compete, maintaining full-time academic status, along with honing their athletic skills to earn playing time, presented a level of exclusivity that the student-athletes in this study cherished:

It's more exclusive. Like I feel it's something that is a step above because everybody who's at the school is in a program but not everybody who's at the school is in athletics or not everybody who's at the school is in a club. So, it's a way of distinguishing yourself amongst other people. – *Victor, Basketball, 26 yrs, Political Science*

Being a student-athlete in an environment where everyone was a student added a layer of distinction that equated to being special. All the student-athlete participants felt that they were members of a select group, which set them apart from the rest of the university population. Fletcher, Benshoff, and Richburg (2003) described student-athletes in the USA as being one of the most recognized groups on a university or college campus. Their sport-based performances garner praise but also resentment from some non-student-athletes. It was this combination of praise and resentment that led to the unique experiences centered around being an athlete and a student, being Black and an athlete, and being Black and a student, that shaped their university careers.

Being an athlete and a student.

Jay, a gridiron football player, described his experience of having to choose his sport over his preferred academic program. He aspired to be a professional gridiron football player in either the NFL or CFL like his father. Yet, he also had a goal of becoming an engineer in case he did not obtain a professional sports contract, or to pursue as a line of work at the end of his professional sports career. However, the academic requirements of the engineering program at his university conflicted with the gridiron football practice schedule. He therefore enrolled in the environmental studies program, with the aim of becoming an urban planner, which he considered to be a close second to engineering. This program allowed him to participate as a member of the gridiron football team without missing practices or meetings, which was frowned upon by his football coaches:

As much as coaches say you are a student-athlete, they expect you to be present [at practices]. It almost - at least for me - felt like with the coaches, school came second.

With our coaches if we had a midterm or something we could miss practice. But it also felt like with our [football] culture, that was the only excuse, because we made a commitment to play football. And I don't think there should be an excuse, but it felt like we were students second. – *Jay, Football, 22 yrs, Environmental Studies*

At the time of his interview, Jay was being scouted by the CFL but indicated that he would pursue a Master's degree upon completion of his undergraduate degree if he did not get drafted into the CFL. Therefore, his academic performance was important to him, but he felt that the "student-first, athlete second" motto was not being upheld, as his coaches wanted him to prioritize his athletic responsibilities ahead of academic studies. This was particularly problematic for Jay, who valued education and needed to achieve certain academic results to not only maintain his athletic scholarship but also to pursue graduate studies. Yet, despite his disappointment in his team's culture, which he blamed for prioritizing sports over education, Jay also put his athletic responsibilities first, by registering for a different program because he wanted to maintain his position on the team.

Jay's focus on gridiron football is in some ways comparable to that found in the American collegiate sport system. Billings (2012) argued that the term "student-athlete" has become a misnomer in high revenue generating sports because many of these athletes use school as a vehicle to enter the professional ranks, rather than to get an education. He placed blame squarely on the media whose overvaluing of athletics has made it difficult for Black American youths to enter non-sport fields. Similarly, community members from the Black Experience Project, a diversity initiative in the Toronto area, inferred that the media's disproportionate representation of Blacks in the areas of sports and entertainment has also led to an increase in

young Black Canadians pursuing social mobility through athletics at the expense of academic success (Connely, Cukier, Grant, Neuman-Bremang, & Wisdom, 2014). However, not all student-athletes interviewed focused on their professional sport aspirations at the expense of academic achievement. Flash, who played soccer at the university level, also excelled academically to such a degree that he had entertained admission offers from some of the Ivy League schools in the USA. He was very close to attending Cornell, had been to Dartmouth's training camp and had spoken to coaches at Harvard and Yale. As a result, Flash claimed that he was never pushed into placing more value on his athletic aspirations over his academic aspirations because he never allowed his coaches to define him solely as an athlete, despite their apparent attempts to do so. Consequently, Flash's coaches conceded to the need for a balance between athletic and academic achievement, which was in direct contrast to Jay's description of his experience with his coaches:

There was a strong suggestion to take a lesser course load but again, I think, in Canada it's a bit different. People go to school to go to school in Canada. They are not going to school to potentially go pro. That's sort of a residual dream. How many people make the jump from CIS [U SPORTS] to the pros? That's very, very rare. And so, because of that, I think the coaches were more understanding. That being said, I think they still push. I think if you were to increase the incentives athletically in Canada, you would definitely see people putting more pressure. But I think the pressure was present; it was just less so.

– *Flash, Soccer, 25 yrs, Faculty of Law (professional program), Political Science (undergraduate program)*

Some might have viewed the suggestion to take a lighter course load as prioritizing sports over education, but it was also possible that the proposal to take a lighter course load was a strategy to better balance team requirements and academic studies, while still maintaining full-time status.

The distinction between Jay and Flash's interactions with their coaches could be explained by the expectation of some educators, coaches, parents and even Black youths themselves to excel athletically at the expense of academic achievement (Cukier, Grant, Neuman-Bremang, & Wisdon, 2014; Duda, 1989; Saul & James, 2006). Jay's coaches pushed him towards prioritizing his athletic responsibilities over his academic goals, either as a means of keeping him engaged in school or because they did not think that he valued his education as a student-athlete.

Conversely, early on in his athletic career Flash made it explicitly clear that education was a foundational part of his university experience. It is also possible that the rationale displayed by Flash's coaches could have been impacted by the sport he played. MLS rules prohibit Canadian university athletes from entering the league. This provision may have been the catalyst to the coaches' understanding that perhaps for their soccer athletes, an athletic and academic balance was necessary. In contrast, Canadian university gridiron football players can and have transitioned to professional playing careers in the CFL and NFL. Therefore, for these coaches, pushing their athletes to prioritize such athletic heights may have been viewed as normal.

One of the coaches interviewed provided an example of a coaching staff and sports program that enable their student-athletes to not only excel athletically, but academically as well:

We also have a lot of proactive programs, in place – we have a tutoring program that is free to varsity athletes at [name of University]. Students can call and say, “You know, I’m struggling with calculus 120, can I get a tutor?” And then they’ll go and find a tutor

for that student. They have a long list that they draw from. So, each of the faculties on campus have helped to provide names of upper year students who can help. We have an athlete to athlete peer mentoring program, where upper year varsity athletes are peer mentors to the first-year varsity athletes. We have an inter-university varsity council that has meeting monthly with members of a committee and then those members take stuff back to the team saying things like, “Here’s some stuff going on, here are things to be aware of, here’s what’s coming up, here’s what’s happened”. – *Mike McSmith, Coach, Basketball*

When probed further he added:

We also do study hall on the road personally with the basketball team. So, if we’re in Ottawa for example, and we play at 8 o’clock at night, we’ll have a shootaround in the morning and then from 11-12. We’ll book a room at the hotel like their conference room or something and guys will just go in there and – there’s no phones, no headphones, nothing, they just sit there and work for an hour. We try to provide as much structure as we can for them. We also try to give them one night a week where we practice in the morning. Most times we don’t practice till like 5:00 or 6:00 at night, so guys even if they’re done school at 2:00, they don’t get home till 8:30, 9:00 or whatever. So, one day a week, on Wednesdays we practice at 7am with the hope that those guys will then go home at 3:00 or 2:30 or whatever it is, and get some work done or get caught up. Or maybe they just want to be a “normal student” for a day and do something. So, we try to

normalize it as much as possible but [name of university] is pretty proactive in terms of trying to get ahead of any issues that may arise. - *Mike McSmith, Coach, Basketball*

According to Coach McSmith, this structure was created to provide balance to the student-athlete experience, athletically, academically and socially. So, as a coach he could not speak to the experiences of the Black student-athletes, but he did talk about the approach taken by his university and his team to facilitate a balance and normalize the student-athlete experience as much as possible. The participants who no longer competed as student-athletes did describe how they missed such structure. These participants had valued the rigor of being a student-athlete, claiming that it kept them focused on their tasks and limited procrastination as much as possible.

Mike, a former gridiron football player who had transitioned out of university sport at the time of his interview echoed Flash's sentiment that the "dumb jock" stereotype that presumes student-athletes have no real academic aspirations because they prioritize sports, did not affect him. According to him, attending one of the top universities in Canada was enough to quell any assumptions that he was simply a "dumb jock". He had a positive student-athlete experience because others viewed his university admission as being based on academic merit. Gaining access to such a prestigious university was a source of pride, therefore he wanted to ensure that he maintained an athletic and academic balance.

Many of my participants were raised with the understanding that education was to be their key to social mobility, with athletics seemingly providing a hinderance to their academic success. Frank, who was a child of Congolese parents and a 2nd-generation immigrant, was discouraged from participating in athletics, with his parents telling him that although they were in Canada, inside their home was considered the Democratic Republic of Congo, where parental

rules and their cultural heritage took precedence over Canadian values and norms. Ogbu (1992a) found that Black immigrant families in the USA have a different educational mentality than non-immigrant Black American families. Similarly, James (2003) found that Black Canadian immigrant families also have this mindset that differs from Black families who have been in Canada for generations. Immigrant families are more likely to urge their children to take advantage of the opportunities provided through education to obtain upward social mobility (James & Taylor, 2008). Conversely, due to expectations of being treated justly by White Canadians and a valuing of attitudes and behaviours that differ from White Canadians, non-immigrant Black Canadians struggle to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them (James, 2010). According to Smith, Schneider, and Ruck (2005), Blacks from Nova Scotia who have been in Canada for generations display more negative attitudes towards academic achievement and success. This group of people attribute their suffering, disadvantage, and negative attitudes to their longstanding history of systemic oppression in Canada, hence their disdain for activities or events that reflect characteristics of Whiteness.

In Canada, just as in the USA, voluntary migrant minority students are more likely to aspire to post-secondary education than involuntary migrant minority students. Samuel, Krugly-Smokska, and Warren (2001) found that voluntary migrant minority students value academic success and express motivation to succeed in teaching, law, sports, medicine, and graduate studies in psychology and sociology. Involuntary migrant minorities, particularly Canadian males, are found to have the lowest aspiration for university, opting instead for college and technical schools, due to the ease of job access.

Frank's pursuit of athletics while maintaining above average grades as demanded by his parents, challenged not only the North American expectation that he was to excel athletically at

the expense of his academic studies, but also the immigrant expectation that he was to excel academically at the expense of athletics, thereby demonstrating that athletic *and* academic success was an attainable goal:

It makes me feel one-dimensional. They don't think that you are capable of anything else. If anything, it made me curious to kind of question "why is that?" And then I realize that a lot of African-Americans feed into that type of stereotype, and they don't do anything to prove them wrong. That motivated me more to prove the critics wrong and prove that you can be smart, and you can be good at sports. – *Frank, Football, 22 yrs, Communications*

Even though Frank was born and raised in Canada, his account showed the complexity of homogeneous and heterogeneous group statuses. His generalization of Black people insinuates that there is no distinction between Black Canadians and Black Americans. In the Toronto area, Ornstein (2000) found that 69% of Torontonians who described themselves as Black or African by omitting any identification to a specific national identity outside of Canada were born in Canada. According to Ornstein (2000), this is likely due to the Black or African identity being racialized over time, causing the children of voluntary migrants to be "Canadianized" (p. 27). In Frank's case, as a child of immigrant parents he was navigating the world while trying to simultaneously engage in Canadian and Congolese norms and expectations. In doing so he was willing to sacrifice some of the Canadian performance of Blackness to honour his parents' expectations and pay homage to their sacrifices. Without this cultural balance, Ornstein (2000) suggested that Black Canadian immigrants' interaction with Canadians leads them to think of

themselves as Canadian, which results in a separation from their parents' distinct national identities and an assimilation in to the host Canadian culture. This blurring of cultural lines may have been what Frank used in his blurring of boundaries when he classified Black Canadians as African-Americans, illustrating the rationale behind how he made sense of the influence of the Black American community that continues to homogenize Blacks in Canada with Blacks in the USA.

However, there were a few participants who were on the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of the value they placed on education as student-athletes. For instance, Jamal and Kevin's narratives displayed an ambivalent attitude towards school that contrasted with Jay, Flash, and Mike's dedication and attitude towards striving for an athletic and academic balance:

I would say I definitely focus more on my sport because my sport is what I want. As much as school is supposed to be first, it's pretty hard to value, because it's not your primary focus. – *Jamal, Football, 22 yrs, Communications*

Jamal's focus was always on becoming a professional gridiron football player, and like Jay, he was being scouted by CFL teams at the time of his interview. He was ranked highly on the prospects list and indicated that he had been approached by a CFL team who encouraged him to leave school and start his professional career early. This probably led to his focus on education waning, since he was tempted by the offer to forgo obtaining his degree, stating, "I don't care enough about that piece of paper". However, he admitted that the only reason he remained in school was because his single mother would have "killed him" if he did not graduate.

As a child of voluntary migrant parents, it was anticipated that Jamal would express a non-oppositional social identity leading him to value education (Ogbu, 1992a). Yet, he admitted that gridiron football was his focus, which according to his mother, contributed to the loss of his athletic scholarship because he failed to maintain the necessary academic requirements for its renewal. Thus, his attitude resembled that of involuntary Black Americans who do not value formal education but were in university because it was the most direct avenue to achieve their professional athletic goals. Whereas many of the other participants focused on their academic pursuits because their professional athletic opportunities were limited, Jamal's gridiron football talent led him to receive significantly more professional athletic opportunities during his university playing career.

Jamal's mother, however, wished that her son placed more value on his education. As a single mother, Ms. Bee paid his tuition fees, but he was expected to cover for his accommodation and meal expenses through his financial aid (OSAP), since he was living away from home. She claimed that the fact she paid his tuition fees reduced his sense of financial responsibility, thereby contributing to his focus on athletic success to the detriment of his academic performance. Despite her disappointment that he let his grades suffer to the point of losing his athletic scholarship, she was nevertheless proud of him for putting in the necessary work in the classroom to maintain his playing eligibility. His satisfactory performance in the classroom, in conjunction with his gridiron football success ensured that his professional athletic dreams were still a possibility and countered the narrative that, as a son raised by a single mother, he was a troublemaker (Booth et al., 2010). The following was Ms. Bee's description of her son's struggle to balance athletic pursuits with academic responsibilities:

I can't speak for other student-athletes, but for Jamal, one of the disadvantages of being a student-athlete was that education was not as important to him. I tried to ask him about it, but during football season he won't talk about anything else. That's all he can think about because he wants to play in the CFL. I worry because his one-track mind includes not thinking about finances or the bigger picture. I worry about that because in life you need to be able to balance all of those things. – *Ms. Bee, Jamal's Mother*

Although she valued the student-athlete experience and thought it had been a positive influence on her son, Ms. Bee also acknowledged that a disadvantage of the student-athlete lifestyle was that it gave her son license to disregard his university studies, hence the loss of his athletic scholarship. However, recognizing his goals, skills, and opportunity to play professional gridiron football, Ms. Bee was more accepting of the fact that her son valued athletic success over academic success. According to James (2005), Canadian families of low socioeconomic status are more likely to support children in sports that are predominately played in schools such as basketball, gridiron football, and track-and-field. In contrast, high socioeconomic families are more likely to support children playing sports such as hockey, golf, and tennis that take place in leagues outside of school. Ms. Bee ended up supporting Jamal's football endeavour because she viewed university as career preparation, and his athletic talent was promising enough to put him on the precipice of a career as a professional athlete. It may also be that she supported his pursuit of a professional career as a gridiron football athlete because this particular sport was played and financed through school and therefore did not cost as much as competitive sports organized outside of the school system. Despite this she worried that his struggle to find an athletic and academic balance at the university level would have a long-lasting impact on him later in life,

which was why she was adamant that he needed to graduate from university prior to entering the professional ranks. Her concern was that he would be even less motivated to obtain his undergraduate degree once he had been away from university for a few years.

One of the problems of prioritizing athletic pursuits is that students who struggle with balancing athletic and academic responsibilities are more likely to place greater priority on sport because that is the area in which they receive their recognition (Edwards, 2000; Saul and James, 2006). Jamal fits into this category, but he was not the only participant to aspire to a professional athletic career. All the participants aspired to making it to the professional ranks, although many of them did not have the opportunity to enter the professional sports leagues. As a result, they placed priority on their academic studies, achieving a greater athletic and academic balance. Jamal's increased opportunities to play professional gridiron football empowered him to focus more on his sport than on his education, leading to questions of academic effort that he and other Black student-athletes received. Several participants stated that non-student-athletes were skeptical of their admission to university, suggesting that they received preferential treatment in the admission process and/or received certain advantages, academic or otherwise, that eased their university studies:

It's like a false understanding by people outside looking in at us thinking—I don't know what it was like in the States, but what I realized is, they don't make anything easier for us. At [university] especially, they're like, "You better pass otherwise you are not playing sports". They don't do anything to make it easier. – *Fred, Football, 22 yrs, Kinesiology (graduate program), Kinesiology (undergraduate program)*

It appeared to be Fred's assertion that the American student-athlete culture was influencing Canadians to think that Canadian student-athletes received the same preferential treatment as their American counterparts. As a recent graduate who had been accepted into a Master's program at the time of his interview, Fred was annoyed by the suggestion that he had received favours as a student-athlete. Despite knowing it was not true, that his peers might think that he received special benefits as a student-athlete seemed to put a stain on his hard work and accomplishment of being admitted to a graduate program. Hence, he wanted to distance himself from the idea of preferential treatment, and one of the easiest ways to accomplish that was to separate the Canadian and American university/collegiate sport systems by associating special benefits with the American model.

The hovering of the American culture is what Fred alludes to when he says he 'does not know what it is like in the States'. Accusations of preferential treatment often made by non-student-athletes stem from the "dumb jock" stereotype that is derived from the American context in which intellectual ability is assumed to be inversely proportional to athletic identity. In Fred's case, his academic success was the reason for his anger, because as a Canadian university student-athlete, he knew his admission process resembled that of Canadian non-student-athletes. However, despite no one directly accusing him of benefiting from favours attributed to student-athletes, he stated that others thought he received special support to maintain his playing eligibility. Thus, Canadian student-athletes can internalize such stereotypes which subsequently affects their thought processes and behaviours.

Although Fred specified that he hated being referred to as a "dumb jock", he admitted that he is guilty of describing some of his fellow athletes in that manner, illustrating the power of this stereotype:

I hate – I really hate terminology like, “Oh, he plays football, he must be like stupid or Something like that”. I really – I really, really hate that. But I think athletes better understand. All the athletes here at [university] better understand that because I am here, that might not be the case. But I’ll be honest, on the football team even I look at my teammates and I’m like “You’re a meathead”. I don’t say it to him, I just think it. “That guy, number 1 meathead out here for sure”. – *Fred, Football, 22 yrs, Kinesiology (graduate program), Kinesiology (undergraduate program).*

Fred made the distinction between athletes and non-athletes, suggesting that the camaraderie shared among student-athletes was comforting because there were others on campus who were experiencing similar issues and therefore understood that his presence on a university campus was justified. Although his use of terms such as “meathead” to describe his teammates aligns with some American studies (e.g., Baucom & Lantz, 2001; Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwen, 1995) it showed that faculty, non-student-athletes and even student-athletes were capable of viewing athletes as less academically qualified than their non-athlete peers. Hence, the belief that student-athletes would not be in university if they did not participate in varsity sports, counters Fred’s own argument that there exists a bond between athletes that enables them to understand that their fellow athletes have earned their admission into university and therefore belong.

Despite a lack of empirical evidence of the prevalence of preferential admission treatment for Canadian university student-athletes, Fred’s account demonstrated that the assumption of special benefits does exist in Canada. Denzel’s following account supports the idea that at least some student-athletes do benefit from favours at some Canadian universities:

I didn't know where I wanted to go and I literally picked where I was going to go, maybe a week or two weeks before school started. I called [] and was like, "Can you get me into residence?" and he was like "yeah". He got me into [], the best rez². I heard everyone was on a waiting list and he got me in. I know some people and they were like, "I was waiting for like months" and I was like "I called like two weeks before and I got in". – *Denzel, Track-and-Field, 24, Social Sciences*

In our discussion, Denzel indicated that he received special assistance from university staff in securing residency. As a track and field student-athlete, Denzel described being courted by different university track and field programs in Canada where he was offered money, scholarships, and other incentives. In the end he surprisingly chose the university that did not offer him any money or incentive. Denzel claimed it was more about the feeling that he got from the coaches that made it seem like a good fit. Despite not receiving any known preferential treatment for his university admission, he was given access to the best residence hall on campus at the last minute, bypassing the waitlist because he was a member of the track-and-field team. This benefit, while not an academic benefit, does show that student-athletes may receive some advantages over other students that facilitate their university integration. However, none of the participants discussed receiving any academic detour, albeit it may be that none of them wanted to admit to "cheating the system".

² Rez is the short form or slang for residence

Being Black and an athlete.

As a mixed-raced individual growing up in a White neighbourhood, Mark described how the other kids in his neighbourhood expected him to excel at basketball. Mark, a varsity basketball player yet to graduate at the time of his interview, attributed this increased athletic expectation to the high number of Blacks participating in the sport of basketball. He felt that non-Blacks easily applied their interpretation of Blackness and basketball to him, despite Mark classifying his basketball skills at that time as average to above-average. Gordon had a similar experience with his peers and coaches who he claimed expected him to excel athletically. As a football player, Gordon struggled to make sense of his Blackness. In our discussions he talked about working hard to achieve his goals but contradicted himself when he added that the way others viewed him as a Black male had an impact on his experiences and affected the way he approached various situations. He referred to stereotypes and the role that television and the media have in portraying Blackness as a negative characteristic. Specifically, he referred to his understanding of his Blackness and the circulation of stereotypes, to rationalize the assumption that he was a drug dealer and that his mother was on welfare, all of which likely contributed to his view of the world:

Mostly all of the predominant athletes right now are Black, and you expect so much of our athletic ability to translate to that. Whereas the White athletes don't have that same spotlight on them. [Coaches and teammates] expect more of me athletically but not academically, whereas it's probably the other way around for the White guy. They probably expect more from them academically compared to the Black guys. – *Gordon, Football, 24 yrs, Sociology*

While Gordon's peers and coaches did not explicitly say that he was expected to excel athletically because of his skin colour, his awareness of stereotypes led him, like Mark and many other participants, to associate such expectations to racial features. In this instance, Gordon assumed his coaches and teammates expected more from him athletically because he was Black. However, that this account shows he was not specifically told that his skin colour led to expectations of athleticism implies that he was subject to the influence of the media's representation that frame Black males' athletic capabilities and interest in sports as detrimental to their academic achievements (Harrison Jr., Harrison, & Moore, 2002), as if both could not be pursued at once.

James (2011) explains that Blacks are expected to excel in gridiron football, basketball, and track-and-field because those are the sports where Blacks are most visible. Danford and Donnelly (2018) found that during the 2016 season Blacks were most visible in basketball (26.5%) and gridiron football (20.1%) within U SPORTS at nine Canadian universities compared to volleyball (5.4%), field hockey (2.6%), and ice hockey (<1%). These statistics reinforce the stereotype that allude to the athletic preferences and in some cases athletic capabilities of Black and White athletes. This stereotype has become so ingrained in both Black and non-Black cultures that both groups expect Blacks to occupy certain positions within sport and play with a certain flare or "flashy" style (Wilson & Sparks, 2001).

A prime example of this behaviour occurred with William, a basketball player who described his coach's ill-fated attempt to encourage him on the basketball court. However, he was quick to explain that the coaches who recruited him to university no longer worked at the school, and a different group of coaches were at the helm of the program at the time of this

incident. An undergraduate student at the time of his interview, William, described his tumultuous career path as he attended multiple high schools in Canada and the USA, various prep schools in the USA, ultimately ending back in Canada to attend university. However, his time in university was also difficult as he failed to maintain the necessary academic requirements for eligibility to compete in varsity sports, subsequently having to sit out a year because he was placed on academic probation. When he returned to play, he was older than other students and dedicated himself to his studies, receiving his first ever “A”. He no longer viewed himself as solely an athlete, as he did when he first arrived on campus, therefore the following account bothered him:

If the coach is not Black, it’s like, “Go there and be an animal. Go there and jump as high as you can. I know you can jump higher than that. I know you can catch with two hands but make that incredible catch that unrealistic maneuver. I’ve seen you jump before and you should be able to jump like all the other Black people”. Some coaches have some ridiculous standards of what they think you should be able to do if you’re a basketball player or if you’re Black or whatever. – *William, Basketball, 24 yrs, English*

Although William’s coach may have thought he was motivating him to perform at a higher level, these comments objectified and racialized William. In using the phrase “be an animal”, the coach put the focus squarely on William’s Black body, reducing him to a status less than human.

Historically, since Black men did hard labour, their bodies were objectified as big, strong, and stupid (Ferber, 2007). Due to their bodies, the narrative quickly became that Black males are hypersexual, animalistic, and savage, particularly in the USA (Ferber, 2007). It is this focus on

the body that links Black masculinity to athletics within the Black community, with some Blacks believing the stereotype that they are nothing but their bodies, possessing superior athletic ability, but inferior intellectual ability (Ferber, 2007). Comments such as these support the notion that due to Black athletic success, sports actually reinforce racialized images, ideas and social practices of Blacks as superior athletes, which aids in marginalizing them as athletes (Hartmann, 2000). This relates back to what Mark and Gordon stated earlier regarding the images presented in the media of Black athletic success. William's coach seemed to have adopted this mentality of ascribing superior athletic ability to all Blacks, and thus he expected William to perform to his pre-determined expectation of Black athleticism. This social construction of race, born of historical, political, and social contexts, is understood in terms of power and domination (Sefa Dei & Jaems, 1998), in which Blackness is devalued when it is reduced to standards of athleticism. As a result, the intellectual capabilities of Blacks, which are important for young people who define themselves as student-athletes, are often ignored, making it appear as though Blacks cannot achieve athletic *and* academic success.

This form of overt racism, however, was not described by participants as a typical experience. Most of them talked about experiencing subtler forms of racism and/or interpreted certain actions or comments as forms of covert racism. When asked about the stereotype of race and athletics, Riley stated:

I guess those stereotypes are there, but it's never been something that is serious, that somebody has come up to me and said, "This guy shouldn't be beating you. If you're Black you're supposed to be faster than him". More so it'd be just a joke or something

that you might feel from the coach. It's never something explicit. - *Riley, Soccer, 20 yrs, Accounting and Finance*

Like Gordon, Riley's feelings of racial and athletic stereotypes seem to be more perception than overt stereotyping. This is in direct contrast to William's example of racial and athletic stereotypes. All the participants described being on the receiving end of crude jokes about their race, intelligence or athletic ability. However, they all disregarded them as nothing serious, and an expectation of life as a Black Canadian male. Since these racial jokes were discounted, some participants claimed that they did not experience racial stereotypes at all, although they were all aware of their existence. Despite none of the other participants describing anything as overtly offensive as the racist incident William referred to, some of them did depict more subtle forms of stereotyping that attribute Blackness to athleticism and Whiteness to intelligence, such as Jay's account below:

We have this White guy on the team, he's a safety and his nickname is, "The Brain". He's a smart football player, and the coaches call him "The Brain" and stuff, but he's one of the most athletic guys on the team. He's really good. He's a white DB and they just called in "The Brain" because they say he's so smart but he's also so athletic. But nobody gives him the credit he deserves as an athlete, because he's White. - *Jay, Football, 22 yrs, Environmental Studies*

When probed further he added:

And on the reverse, some of the smartest people I know are Black. The guys with the highest GPAs on the team are Black, and they are in our hardest program, Business. But they don't get the credit they deserve for being smart. No one gives them the nickname of "The Brain". So, I just hate it when people assume a guy is not smart enough because he is Black. - Jay, *Football, 22 yrs, Environmental Studies*

Jay's account was an example of the subtleties of stereotypes. His interpretation of this situation is wrought with racial connotations in a two-layer approach. First, he believed that his White teammate did not receive the recognition that he deserved as an athlete. According to Jay, the use of the nickname "The Brain" by the coaches implied that intelligence is synonymous with Whiteness, and that as a White athlete, he should be known for his intelligence, not his remarkable athleticism.

It was possible that this White player's nickname of "The Brain" was satire, similar to giving an overly large person the nickname "Tiny", but clearly this was not how Jay perceived it. Contextualizing racial stereotypes in this manner meant that he was more sensitive to the racial connotations attached to the nickname, and to whom the nickname was attached. Second, from his tone of voice his biggest issue seemed to be that the nickname was disrespectful to the Black members of the team who were putting in the effort to challenge stereotypes that suggests Blacks cannot excel athletically and academically. According to Jay, the Black players had the highest academic averages. Therefore, they should have been given the nickname "The Brain". Although

Jay was not directly involved in this subtle form of stereotyping, the nickname still produced a strong reaction.

In a similar account of the impact of racial stereotypes, Fred expressed dissatisfaction with the assumption that his athletic abilities were a blessing, therefore he did not need to work for them. A Nigerian immigrant, raised in Canada since he was eight years old, Fred rejected the stereotype that racialized his athletic skill. Although he conceded that his genetics played a role in his increased muscle mass, speed, and strength, he perceived his reputation on campus to be one in which teammates, coaches and other students assumed he did not have to work to achieve his physical condition because he benefitted from natural ability. “People always said I was gifted, which I found very annoying because to be gifted means you don’t work hard for your results”. When probed further as to why he thought others had this perception of him, Fred added:

Well, because like in terms of like running faster, like putting on muscle mass, and getting stronger, I went to the gym by myself and just lift as much weight as possible, and then the results occurred. I gained thirty pounds from my first year to my second year and it was all muscle, and I was like “Whoa, impressive”! But people only saw the after aspects of it and would be like, “Wow Fred, damn! So, you come into the gym, you lift like five pounds and you’re jacked”. And I’ll admit, my genetics are a blessing, but if you look at my siblings, who are closer in genetics to me, they are not like me. So, it takes some hard work to get to where I am. - *Fred, Football, 22 yrs, Kinesiology (graduate program), Kinesiology (undergraduate program)*

Although his teammates and coaches were privy to some of his workouts, Fred also went to the gym on his own time, above and beyond the gym time assigned to the team. So, it is possible that those who made such comments were not aware of Fred's extra training. Furthermore, Fred felt uneasy when his strength and conditioning coach objectified his body to recruit high school athletes by insinuating that they too could look like Fred if they attended that university. Fred felt such statements assumed that the size of his body was merely the result of the strength and conditioning training program rather than the consequence of the extra work he put in. Those not privy to Fred's regime, particularly non-student-athletes, assumed that his increased mass resulted from natural gifts. Such a conclusion invalidated the credit Fred felt he deserved for his efforts and objectified the Black body as simply big and strong (Ferber, 2007).

Fred's account is also significant in denoting a feeling that he ought to live up to a certain standard by others. In fact, he described having to demonstrate outward support for certain rap music that inwardly he did not support. Fred implemented this ruse because one of his teammates tagged him as the "Whitest" person they knew. This outraged Fred who questioned whether he was tagged because he displayed behaviours and characteristics of an educated Black male. He even asked his teammate why he was tagged, to which his teammate had no response. That experience seemed to have jaded Fred to think that others had racial expectations of what characterized a Black male and as a result Fred behaved in ways that would no longer produce questions about his Blackness:

Sometimes I feel like I have to be better than I am because otherwise you get put into a category. For example, in the locker room, I listen to rap music. But there are certain kinds of rap music that I think are just dumb. But in the locker room you see all the Black

dudes and they listen to rap music. So, you kind of have to join that culture in a sense, even if you don't see yourself in it because it makes you more Black. – *Fred, Football, 22 yrs, Kinesiology (graduate program), Kinesiology (undergraduate program)*

In order to ensure that his Blackness was not questioned because he did not present the stereotypical image of a Black male, Fred engaged in behaviours that seemingly enhanced his racial identity by making him appear “Blacker”. This was accomplished as a means of placating his teammates and limiting questions about his Blackness. It seemed that as a Black athlete, Fred himself had preconceived notions as to how he was supposed to act, as no one directly commented on his music tastes. However, this could be a residual effect of his prior experience with his White teammate, who questioned Fred's Blackness because Fred was not fitting the stereotypical mold of the Black athlete due to his academic successes. Bergin and Cooks (2002) reported that the fear of being labeled a “sell-out” factors into the thought processes of some Black youths who purposely suppress their racial and intellectual ability, thereby confirming negative stereotypes. However, Fred did not suppress his racial identity nor his intellectual ability, which would have confirmed the assumptions of his peers.

What is particularly interesting about Fred's case is that rather than suppressing his racial identity to fit into the confines of the dominant White culture, or hiding his intellectual ability out of fear of being accused of “acting White”, Fred purposely engaged in behaviours that would accentuate his Blackness. His superficial support of certain types of rap music was done to fit preconceived notions of what it meant to be Black. Furthermore, although Fred's understanding of Blackness may have been different from his teammates, particularly his White teammates, there still seemed to be an underlining consensus about how Black people were to act. It

therefore would have been fascinating to know how Fred would have reacted in the locker room had his teammates been all Black or all White. In other words, were Fred's actions done to appease his White teammates, Black teammates or both racial groups?

While some of the participants' interpretation of the over-arching effects of stereotypes led them to believe that they shaped their university experiences, others believed the opposite. Kenny, a track-and-field athlete at the time of the interview, who was yet to transition out of university athletics, initially stated that he did not feel the effects of stereotypes. "I wouldn't say so, no. I would say that it hasn't really had much of an impact just because people are more open-minded and they also realize that somebody can be good at sports and good in school too". However, when probed further he changed his response with regards to stereotypes about race. "In track-and-field, when it comes to the sprints or jumps then I would say 'yes'. Because based on stereotypes we're all supposed to be fast and even jump well".

Kenny's response showed the intricacies of stereotypes. His initial response denied that his interpretation of stereotypes had an influence on his experiences. This suggests that he may have only been aware of stereotypes that impacted certain or specific aspects of his life. His initial broad statement of not experiencing stereotypes in university likely referred to not experiencing stereotypes in an academic setting. However, when probed he reconsidered his stance and added that he did experience stereotypes in the athletic arena. Kenny pointed to the fact that he felt an expectation to excel athletically because of the stereotype of Black athletic superiority that circulates in Canadian society. At his university he was not stereotyped regarding the intersection of his athletic and academic status, claiming that his peers recognized that his admission to university was warranted, thereby treating him with the same respect as any other

student on campus. In contrast, the intersection of race and his athletic abilities led Kenny to develop the sense that he was expected to run faster and jump higher than his non-Black peers.

Being Black and a student.

The student-athletes in this study made sense of their experience of being Black and a student by assuming others did not value their intellectual capabilities:

[Non-student-athletes think] I'm just an athlete. I'm a Black guy so that's probably all I'm good for, realistically. They would think I was just another Black athlete from the projects or something, who doesn't do well in school or anything like that. They probably think that I am spoon fed and they [the university] did some things to get me in, even though I got the requirements to get in. I did the same things they needed to do to get in except I play football. – *Gordon, Football, 24 yrs, Sociology*

Gordon's story implied that his combination of athletic status and dark skin colour meant that he was not academically inclined. According to him, his non-athlete peers assumed that he did not work as hard to get into university or that school was somehow made easier for him. While this may be the case with most student-athletes, it is more complicated for Black student-athletes when they are assumed to be incapable of doing anything other than engaging in athletics because of their race. They contend that their non-athletic peers assume that they would not be in university without their athletic abilities ("dumb jock"), which when combined with the assumption that Blacks are intellectually inferior, led Gordon to conclude that others think Black student-athletes receive admission benefits. His annoyance with this assumption was that it pigeon-holed him into the category of Black athlete-only and disregarded the value that he

placed on education because of his skin colour. Whereas a coach may suggest programs that have lower admission requirements, admission requirements were not lowered for athletes. They must gain admission to the institution based on the same standard as their non-athlete peers (Athlete's Guide, 2015). As was shown in Denzel's story earlier, there may be advantages provided to student-athletes once admitted, but all students, regardless of race or athletic status must meet the academic conditions for admission to their university program.

Engstrom, Sedlacek, and McEwen (1995) found that American non-student-athletes adopt negative attitudes towards student-athletes in areas of academic performance, with greater skepticism towards Black student-athletes. The belief is that student-athletes are less likely to excel in the classroom because they do not have the academic capabilities to succeed. When these student athletes are Black, the effect of this stereotype is magnified because of the racial stigma that views intelligence as a characteristic of Whiteness and athleticism as a characteristic of Blackness (Roper & McKenzie, 1988). The belief that intelligence is synonymous with Whiteness is tied to the assumption that behaviours and attitudes conducive for school success are characteristics of Whiteness and are therefore less Black (Horvat & Lewis, 2003; Ogbu, 1992a). Blacks and non-Blacks are found to link Blackness with academic competency in the formulation of the "acting White" hypothesis (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). It may be that the "acting White" hypothesis is not an adequate explanation of the Canadian experience. It has indeed been observed and developed to explain the American context. In Canada, and for these student-athletes, it is not so much about "acting White" as it is about how they understand Blackness:

It's not your skin tone, it's your personality, behaviour, and just the way you act in general, in different situations. The way you talk, your intelligence level, honestly, if you are too smart, I feel like it reduces your level of Blackness. Which is actually just ridiculous! It's how people see it though. – *Fred, Football, 22 yrs, Kinesiology (graduate program), Kinesiology (undergraduate program)*

As stated by Ogbu (1992a), the negative connotations applied to adopting attitudes and behaviours conducive for school success in the USA is encapsulated by Black students who repress their intellectual abilities out of fear that high academic performances would categorize them as “acting White” and less Black. Others suppress their racial identities to assimilate into the dominant culture, which is seen as their best way to achieve success in a society that devalues Blackness (Fordham, 1991). However, it is also likely that there are those who suppress their academic performances without being sanctioned by their peers, simply because they do not value formal education (Wildhagen, 2011). All the student-athletes in this study claimed that they did not curb their academic abilities, nor did they sacrifice their racial identity out of fear that their academic capacity or level of Blackness would be questioned. In Fred's case, his acceptance into graduate school solidified his rejection of Black intellectual inferiority, while illustrating his commitment towards education. His Nigerian immigrant parents' value of education and a Canadian university sport system that placed an equal if not greater emphasis on education by combining athletic and academic scholarships, seemed to instill in him the importance of educational success. This valuing of education by Blacks challenged the literature that suggests Black students do not have high educational aspirations. Many of the participants pointed to the fact that as student-athletes, they were required to maintain specific academic

averages in order to remain eligible to participate in varsity athletics. Although this requirement was used to explain their academic success, their athletic performance was used to help maintain some semblance of Blackness (Hanlon, 2006), which further suggests that they too viewed academic success as a characteristic of Whiteness, and/or athletic success as a characteristic of Blackness.

Like Fred, Jamal discussed the process of having to engage in behaviours that are deemed to be appropriate for Black males as a way of maintaining his Blackness:

If I walk into class and I see one of my boys I'm not going to stop myself from saying, "what up nigga, how you doin'?" If I do that and there's a White teacher beside me that's shocked and opens her mouth agape, that makes me smile even more. Because she's going to see my paper and mark it a 90% and think "I guess I shouldn't have judged that guy and anybody else that acts a certain way". Like on my team, there are a lot of guys from Toronto, from Jane and Finch³ and I have zero issue with them sagging their pants or doing whatever they want because they're in university. So, I would never hold back my Blackness in any case. The way I want to speak, the way I want to hold myself and behave, and the music I want to listen to, and how loudly, is never going to be impacted by who I am around. – *Jamal, Football, 22 yrs, Communications*

Jamal's response implied that his teacher assumed that he was not academically successful because of his willingness to engage in stereotypical Black behaviour that she deemed unacceptable. Sefa Dei and James (1998) found that many Black students used Blackness as a

³ Jane and Finch is an area of Toronto that is known for its high drug and crime rate, gang violence, and people of low socioeconomic status (Friesen, 2018)

strategy to challenge the dominant conceptions of identity. Jamal did the same, asserting that success came in a variety of fashions, and therefore no one, particularly Whites, would cause him to hold back his Blackness or dictate to him what was acceptable behaviour, whether one is White or Black.

Despite Jamal's confidence that his teacher would mark his paper a 90%, he still had an ambivalent attitude towards formal education. His statement that he would receive a 90% was only his assumption, and it did not guarantee that he was actually academically successful in that course. In fact, his belief that he would receive a 90% is puzzling, considering he failed to maintain his athletic scholarship which only required him to maintain a 70% average. The tone in which he makes this statement suggests that such an incident might not have occurred as described, but rather this is how he envisioned such an incident occurring. Therefore, it is not fair to say that he experienced this type of racialized behaviour firsthand, but rather the aura of stereotypes and racism had conditioned him to be on the offensive in preparation of such an incident, to which he would be able to dictate how his Blackness was to be perceived.

His defiance as a mixed-raced was reminiscent of Flash and Mark's struggles as mixed-raced student-athletes, as Jamal fought against the idea that he possessed a racialized identity or that he was "becoming Black" by engaging in behaviours that fit the stereotypical mold of Blackness. His embracing of the "N" word as a term of endearment to his fellow Black man and not passing judgement on Blacks who sagged their pants (a style associated with the hip-hop culture and street gangs), challenged the status-quo of acceptable Black behaviour while allowing him to display a sense of pride that maintained his Blackness. His support of Blacks from "the hood" who achieved the same academic credentials for university admission as their White counterparts, but with fewer resources, illustrated his disapproval of the stereotype that

implied at-risk youth are underachievers. His accentuation of Black characteristics likely reinforced stereotypical Black behaviour as a means of decreasing doubt regarding his Blackness and making it easier for himself to fit into the Black cultural dynamic as a mixed-raced individual.

Flash echoed similar sentiments to that of his fellow participants, but he was more specific in his rationale as to why and how he felt his intellect was being used as a catalyst for accusations that he was less Black:

It wasn't that rare for people to say that I spoke White. So, when I got to [university name] and people were saying the same kind of jokes, "Oreo", "You talk White", because I didn't talk like "yo yo yo", etc. It bothered me since being more articulate is to be more White. – *Flash, Soccer, 25 years old, Faculty of Law (professional program), Political Science (undergraduate program)*

Although he played soccer at a very high level and had the opportunity to play professionally, Flash relinquished his goal of playing professional soccer due to timing and circumstance. This decision was made in favour of completing a Law degree, which is why such accusations and "jokes" bothered him. The notion that being smart somehow reduced his Blackness was also a point of contention for all members of this group of academically inclined young men.

As a mixed-raced individual, Flash acknowledged that his rich vocabulary invited taunts of "Oreo", which implied that he was Black on the outside and White on the inside. His understanding of these jokes was that he was not fully Black because of the way he spoke, and thus he was expected to speak a certain way due to the colour of his skin. Thus, while it is

possible that athletics were used to maintain his Blackness by negating some of the ridicule he received as a highly intelligent mixed-raced male. It is equally as likely that he simply enjoyed playing soccer and was willing to overlook some of the ridicule that he experienced. However, he made it clear that his academic achievements were accomplished because he was raised to value education and to pursue it to the best of his abilities.

Flash's mom, Jane, expanded on the impact that being an educated mixed-raced Black male had on her son. She acknowledged that her White privilege possibly led her to emphasize academic achievement with her children. As a result, her children were teased for not presenting the image of the stereotypical Black male athlete:

I do feel that because my children are Black males that they have to work harder. I have to be honest, I feel that they're living inside of a very White privilege world. And I do feel that maybe part of my expectations have been about them testing the boundaries of these stereotypes and reshaping the negative stereotypes of what people think of young Black males. For example, Flash's father and uncle have friends and family from the United States who would laugh at the way he talks. Because he "talks so proper" is basically the way they would characterize it. They just talk the way normal people talk. They didn't take on the slang. They didn't try to pretend they were from the ghetto. I have friends in Brooklyn and they laugh at the way [my children] articulate their words and how intelligent they are and how well they speak. Maybe they expected them to take and use some of that cultural colloquial slang. But they don't. They don't pretend to be that. – *Jane, Flash's Mother*

Incidents such as these continued to highlight the subtle nature of racism that are often rooted in an American context of what it means to be Black. Even among family and friends, Flash could not escape the stereotypical comments that seemed to associate his intelligence with Whiteness. Although they did not come out directly and say it, his family and friends' use of the phrase "speaks proper" was actually code for "speaks White". Such a comment references an oppositional social identity that some Blacks use to reject formal education, and in this case, speaking properly, because of its association with Whiteness. It was my impression that Jane was content with her children "speaking White" if it meant that they did not have to lower themselves to fit a stereotype. Hence, she continued to encourage her children to use education as the key to upward social mobility, which was epitomized by Flash's disregarding of professional athletic opportunities to pursue a career as a lawyer.

According to Yosso (2005), success for minorities in educational institutions not only depends on their ability to navigate peer networks but also on their ability to effectively deal with institutional racism. Despite Jane not being a visible minority immigrant, she still preached the same message to her children that as Black students they need to work harder than their majority-group peers to challenge prejudices in order to achieve their goals. Thus, it was not a surprise that Flash was successful at balancing both his athletic and academic responsibilities, ultimately opting to pursue a degree in the Faculty of Law.

As a child of Ghanaian immigrant parents, Riley had high educational aspirations and expectations. As one of only four Black students in his program of 400 students, Riley used his high academic standards to challenge the stereotype that as a Black man he did not belong in the accounting program. He was concerned by the fact that he was only one of four Blacks in a

program dominated by Asians, who are often stereotyped as intelligent, and as a result he felt that he needed to prove that he belonged in such a program:

My program is made up of a lot of Asian people, so I think that's something that I've had to almost prove to people that I know what I'm doing and that I'm on the same level as them. I feel like that sometimes. So that's definitely something that I've had to deal with. And as you said, it's not really student-athlete specific. My program has 400 kids and only four of us are Black, so it's just a way of life, I guess. – *Riley, Soccer, 20 yrs, Accounting and Finance*

Stereotypes can be both positive and negative in nature. The stereotype about Asians' mathematical skills is commonly held as a positive stereotype. Cheryan and Bodenhausen (2000) found that positive stereotypes can actually provide a performance boost. However, in the same respect, the stereotype about the inferiority of Black intelligence is a negative stereotype. Riley and most of the participants discussed having to actively prove it false in order to feel accepted. According to James (2010), assumptions made about the intellectual capabilities of Black males by both peers and instructors leaves them struggling to establish a sense of belonging within an academic setting. Even though Riley achieved the same admission requirements as his fellow classmates, he still felt that he needed to prove to others that he belonged. The stereotype of Black intellectual inferiority, and by extension Asian intellectual superiority, particularly in mathematics, influenced his academic experience. Riley's experience supports James and Taylor's (2008) results where Black participants described their financial aid as a "scholarship", as a means of suggesting they had earned their place in university based on academic merit.

Being 1 of 4 Black students in a class of 400 seemed to signal more to Riley than to the other students that he was out of place and did not belong. While he was disappointed at the lack of Black representation in his class, he acknowledged that this was simply ‘a way of life’, as he understood that this specific stereotype had manifested itself through the few Blacks actively pursuing programs such as accounting. Thus, his need to prove that he belonged was to challenge assumptions about his intelligence. Again, although this stereotype was not overtly put to him, he had internalized it and sought to disprove it.

Riley attributed his ability to challenge these preconceived notions to his family, most notably, his immigrant parents. Anisef, Poteet, Anisef, Farr, Poirier, and Wang (2005) found that the strong educational orientation maintained by immigrant parents is often passed onto their children as encouragement to pursue education as their vehicle to social mobility. This was no different in Riley’s case, as his parents wanted him to achieve success through education rather than through sport. Riley stated that his Ghanaian parents’ refusal to attend his soccer matches instilled in him the value of education. Hence, with both of his parents being Certified Professional Accountants (CPA), Riley’s pursuit of that designation demonstrated the influence that their education had on him, his belief that he belonged in a program where Blacks were mostly absent, and his high educational aspiration as a child of visible minority immigrants.

Carter, who was born in Nigeria and came to Canada at the age of six, also showed admirable athletic talent and aspired to play professional basketball in Europe. Yet, he also discussed the importance of education instilled in him by his Nigerian immigrant single mother, who was completing her Ph.D. at the time of his interview. Statistics indicate that immigrant adults tend to have higher educational levels than native-born adults. Galarneau and Morissette (2014) found that in 2006 19% of native-born Canadian males and 23% of native-born Canadian

females had a university degree. Conversely, 58% of recent male immigrants and 49% of recent female immigrants had at least a bachelor's degree. Also, in 2006 the Youth in Transition Survey found 57% of first generation and 53% of second-generation minority immigrants accessed Canadian universities. Only 37% of non-immigrants accessed Canadian universities (Statistics Canada, 2011). Furthermore, 24.3% of minority youth accessed a Canadian university when neither parent had any post-secondary education. Conversely, 49.2% of minority youth accessed a Canadian university with at least one parent having some post-secondary education (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Although Canadian immigrants are found to pursue university degrees at a higher rate than non-immigrants, Abada, Hou and Ram (2009) found that Black and Filipino minority groups do not achieve university education attainment comparable to other groups: Korean and Japanese (69%), Chinese (59%), the South Asians (57%) and the West Asians (52%). Only 25% of Blacks and 38% of Filipinos born in Canada attain a university degree. These competing statistics centered around race and immigrant status questions whether the cultural capital obtained by Black immigrant parents through their educational achievements can be used to facilitate the academic success of their children within the Canadian school system (Abada et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2005) seemingly answered this question by suggesting that neither parental education level nor socioeconomic status have a strong influence on Black Canadian students' educational outcomes. However, this was not the case with Carter as he used his mother's educational achievements as extra motivation in his own academic success, particularly since she was completing her Ph.D. while he was enrolled in undergraduate studies. When others tried to deter him from academic achievement, Carter remembered that his mother not only preached the importance of education, but she followed through on her beliefs as well. This provided him with

a role model to which he aspired and deconstructed the narrative that single mothers produce troublemaker children. Evidence of this was seen with Carter maintaining a balance between his sport and education, culminating with his earning his undergraduate degree and becoming a professional basketball player in Europe.

Smith et al. (2005) found that there are marked differences between the educational attitudes of Black Canadians when compared to Black Americans. Regardless of gender or region, most of their Black Canadian participants displayed positive attitudes towards education, with high aspirations and expectations. Similar findings were uncovered in the present study, with 17 of the participants having high aspirations and high expectations regarding education. The remaining three participants, Jamal, James, and Kevin maintained more ambivalent attitudes towards university education. Although it may have been anticipated that all university students hold elevated expectations and aspirations regarding education, Jamal, James, and Kevin's attitudes towards university education show that this is not necessarily the case. Hence, their presence in university could be explained by a recognition of the importance of securing a university degree in pursuit of a career or simply as a means of pleasing their parents.

Despite many parents in this study encouraging their children's academic efforts, most of them did not have the resources to provide full financial support for their children. Therefore, attending a post-secondary institution in Canada was only a privilege relative to those who were not in university and not to those who were already in university. These young Black men still required financial assistance in the form of athletic scholarships, bursaries, loans, or employment that was not needed by some of their peers. These student-athletes recognized that their immigrant parents did not have the necessary resources to support them, so they refrained from informing their parents about their financial situations related to university, so as not to worry

their parents. To ease the financial burden on their parents, many of the participants worked full-time in the summer, part-time during the school year, and/or obtained the necessary academic results to acquire and maintain their athletic scholarships.

In Ontario, there are several forms of financial aid from which students could benefit. The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) offers grants and loans to students. Unlike grants, loans need to be repaid, beginning six months after graduation (Ontario, 2017). If the student's institution is on the list of approved schools and their parents' income is less than a certain amount, the student is eligible for either an OSAP grant or loan. Scholarships and bursaries offered by various student-aid services such as *yconic* are also available with their own eligibility criteria and do not need to be repaid either (Ontario, 2017). There are also government scholarships, loans and bursaries that are available to students attending institutions outside of Ontario, as well as university specific financial aid.

Thus, while Black Canadian high school students can claim that success is dependent on separating their racial and academic identities, such a claim is irrelevant at the university level (Smith & Lalonde, 2003; Abada et al., 2009). The diversity of the high school population means that fewer students are embracing academic success due to the wider variety of students that value education and those who do not. The more involuntary nature of high school suggests that those who attend high school are less likely to focus on succeeding academically than those who attend university (Abada et al., 2009). University students are likely to embrace academic success since the voluntary nature of university means that those who attend are likely focused on succeeding academically, as are their peers, theoretically limiting accusations centered around not being Black enough (Abada et al., 2009; Smith and Lalonde, 2003).

In previous research linking family structure with educational attainment, Krahn and Taylor (2005) predicted that children from lone-parent households would have lower post-secondary aspirations than children from two-parent households. Using the results from the 2000 Youth in Transition Survey of 18- to 20-year-olds, Bowlby and McMullen (2002) found that in Canada, over 75% of high school graduates live in two-parent households, compared to just under 66% of dropouts. These findings support Krahn and Taylor's (2005) hypothesis that the increased aspiration for university among visible minority immigrant youth is the result of their family dynamic. In other words, more high school graduates come from two-parent households. However, contesting their original hypothesis, Krahn and Taylor (2005) found that when family structure is controlled, the impact of the family dynamic for visible minority immigrant youth becomes largely immaterial. Hence, Denzel, Flash, Fred, Carter, Kevin, Jamal, Gordon, and Mark's aspirations for a university education while having been raised in a single parent household supports Krahn and Taylor's (2005) findings that family structure is largely irrelevant in determining the aspiration for university among visible minority youth. All of the above-named youths from immigrant families obtained a university education with some of them pursuing graduate and professional degrees.

Furthermore, Krahn and Taylor (2005) speculated that the immigrant status of parents creates the visible minority immigrant effect that is primarily responsible for the increased aspirations for university among visible minority immigrant youth. This effect is especially noticeable in households where neither parent has a university degree, as 75% of these visible minority students aspire to university education compared to only 51% of Canadian-born non-visible minority students. The high aspirations of visible minority youth may have been an acknowledgment of their parents' desire for them to work harder because of the discounted value

of their parents' own credentials in the job market. This was possibly the same outlook observed among my participants that distinguished them from other Blacks, since most of them had at least one parent born outside of Canada. Therefore, a myriad of factors including, but not limited to, race, athletic status, academic status, immigrant status and age created distinct identities which distinguished participants from their Black Canadian peers, non-Black Canadian peers, and from Black American students.

Being Black in Canada.

The conceptualization of Blackness in Canada was a topic that elicited a wide range of responses from the participants. According to Jamal, faculty and administration staff discussed superficial issues centered around gridiron football with him, such as the number of touchdowns he scored that week. However, he asserted that those same individuals discussed issues of employment, family, and life after gridiron football with the White members of the team. Such experiences that painted him as an athlete first seemed to reaffirm his indifference towards formal education, and strengthened his pursuit of a professional sports career, which he seemed to borrow from the Black American student-athlete culture:

We don't really have an identity or culture in so many ways. It's almost—and I'm involving myself in this which is embarrassing to say—it's kind of like we're just trying to ride the coattails of the Black American student-athlete experience. It's weird because not having that identity, it's like we just act like the American guys. – *Jamal, Football, 22 yrs, Communications*

Jamal's feeling that there was a lack of a Black Canadian student-athlete culture was exemplified by his own struggle to fit into Canada's racial dynamic as a mix-raced individual. Highlighted by comments such as, "white-washed" and "nigger", the juxtaposition of these slurs implied that he was either not Black enough or too Black, which filled Jamal with a lot of anger and a need to prove his Blackness. Such comments likely made it easier for him to associate with and embrace the Black American student-athlete culture and racial stereotypes. In doing so, Jamal was better able to display his Blackness and compare the culture and identity of Black Canadian student-athletics with that of Black American student-athletics.

Mark, who is also of mixed-raced heritage, claimed that he never experienced racial stereotypes. Although he was aware of his racial difference, his childhood involved interacting with racially diverse groups of kids at school, whose life experiences were like his, making it easier for him to relate. Mark used his mixed-raced heritage as a tool to build rapport with both Whites and Blacks. During our interview he alluded to NFL quarterback Dak Prescott's media statements about being biracial, and expressed confidence as well as relief that there are other people in the world who understand and have similar racial experiences. In fact, Prescott stated that being biracial allowed him to connect with everyone on his team (Schilken, 2017). Prescott claimed that his family's racial diversity enabled him to experience the contrast in how his White grandparents lived compared to his Black grandparents, within the same city. He credited his experience and the racial diversity in his life with shaping him as a person (Schilken, 2017). Although being of mixed-raced status had its challenges, Mark indicated that he was appreciative of his multiple racial and cultural heritage, which he found to be beneficial in connecting with all groups of people. Thus, by referring to Prescott, Mark was underlining shared experiences of

Blackness, specifically the similarities of a mixed-raced heritage that extend beyond nationality.

Yet he maintained the distinctiveness of Canadian Blackness:

I don't see the American Black culture here. I don't feel like I act like that or talk like that or do all that stuff. But I do know Black kids that speak with an American accent, and I'm like, "That's not you. I know how you talk". And you see the way they dress. And I get why they do that, but for me, I've never seen the Black American culture and felt like that has to be me too. – *Mark, Basketball, 21 years old, Kinesiology*

Mark's insistence on a different performance of Blackness in Canada shows that the way in which individuals perceive stereotypes is equally as important to the circulation of stereotypes themselves. In stating that he did not feel that the Black American culture played a role in his life, Mark was signifying his comfort with the diversity of Canada and his mixed-race heritage that affords him the opportunity to interact with different groups easily, in much the same way that Dak Prescott interacts with his racially diverse teammates. His narrative contrasts that of Jamal in illustrating a different experience of Blackness in Canada, that is created from shared similarities, but manifested through distinct experiences. According to Mark, this distorting of cultural boundaries leads Black Canadians to adopt the Black American culture in the way they dress, speak, and act. Yet his claim that he was not influenced by the Black American culture likely suggests that there are differences between the two cultures that foster a distinct Black Canadian identity. It is this distinction that challenges academic literature suggesting that the Black American culture on Black Canadians homogenizes Blacks (May, 2009; Gilroy, 1993). At the same time, this distinction is sustained, in part, by the greater emphasis placed on education

within the Canadian university sport system that distinguishes it from the American system (Athlete's Guide, 2015). It also is likely that Canadian specific hip-hop music, popularized by artists such as Drake, Kardinal Offishall, and The Weeknd, helped put Toronto's, and to a lesser extent Canada's, distinct hip-hop culture on the global music scene further separating the Black Canadian identity from the Black American identity. However, this was not the consensus among the participants. Most of the participants acknowledged that they, along with their peer groups, were influenced by the Black American culture, which counters Mark's suggestion of a distinct Black Canadian identity and implies that Black Canadian and Black American cultures are significantly intertwined.

Mark's comment also implied that a level of agency is required to determine the outcome of events in an individual's life. Blacks who forget about this agency end up falling victim to the ideals of society, reproducing stereotypes of Black homogeneity that incorrectly characterizes all Blacks as being from one group (Allahar, 2010). The multicultural dimensions of Canadian identity likely aided Black Canadian young men such as Mark in forging their own identity, separate from Black American culture. William's struggle to belong also illustrated the heterogeneity of Black in Canada. As a Canadian-born child of Jamaican immigrant parents, William described feeling alone on his university campus. Although he interacted with other Blacks, their cultural heritage was rooted mostly in African nations, leaving William with no one with whom he could share his Jamaican-Canadian heritage:

At [university] I feel super super Black, because all the other Black people here are from Africa and they already have their own culture. I'm the only Black person over there with

my culture and so I feel extra GTA (Greater Toronto Area) Black over there. – *William, Basketball, 24 years old, English*

As Ogbu (2004) stated, collective identity, or social capital stems from Black oppression, creating a mutual bond that binds Blacks together. The presence of Black Stylized English (a specific form of speech), which is considered by some scholars to be the single most vital component of Black ethnic identity, is used by Blacks in Canada and the USA (Phinney, 1990). Smith and Lalonde (2003) suggested that the stronger bond of collective identity found in the USA is likely due to the presence of the civil rights movement, which galvanized Black Americans for a unified cause, contributing to the collective consciousness of Black Americans. In contrast, it is important to acknowledge other factors, including but not limited to population density and immigration policies, that may have affected the degree to which Black Canadians were impacted by collective identity. Despite this, Black Canadians adopt forms of Black Stylized English that they use to maintain their own individuality from the White majority group (Ibrahim, 1999; Sefa Dei & James, 1998). This racial component of Black Canadian identity and Blackness is significant enough to bind Black students together as they traverse the Black Canadian experience fostered within schools and the greater Canadian society (Thiessen, 2009). The element of bonding, as a dimension of social capital, is captured within the connection of predominantly homogeneous social ties, leading to a strengthening or reinforcement of values and characteristics (Putnam, 2000).

Still, William's experience was quite different. He felt that race alone was not enough to build solid bonds of connective identity, as other factors such as specific ethnic Black culture were missing. The uniqueness of his ethnic identity among his university peers was reified in that

he felt he could not share his cultural identity, customs, or experiences with the other non-Jamaican Blacks on campus, despite sharing racial similarities.

The structure of the Canadian university sport system offers a greater educational and athletic balance, allowing Black Canadian male student-athletes to demonstrate resiliency and challenge the conception that they are marginalized and racialized as the other (James, 2012; Stone, Perry, & Darley, 1997). This is in stark contrast to the American collegiate sport system that does not offer this balance, and as a result sees Black American youth overrepresented in sports and underrepresented in careers obtained through education (Lee, 1985). However, with the Canadian educational system's ongoing efforts to provide equitable access to quality education for all students regardless of race, Black Canadian university student-athletes may be racialized but not necessarily marginalized in the same way as their USA student-athlete counterparts. This is because the concept of Blackness in North America is based on norms, narratives, and everyday roles and acts, demonstrating that "one is not born Black" (Ibrahim, 2004, p. 80). As mostly voluntary Canadian migrants, the participants in this study were aware of the expectation that they were to "perform" their race and "become Black" by engaging in behaviours that accentuated their Blackness. Some of them resisted appropriating White culture, pushing a form of hyper-Blackness used to authenticate themselves and gain acceptance or confirmation that they were just as Black as their Black peers. Some discounted or ignored such stereotypes, while others challenged the assumptions of Blackness and Whiteness by continuing to engage in behaviours conducive for academic success, as a means of proving the stereotype wrong, despite the increased accusations that they were selling out their own race (Sefa Dei & James, 1998).

Sefa Dei (1997) deconstructed the concept of “acting Black” or Blackness into racial identity and racialized identity. Racial identity involves a state of “being” regarding how Black youth view themselves as individuals. Racialized identity involves “becoming” Black by engaging in behaviours that others deem to be the standard of acceptability for Black youth. Such behavioural standards often lead Black males in particular, to be portrayed as violent, disrespectful, unintelligent, hypersexualized, and threatening. These images circulate in schools and negatively influence the ways young Black male students are treated, positioned, and provided opportunities to learn (Davis, 2003). Hence, racialized identity is a more suitable term because although Black people share similar characteristics and interests that helps them to understand and acknowledge one another, the heterogeneity among them also needs to be supported because there is strength in diversity.

In Canada, the term “Black” was found to be the preferred group label of choice in comparison to other labels such as African-Canadian (Boatswain & Lalonde, 2000). One of the reasons for this choice was the explicit reference to race and skin colour (Lalonde, Jones & Stroink, 2008). Whereas Black slavery was critical to the formulation of the American economy, Black slavery in Canada, by comparison, is not central to defining Canadian racial tensions. Furthermore, the multicultural viewpoint in Canada is used as a buffer to racial tension, while simultaneously acting to support cultural diversity, hence the heterogeneous makeup of Canada’s Black population (Lalonde, 2002).

As mentioned earlier, Canada’s Black population is 3.4% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2016) and despite being the third largest visible minority group in Canada, they still experience considerable discrimination with higher rates of unemployment and lower average salaries than do other Canadian immigrants (Milan & Tran, 2004). They are subjected to

racial profiling by the police (Friendly, 2003), and continue to be targeted for deportation at a higher rate than other groups (Doucet, 2001). These issues are very similar to those experienced by Blacks in the USA, therefore it would be naïve to assume that the politics of Black identity in Canada do not have any ties to that of Black identity in the USA (Lalonde, Jones & Stroink, 2008). Given their shared cultural experiences, I argue that issues of race in America, while separate and distinct from the Canadian context, do have a place in Canada, as many Black Canadians may feel connected to Black Americans due to the fact that they are both members of a visible minority group that is socially disadvantaged within their respective countries. However, it is also possible that the differences between the two groups such as the smaller population size and emphasis on multiculturalism may mean that Black Canadians do not necessarily identify with being Black in the same way as Black Americans (Lalonde, Jones & Stroink, 2008).

Concluding thoughts on experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes.

The stereotypes about Black Canadian male student-athletes are messy, contradictory, and convoluted. Although participants challenged stereotypes of race, academic competency, and athletic requirements as they successfully navigated the Canadian university system, the vast majority of these stereotypes were of the subtle variety. Rarely were there overt instances of racism or stereotypes. Rather the assertion, or hint to race, academic competency and athletic requirements were made and directed towards the participants. Most of the participants experienced some form of stereotypes such as jokes, or comments which they ignored or categorized as part of everyday Black life.

The three areas of intersection pertained to: being an athlete and a student; being Black and an athlete; and being Black and a student. Participants in this study seemed to focus on the

first and third combinations. It appeared they particularly valued those experiences where they needed to go against the norm and challenge preconceived notions of their capabilities. Their interpretation of the effects of issues pertaining to their athletic and academic status was one in which the expectation was that athletes are not supposed to excel academically, therefore this was a topic worth discussing, or at least a topic that they felt had a significant impact on their university experience. Similarly, the combination of being Black and a student also seemed to elicit a lot of conversation from the student-athletes as they felt that they were not supposed to excel academically as Blacks, thus this intersection held significant value to them. However, the topic least discussed was being Black and an athlete. It appeared the participants made sense of this intersection by rationalizing that they were expected either by others or themselves to excel athletically as Blacks, so this was not something that they discussed heavily. Their discussions therefore centered on issues that would have caused them to reject their interpretation of a stereotype, as it would not have made sense for them to describe their university experiences and discuss a topic that they did not think was relevant. Relevancy in this case was inversely related to expectations of success. If their perception of a circulating stereotype meant that they were expected to succeed, the participants classified this as being irrelevant and did not speak much about it (the Black superior athlete). However, if their perception of a circulating stereotype meant that they were expected to fail, the participants classified this as being relevant to their experiences, as they had a lot to say about how their interpretation of that stereotype was experienced (“dumb jock”). So while it could be argued that the participants focused on issues of race, their discussions both in quantity and quality show that yes race was a primary subject area, but the larger issue that most of the participants wanted to discuss was the idea of breaking the

norm and challenging what they believed to be negative stereotypes that categorized them as inferior people whether athletically, academically or racially.

Chapter 5

Life After Sport

What happens to Black Canadian male student-athletes after they leave Canadian university sports? Little research currently exists on transitions out of university sport from a Canadian perspective. Black Canadian student-athletes who excel athletically at the expense of academic success encounter difficulty achieving social mobility through sport because of the few professional sport opportunities that exist in Canada (Saul & James, 2006). Due to these difficulties, Canadian student-athletes are more likely to place emphasis on education, acknowledging the limited professional sport opportunities available in Canada (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Research on life after university sport for Black Canadian student-athletes was therefore needed to examine how these individuals prepared for and coped with their impending and inevitable transitions. Since transitioning out of university sport does not necessarily coincide with transitioning out of university or out of competitive sport, some of these student-athletes transitioned out of university sport but remained in university. Others transitioned out of university but transitioned into professional sports or the workforce in Canada or elsewhere. Therefore, centralizing the voices of Black Canadian male student-athletes helped us learn how they made sense of their university experiences, which were used to navigate their transition experiences within the Canadian post-secondary educational system and ultimately the Canadian employment system.

Autonomy.

Several of the participants claimed they did not receive help from their coaches, families, friends, institution's staff, or administration during their transition. Displaying their autonomy, these Black student-athletes placed the onus on themselves to successfully navigate their transitions, with the understanding that they were going to receive little, if any help from others.

Flash, a former varsity soccer player who was finished competing in university sports at the time of his interview, elaborated on receiving little help from others during his transition. Flash's transition out of undergraduate studies was unique because unlike the other participants, he competed at another institution where he was pursuing a subsequent professional degree, whereas the other participants participated in university sport at only one institution. While competing in his fifth year of eligibility, Flash conceded that he did not enjoy playing soccer at his new university. A lot of his feelings had to do with his friend and teammate leaving the team and the university due to a health condition. Although Flash could have relied upon his mother's Canadian university experience, he opted to use his friend as support, since they shared many of the same experiences, least of which was being a mixed-raced student-athlete in the Faculty of Law. As Lavalley et al. (1997) indicated, being able to confide in like-minded individuals acts as a coping strategy to ease the distress felt when transitioning out of sport. Therefore, the departure of Flash's friend and teammate created distress when transitioning out of university sport, forcing Flash to be self-reliant and producing feelings of nostalgia, emptiness, and loss:

I don't know if I was helped per se. Our coach [] isn't the rosier of characters so there wasn't like a fade out program. I didn't have my buddy from law school because he had just left. He had stopped law school because of, I guess a health condition... so I had to

carve it out on my own. I mean, there were people who I could talk to, who shared the same kind of longing to be back on the field, or euphoria, or idealism about what it was to be an athlete. But I think that's one you swallow by yourself. – *Flash, Soccer, 25 yrs, Faculty of Law (professional program), Political Science (undergraduate program)*

Theberge (1995) argued that the camaraderie that develops through team sports creates a support system that makes it easier for athletes to manage the different life situations that arise, due to the shared experiences that they and their teammates have. Furlong and Cartmel (2007) countered this narrative, arguing that in these modern times, the increased separation from family and friends means that young people need to be more self-reliant because they have no one to turn to in adverse situations. Flash found it difficult to adjust to his law school program once his classmate, friend, and teammate withdrew from the program. He expressed disappointment in no longer having the shared experiences and support network of his teammates, as that reference point was removed when his elite soccer career came to an end. It was why many of the participants in this study valued the structure and routine of the student-athlete lifestyle that involved a set schedule and the support of teammates and coaches. Maintaining that sense of order helped to mitigate the uncertainty in their lives by reducing procrastination and keeping them productive and focused on their athletic and academic tasks. Through the process of individualization, the lack of stable reference points forced Flash to overcome the change in his life on his own, rather than with the help of others.

Nicholas a former track-and-field athlete who had already transitioned out of university sports and was working as a part-time teacher, also talked about having to navigate his transition on his own. His parents immigrated to Canada from Haiti where he and his siblings were born.

As the middle child of three boys, Nicholas explained that he was the first and only member of his family to graduate from university as both of his brothers dropped out of college. Through our discussions Nicholas made it clear that his parents' immigrant status and unfamiliarity with the Canadian education system meant they could not help him balance his athletic and academic responsibilities, but also that they could not and did not provide encouragement or financial support, forcing Nicholas to be resilient in his transition out of university athletics:

In terms of transitioning into the coaching position, I've been talking to the head coach for the program. I told him what I plan to accomplish as a coach and what I aspire to do. So he's kind of going to help me get set up on the coaching bases. In terms of pursuing doctoral studies, or being able to really make a significant change in the sport system, it's kind of just talking to my peers. So, the first thing I've been doing is finding out about the whole PhD process and if that's something I can actually do. Next is kind of just on my own doing research to find out if anyone has challenged the Canadian high-performance sport system. So that's stuff on my own; nobody's really doing that for me. And then teaching. That's me. I'm the one that's been applying to the school boards and I've been getting those jobs by myself. – *Nicholas, Track-and-Field, 25 yrs, Sport Management (graduate program), Faculty of Education, Human Kinetics (undergraduate program)*

What was particularly interesting about Nicholas's case was that his former coach helped his transition from athletics into coaching. Conversely, he maintained that his transition into educational ventures was strictly autonomous. Although some might argue that his parents did at least indirectly support his academic success (he did live at home), he claimed that his success

actually reinforced the notion that he was independent enough to navigate his transition on his own, thereby allowing his parents to dedicate more time and resources to his siblings.

Furthermore, his interpretation of the stereotypes of Black student-athletes was that an expectation is placed on Black student-athletes to use sports as their only means of upward social mobility. This did not sit well with Nicholas, and he fought to challenge this notion. However, his idea of rejecting this stereotype and maintaining educational avenues to social mobility only mattered if he was able to complete this transition on his own, without the help of others. The way he spoke about his transitions implied he was proud of being able to manage on his own, but that may have been because help in regards to education was not available as it was in regards to his coaching aspirations. This perhaps speaks to the expectation of Blacks in sport found in the literature, which suggests their coaches and educators are more likely to usher them into athletics than education believing it is their best opportunity for social mobility (James, 2010).

Autonomy and the lack of support networks were not only characteristics of those who had already transitioned such as Flash and Nicholas, but also of those who were yet to transition, such as Kevin. Kevin, a gridiron football player with aspirations to play professionally, explained that he kept his family life separate from his athletic and academic lives, and subsequently his transition, claiming that it was not necessary for him to inform his family about his transition:

I don't talk football with my family, I talk to them about my life, you know? I don't mix football with my family. I talked to my mom once [about school], and it was in passing. She's just happy as long as I'm passing. She's assuming that I'm passing all my classes. But she doesn't ask, "how was this last test, how did your exams go?" She just kind of

takes what I give her, you know? She doesn't really probe for information – *Kevin*,
Football, 24 yrs, Psychology

As the first person in his family to attend university, Kevin was preparing to navigate his transition out of university sport on his own, possibly due to it being unfamiliar territory for all members of his family. As an out-of-province student, he intentionally withheld details of his university experience and upcoming transition from his mother and extended family. This was done to shield his mother from any difficulty he was having because he did not want her to worry and because he felt that she could not help him in any real capacity. An understanding was seemingly reached with his family that if he did not have any issues to discuss with them, then it meant he was doing fine. Asking for school advice, transition advice, or employment advice from his mother was apparently an indication that he was having difficulties. Therefore, rather than worry his mother, Kevin decided to make his own decisions about his future. The shifting of his stable reference points meant that Kevin did not use the same anchors to make decisions about his future as other student-athletes. Since he managed his own affairs when transitioning into university, he expected to manage his transition out of university on his own as well.

Even though many parents were not aware of their son's university experiences, several of the participants acknowledged the sacrifices that their immigrant parents made. These sacrifices include but are not limited to parents' leaving family, friends, and their country to take a chance on their children (Fuligni & Tseng, 1999). Although immigrant children face the challenge of integrating into a Canadian educational system, their parents also face the challenge of integrating into the Canadian economic system (Ma, 2003). Education is therefore a vital component to child rearing for Canadian immigrant parents, as children often represent the

parents' best chance at upward social mobility (Worswick, 2004). Hence, the desire of these Canadian immigrant parents to give their children the best chance at economic and social success is used as motivation by these student-athletes to successfully transition out of university sports, thereby confirming their parents' sacrifices. According to James and Taylor (2008), success for marginalized students, particularly Black immigrants, is not derived simply from gaining acceptance into university. Success for these individuals is garnered from taking advantage of the opportunities in Canada, which means graduating with a worthwhile degree that could be used to obtain upward social mobility. Vallerand (1997) found that Canadian immigrant adolescents have higher intrinsic motivation to perform an activity for the pure enjoyment, understanding, and learning that comes with it. Consequently, these children of immigrant parents likely needed to read, understand, and negotiate the educational system on their own, without the guidance of their parents (James, 2005). Nevertheless, they attributed much of their success in balancing athletic and academic responsibilities to their parents, who taught them the importance of seizing opportunities.

Their parents' overall lack of experience within the Canadian educational system forced these student-athletes to navigate their transitions on their own. Thus, their university and transition successes were attributed to the value of education instilled in them by their immigrant parents and a Canadian educational system that prioritized balancing athletic and academic responsibilities, which these participants used to reject the idea of Black intellectual inferiority.

Unlike many of the student-athletes interviewed who did not start thinking about their transition until after they graduated, holding out hope for a professional athletic career, Bob thought about and prepared for his transition prior to graduation. The discrepancy in Bob's transition attitude compared to his fellow student-athletes could have been explained by the fact

that he was a track-and-field student-athlete for only the final two years of his undergraduate career. His post-university mindset was nuanced to include a rationalization that a professional playing career was unlikely, since he had not invested the same amount of time playing his sport as other student-athletes. Developing effective ways to navigate the Canadian school system is necessary to avoid situations that place student-athletes off course, particularly in cases where they have different ambitions than that of their friends (James & Taylor, 2008). Rather than be complacent, Bob directed his own progress and actively sought the help of the Career Services department at his university, where he was assisted with job searches, preparing cover letters, and revising his resume. His use of this service, available to all students at all Canadian universities, was particularly refreshing because it differed from the mindset of most other Black students. As Pope (2006) noted, Black men are unlikely to reach out to university personnel or support staff when they feel isolated. Hence, the initiative displayed by Bob, rather than being guided towards the Career Services Department by his coaches or family, enabled him to have a smooth transition out of university sport.

Black role models.

Supplementing the transition attitudes of these participants was the importance they placed on Black role models. The invisibility of Black role models outside of sport and entertainment compels many Black youths to pursue careers within these industries since that is where Black are most visible (Carrington, 1998; Hodge et al., 2008). Coming from a low socioeconomic background and flirting with a life of crime, Nicholas, rejected the assumption that Blacks could not achieve athletic and academic success. He wanted to be the role model for the next generation of Black youth, or as he puts it, the “poster boy” for Black athletic and academic success:

I don't think it's had an impact on my experience but it's more humbled me. At the high school I went to, a lot of the Black student-athletes didn't end up going to university or college or anything. They didn't do anything. But I feel that because I was a Black student-athlete, it's like, "You know what? Let's make this look really good. Let me be the 'poster boy' for all Black student-athletes". It gave me more of a drive to work harder and succeed better. – *Nicholas, Track-and-Field, 25 yrs, Sport Management (graduate program), Faculty of Education, Human Kinetics (undergraduate program)*

In using his position as a teacher in conjunction with his Blackness, Nicholas illustrated that limits should not be placed on Black potential, evidenced by his entry into a Sport Management Master's program after obtaining his Human Kinetics degree, completing Teacher's College, and finishing his career as a track-and-field student-athlete. However, the words he used to describe this experience was slightly contradictory. At first, he stated that being a Black Canadian student-athlete has not had an impact on his experience. He then follows that up with it humbling him, which is another form of impact. It is likely that he did not feel that being a Black Canadian student-athlete had altered his experience or affected his experience in a negative manner. As alluded to earlier, the idea that their experiences had been impacted only seemed to resonate with these participants if it was a negative impact. As a result, many of the participants concluded that they were not impacted by stereotypes, despite them reacting, whether positively or negatively to that experience.

The idea that Black role models needed to be more visible outside of sports and entertainment was a recurring theme in this study, especially for the student-athletes who were

yet to transition out of sport. William, a basketball player in his final year during the time of his interview, argued that the presence of role models who look like Black youth and had achieved success outside of sports made it easier for many Black youths to pursue those same avenues and provided a sense of pride for the Black community. His spontaneous response pertaining to role models stemmed from an understanding that the lack of non-athletic role models was detrimental to Black Canadian student-athletes:

They don't see as many Black people, and the media does not do it any justice. What you see is us dancing on BET⁴ or whatever. You're not seeing the doctors you're not hearing about our history or all that good stuff, you only see the bad stuff. So even if there were a good amount of Black people that were doctors, everything is easier when you have people that look like you and remind you of yourself. And whether it's their race or character traits or whatever, there's just not enough people to look up to. But it's nice when you see Black doctors. It's more inspiring than seeing any other race do it so. –

William, Basketball, 24 yrs, English

William's attitude coincided with the views expressed by authors such as Carrington (1998), Hodge et al. (2008), Wilson and Sparks (2001), and other study participants who stressed the importance of Black role models. The invisibility of successful Blacks in careers outside of sports makes it harder for some young Blacks to strive towards careers outside of the entertainment industry. According to William, the lack of relatable role models creates barriers to upward social mobility. Due to the media bombarding Black youth with images of successful

⁴ BET stands for Black Entertainment Television. It is an American television cable and satellite channel that produces entertainment geared towards Black American audiences.

Black entertainers, Black youth seem unaware that they can have successful careers outside of the entertainment industry, or they deem careers outside of the entertainment industry as unsuitable. His claim, along with those of other Black Canadian university students, was that the presence of people of colour in academic positions would provide the incentive needed to further their education. However, while it was reported that Canadian visible minorities comprised approximately 40% of first-year university students in 2016, those numbers are not reflected in Canada's university faculty population, creating and reinforcing professional barriers for students of colour (The Consortium, 2018). Therefore, since Black doctors, Black engineers, Black lawyers, and Black professors are less visible than their entertainer counterparts, Black youth tend to look to the entertainment industry for role models, starting with athletes (Harrison Jr., Azzarito, Burden Jr., 2004).

Fred discussed the sense of accomplishment he felt being the only Black person from his graduating high school class to gain admission to university and then being the only Black person from his gridiron football team to be enrolled in a Master's program. However, he felt that achievements such as his were not showcased nearly enough in the media. According to Fred, the media's presence, in conjunction with the invisibility of Black intellectuals and a lack of resources, made it more difficult for young Blacks to enter non-athletic fields:

The media shows guys like Andrew Wiggins in the NBA making millions, and it's not direct advertising, but basically they're saying that you can do that too. Black people think because they can shoot hoops in their backyard, they can be an NBA player. It just really affects how Black people think. I think we just don't have the resources, knowledge, or support to say, "When I grow up, I want to be a doctor". For example, if

your father is a doctor, you're more likely to be a doctor. My brother's girlfriend's father is a doctor, and now she's going to med school to be a doctor. She has the knowledge of all the right steps and knows exactly what to do to get there. If Black doctors were more visible, that would be the only way that Black people would see that it is possible. – *Fred, Football, 22 yrs, Kinesiology (graduate program), Kinesiology (undergraduate program)*

Reinforcing Fred's point, Wilson and Sparks (2001) found that the media's portrayal of Blacks heavily influences both Black and White youths to think that Blacks can only achieve upward social mobility through the entertainment industry. After viewing sport apparel commercials, all the Black participants emphasized the realism of the basketball commercials and lauded the use of Black players/actors. The Black participants added that the "trash talking", (insulting an opponent's basketball ability) and the location of playing basketball in the ghetto accurately depicts how Black people play basketball, even though both groups recognized that these were stereotypical portrayals of Blacks by the media (Wilson & Sparks, 2001). Wonsek (1992) argued that such images support a racist ideology of the superior Black athlete who is capable only of athletic feats and nothing more. It is through such media portrayals that many Blacks believe a career in sports is attainable and why Fred cautioned young Blacks to be wary of the media depicting Black athletic success, but rarely, if ever, showing those who fail. Hence, Wilson and Sparks (2001) stressed the importance of teaching youth of all races the critical skills needed to differentiate between reality and television, otherwise these stereotypes will continue.

Career opportunities.

Many of the participants in this study understood stereotypes of their racial, athletic and academic positions as affecting their career opportunities, or more specifically altering how they navigated their career transitions. Victor, a former varsity basketball player at the time of the interview, admitted that he used the images of Blacks as athletes, criminals, and musicians as motivation to prove others wrong. He took pride in graduating with his undergraduate degree and cultivating a variety of skills that he parlayed into his own startup business. It was his understanding of race, and the way in which he was perceived by others, both Black and non-Black, that caused him to withhold his photo from his LinkedIn profile:

My LinkedIn profile never had a photo on it because I want people just to see my name and where I worked. But I noticed that being in work places, race is huge. Anywhere I go I try to see what the ratio of Black people versus everybody else. And it's usually very low, in comparison. – *Victor, Basketball, 26 yrs, Political Science*

Victor stated that he did not include a photo of himself on his LinkedIn profile because he did not want employers to have a biased opinion of him or group him with other Blacks. It had been his experience that he was less likely to receive a job offer because of his skin colour. According to Victor, employers would see his skin colour and assume that he was a stereotypical Black man. Such generalizations frustrated Victor who wanted to be seen as an individual. However, demonstrating his individuality proved difficult because of the influence of the Black American culture on Black Canadians and the media's homogenized representation of Blacks as dangerous (Smith, Schneider, & Ruck, 2005; Wilson & Sparks, 2001). Thus, Victor's refusal to use a photo

of himself spoke volumes as to the adverse effects of racialization and marginalization that he experienced.

Victor's father Percy echoed sentiments similar to his son, regarding the impact of race and Blackness on his son's life. The high value that he and other immigrant parents placed on education seemed to be used as a countering measure to potential discrimination in the workplace (James, 1993). As an immigrant parent from Jamaica, Percy came to Canada when he was 15 years old. He did not attend university in Canada himself, but motivated his son to attend university because of the greater life opportunities that a university degree can provide. Like his son Victor, Percy was aware of the recognition that comes with being a student-athlete, as opposed to just a student. Furthermore, although he hated admitting it, Percy was sure that Victor had been passed over for jobs based on the colour of his skin:

I think that no matter what, when you are out there, even in the professional world, you are judged. People will look at you, and they may not look at you as Victor, sometimes they will say "the Black guy". I hope that it doesn't exist, but I am sure he's passed over from a position or two because of the fact. It still exists. There are still people out there who make decisions where they might look out for their own. You know it's there, and I believe it's there, but I don't use it as an excuse myself – *Percy, Victor's Father*

When reading Percy's comments, his interpretation of stereotypes led him to interpret them as creating an unbalanced labour market in which minorities do not have the same opportunities as non-minorities. Although he stressed that he did not teach Victor to use the fact that employers may judge him based on his race as an excuse, he was not naïve to think that racism,

discrimination, and prejudice did not exist. Hence, it was not a surprise that his son Victor had similar assumptions or made sense of stereotypes in a similar fashion, evidenced by his removal of his LinkedIn profile picture. Dion (2002) found that visible minorities perceive more discrimination than White minorities. In particular, Black minorities are more likely to perceive group discrimination (discrimination towards an ethnic group), with twice as many Black respondents perceiving group discrimination than White minorities. Thus, perceived prejudice and discrimination are pivotal dimensions in the psychology of ethnic and intergroup relations (Dion, 2002).

Victor's parents' persistence that education was the key to social mobility motivated him to take advantage of all opportunities that were presented. This included indicating his race as Black/visible minority by "checking the box" on job applications even if it meant providing details of his race to prospective employers. Victor claimed that it was in his best interest to take advantage of companies trying to fill a quota. Some immigrant parents reinforce taking advantage of opportunities in Canada because they want to instill ambition within their children, since they themselves are forced to accept a decline in status when they arrive in Canada (Suárez-Orozco, 2001). A similar mindset was instilled in Victor, as his use of the equal opportunity programs and policies in Canada demonstrated his ambition and willingness to take advantage of the opportunities presented to him.

Similar ideas about the circulation of stereotypes within the job market influenced James's approach to transitioning out of university sports. After immigrating to Canada from Senegal at the age of six, James' experiences led him to conclude that he did not want to work for someone else, unless he was in the NFL. Hence, he started his own security business while still in university, as a backup plan to his primary goal of making it to the NFL:

Getting a job is tough. People are not going to tell you that if you're Black you can't have this job. They're going to say, "You don't know how to work, that's why I did not hire". I did this test twice. I went to the butcher shop and asked for a job. They said, "Sorry we cannot hire you because you do not know how to use a knife". I said "okay". Then I asked my friend to go, my friend is White. I said, "go out for this job, I just want to see something". He hired him after 5 minutes. When we came back together, my friend told me that he never touched a knife [during the interview]. My friend has never been a butcher, but he was still hired. – *James, Football, 24 yrs, History*

James's difficulty gaining employment can be correlated to his jaded approach to a job market that he believes continues to prioritize race over ability. This experience was the catalyst for him starting his own business, as he did not feel that he was being treated fairly within the job market. While the context of his account may be accurate, the way he describes the situation leads us to wonder if his perception of the situation impacted the accuracy of his story. Just as Milan and Tran (2004) showed, the unemployment rate for Blacks is higher than any other ethnic group in Canada, with immigrant Blacks fairsing worse than non-immigrant Blacks. Black and South Asian employees in Canada are less likely than White employees to have full-time permanent wage work. South Asian employees are substantially more likely to be in full-time temporary wage work than all the other groups, while Black employees are substantially more likely than the other groups to be in part-time permanent wage work (Cranford, Vosko, & Zukewich, 2003). Hence, self-employment for some immigrants and minority members

represents an alternative to seeking work in the labour market where they encounter limited opportunity for employment and advancement (Li, 1997).

Having recently graduated with his computer science degree at the time of the interview, Mike, a former gridiron football player, also stated that he did not receive any help from parents, peers, or coaches during his transition. Recognizing the importance of being autonomous when given little support, Mike pursued a variety of career paths to augment his transition out of university sports. He experimented as a rapper, stayed in shape in case a professional athletic career became a possibility, and was enrolled in a three-month business program at the time of the interview, which led him to start his own business:

I think I'm a bit different than a lot of guys because I tried doing a lot of things during university. I actually tried rapping, I tried starting a business, I tried doing a bunch of different things here and there. I was just all over the place. Being in university in general gave me a lot of freedom to try a lot of amazing things so I really wouldn't be able to categorize myself [as just a student or athlete]. – *Mike, Football, 22 yrs, Computer Science Program*

The many options available to Mike during his transition preparation was an example of reflexive modernity. His self-sufficient nature enabled him to make his own decisions and contrary to Giddens (2013), the many options available to him did not seem to be a source of confusion but rather a source of opportunity. His balanced approach to gridiron football and academic studies allowed him to manage his time effectively, which he used to pursue different career paths, even if they did not fit with his degree. His refusal to limit or pigeon-hole himself

into a category of either student or athlete rejected the assessment that athletic identity is so paramount in the lives of athletes that they do not know what to do with themselves once their careers end (Stambulova et al., 2009). His venturing into different avenues outside of sports suggested that perhaps his athletic identity was not as important to him as it was to other student-athletes.

As children of immigrant parents who did not attend university in Canada, Victor and James seemed to choose self-employment as a way to combat the discrimination felt when seeking employment. Mike, on the other hand, seemed to choose self-employment as a result of his ability to cultivate other skills while in university. The rather high percentage of participants who ventured into self-employment is explained by Athayde (2009), who found that young Black Americans are significantly more positive about future self-employment than either White or Asian Americans. However, Walstad and Kourilsky (1998) suggested that even more Black Americans could be self-employed were it not for the lack of positive Black role models in business, coupled with a lack of business knowledge. Li (1998) argued that in the Canadian job market, discrimination and racial barriers are more responsible for limiting the opportunities of minority immigrants, thereby forcing them into self-employment. In support of Li's (1998) argument, Samuel and Basavarajappa (2006) found that although the Employment Equity Act had increased the number of visible minorities hired, the vast majority of hires in 2003 were in the communications sector, which accounted for 38.7% of all visible minority hires. Transportation (29.5%) was next, followed by banking (29.0%) and other (2.7%). Senior management accounted for less than 0.1% of all visible minority hires (Samuel & Basavarajappa, 2006). These statistics suggest that well-educated and highly skilled Canadian-born and immigrant visible minorities are not being fully utilized or compensated for their education and

skills in the labour market compared to their non-visible minority counterparts (Samuel & Basavarajappa, 2006), which is a possible explanation for Victor, James, and Mike's pursuit of self-employment.

Mark was another participant who sought a non-traditional path into the job market. He stated that his basketball coach told him that he had the ability to play professional basketball. Despite the encouragement from his coach, Mark was not looking to use sport as his vehicle to social mobility. Although he did want to enter professional sports, he explained that he wanted to play in Europe for a couple of years only to earn some money and see the world before coming back to Canada to become a teacher. This was a common theme among all the basketball players. They acknowledged that if the opportunity to play in the NBA presented itself, they would capitalize on it. However, they were more driven to playing professional basketball in Europe. They realized that while they were good U SPORTS basketball players, they were not necessarily NBA caliber players, adding that no U SPORTS basketball player had ever made a career playing in the NBA.

Once the lack of a professional sports career became a realization, many of the student-athletes took solace knowing that their student-athlete status aided their marketability to employers. Several of them stated that their participation on a university varsity sports team was valued by employers who were attracted to their team-oriented mindset, ability to excel in more than one area, and their time management skills. Although John, who was in his 4th year of undergraduate studies, agreed with this general premise, he argued that being a student-athlete was more of a disadvantage when it came to transitioning out of university sports. Like all the participants, John had particularly high aspirations to play basketball professionally, but he also realized that if that opportunity did not come to fruition, he needed to be able to transition into

the workforce. His concern was that his efforts to play professional basketball would interfere with his efforts to secure a job:

Even being a student-athlete, even like the part-time jobs, a lot of my friends in my program are working at a bank, whereas I can't do that. I can't get the experience, which looks good on your resume. So, like after school it's just like I don't really have any work experience in my field. So, I feel like some of the people get a head start on that. I'm just trying to play catch-up. – *John, Basketball, 22 yrs, Economics*

According to John, when student-athletes had professional sport aspirations, the time and energy devoted to the student-athlete lifestyle, particularly training, left very little free time or opportunity for career advancement outside of sports. This forced student-athletes to work from a disadvantage as they attempted to play “catch-up” in career advancement with their non-athlete peers, and in some cases their fellow athlete peers at other institutions. Gordon echoed John's sentiments by referencing the American Collegiate system. He argued that the Cdn \$3500/academic year limitation put on Ontario athletic scholarships paled in comparison to the value of NCAA athletic scholarships. As a result, some Canadian student-athletes were forced to seek part-time employment during the school year and/or full-time employment in the summer in order to finance their education, something that NCAA scholarship athletes did not have to do.

In the NCAA Division I Manual (2018), it stated that one of the main barriers to student-athletes' academic success is the significant time and energy demand of university athletic participation. American intercollegiate teams officially trained and competed for 20 hours per week in season and 8 hours out of season. Gridiron football players reported the highest weekly

in-season time commitments, with a median of 42 hours/week, up from 39 hours/week in 2010 (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2015). However, this does not include other time requirements such as team events, treatment, and studying of plays. Although these same regulations are not present at the Canadian university level, Miller and Kerr (2002) found that Canadian student-athletes spend similar amounts of time training and competing as their NCAA student-athlete counterparts. Several of my participants including John, Gordon, Victor and William stated that the high student-athlete workload in Canada left little time for career advancement outside of sports. However, other participants stated that they did have the opportunity to engage in off-season employment. Kevin and Jamal were two participants who described a summer employment program designed for football players and organized by former alumni football athletes at their university that allowed them to receive income along with building their CVs for scholarships and future job opportunities.

Although some student-athletes had exclusive student-athlete services and used them, others claimed that they were not aware of any services (mostly those yet to transition), while there were those who stated that their universities did not have services at all geared towards their transitions. When discussing the existence of transition services, most of the participants were wanting services that were focused specifically on the student-athlete experience, and if university services were geared towards the entire student population, those student-athletes viewed those as not representing services for student-athletes.

Since few Canadian university student-athletes, including my participants believe a career in professional sports is a viable option, and with the majority of my participants claiming that they did not receive employment opportunities to aid their career advancement after sport, some of them decided to start their own businesses and become self-employed. However, this did

not mean that my participants did not aspire to enter professional sports. In fact, all of them had aspirations to enter professional sports, meaning that sacrifices had to be made. One of those sacrifices involved dedicating more time and resources to training in the off-season. Elite student-athletes were more likely to commit to training at the expense of employment opportunities, as a means of separating themselves from their competition. In John's case, he trained at a higher intensity and for longer periods than student-athletes who did not have professional aspirations. Gordon added that the combination of employment, a need to train, and the enrollment in summer courses became overwhelming. The time commitment towards his sport influenced the type of employment he was able to secure and reduced the likelihood of his gaining the necessary work experience to compete in the job market against his nonstudent-athlete peers.

The feeling of disadvantage that John and Gordon described, and other participants acknowledged, likely stems from their unique situations in which their universities/sport alums did not offer such programs for off-season employment. More should therefore be done to ensure that off-season employment programs become a universal part of the Canadian student-athlete experience so that all student-athletes have an equal opportunity at gainful employment during their university careers in preparation for gainful employment once their university careers end, regardless of the university that they attend.

Concluding thoughts on life after sport.

Most of the Black Canadian young men interviewed placed priority on their education, contesting the idea that they pursued athletic success at the expense of academic success. Since sports do not last forever, these young Black men were cognizant of the fact there were a limited number of professional athletic options available to them. Thus, their preparation for life after

university sport was exemplified by focusing on professional sport development, pursuing employment opportunities, and furthering their education in graduate or professional programs, thereby ensuring that multiple avenues to upward social mobility were available to them.

Despite Flash and Jamal having mothers who attended university in Canada, they did not call on their parents as a resource for guidance in navigating their transition through the Canadian educational system. Their refusal to involve their single mothers was likely the result of not wanting to burden them, wanting to be self-sufficient, and/or feeling that their mothers' experience was outdated in regard to their current university and transition experiences. In contrast to Flash and Jamal, Carter leaned on his mother as a resource. His decision to do so seemingly stemmed from the fact that he and his mother were in university at the same time, making her experience relevant and current to the issues he faced in university.

Despite these participants demonstrating initiative and autonomy in their transitions, their behaviours were not necessarily indicative or representative of all Black people. Not all Black people are autonomous, just as not all White people are autonomous. The Black student-athletes who volunteered for this study displayed certain behaviours that they used to successfully manage their transition out of university sport. Their success in making it this far is therefore a product of challenging the stereotypes and being autonomous by not seeking guidance from family, coaches, or peers. Through their parents' immigrant statuses, which promote education and balance the student-athlete lifestyle derived from the Canadian university sport system, the Black Canadian male student-athletes in this project were equipped with the skills necessary to transition into a future beyond the playing field, where they have improved prospects for upward social mobility.

At the beginning of this project, it was my hope that this project would lead to the development of policies or procedures within U SPORTS regarding the challenges that Black Canadian male student-athletes encountered when transitioning out of competitive Canadian university athletics. My experience as a former student-athlete and Black Canadian male was the driving force behind my motivation for the implementation of such measures that would equip Black Canadian male student-athletes with the skills needed to navigate the job market. After having completed the project, my analysis suggests that even with the implementation of such policies or procedures, it is highly unlikely that they would be of use since all my participants were accustomed to doing things on their own. However, that may be because the aid provided to student-athletes in the form of the Career Services department on university campuses are not exclusive to student-athletes. Some of the coaches and student-athletes alluded to the high rate of use and success of their individual academic and/or transition programs as a direct reflection of their targeting only their athletes and separate from any transition programs affiliated with the general student body. As I mentioned earlier, this idea of being special or different from the student-body was something that student-athletes coveted. Thus, if other universities or even U SPORTS as a whole were to develop transition programs out of university sport, ensuring that it is situated within the student-athlete dynamic, where it would provide a sense of elitism and exclusivity might be necessary to ensure its success.

Chapter 6

Concluding Thoughts on Transition Experiences Out of U SPORTS

The importance of this study.

Understanding race is complex. Through the distinct experiences described by the participants, Black Canadian male student-athletes can be viewed as a heterogeneous group, rather than a homogeneous group that incorrectly identifies them as part of a larger “Black” diaspora (Allahar, 2010; Ibrahim, 2014). Smitherman (1991) found most Blacks in Canada prefer to label themselves using region-specific terms such as Caribbean, Jamaican, Trinidadian, etc. Henry (1994) found that these labels help some Black Canadian students embrace their culture and heritage, while opposing more distant cultural labels such as African-Canadian or assimilated labels such as Canadian. However, this apparent refusal to assimilate is often misunderstood as Blacks wanting their own separate identity from Canada.

Contrary to the opinions of some critics of multiculturalism, many Blacks do not want to be separate from Canadian society but instead want recognition and acceptance, confirming the simultaneous expression of their African and Canadian identities (Bissoondath, 1994). Their desire to be viewed as individuals without any qualifiers of race, class, gender, athletic status, immigration status, etc., creates unique challenges and obstacles to overcome. The removal of this individuality sets a dangerous precedent, as the negative characteristics of some Blacks as poor students, thugs, rapists, or murderers tends to be used to characterize the entire group. Although this seems like an exaggeration, it shows that the homogeneity of stereotypes is real, and understanding the individualized experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes is necessary to debunk the myth that all Blacks are the same.

What did we learn?

Going back to Carl James and his studies on Black Canadian male high school athletes, we learned that Black Canadian male university student-athletes shared some of the same qualities and characteristics with their high school counterparts, but also some differences. Contextualizing the similarities and differences of Black Canadian male student-athletes made their transition experiences out of university sport messy and convoluted.

Just as James's (2005) participants aspired to acquire scholarships to the USA, my participants also had aspirations to enter the professional ranks, but they were not so naïve as to think athletics were their only method of upward social mobility. What separates my participants from James's participants is that my participants can be described as successful. It can be argued that in recruiting university student-athletes, I was recruiting students who: (a) had been successful at meeting academic criteria to be admitted in university; (b) had been successful enough to make the varsity team; (c) had been in the program at least 2 years (since I wanted them to be within 2 years of graduation); (d) had graduated since I wanted some that had left the university. Therefore, the recruitment criteria went a long way in ensuring I would interview young men who had been academically successful.

These young men were successful regardless of any qualifiers of athletic status, academic status, or race that categorized them as successful athletes, successful students, or successful Black males. Whereas my participants differed from James's (2005) participants in terms of success, they shared characteristics of academic success with the student samples of Codjoe (2006), Nieto (1992), and Nieto (1994). Although there may be disagreements about what it means to be successful (Nieto, 1994), the African-Canadian students in Codjoe's (2006) sample developed both academic skills and positive attitudes about themselves and the value of

education. Similarly, my participants expressed the same mindset, adding the element of athletic success to their collection of successful accolades. They successfully balanced their athletic and academic requirements, evidenced by their graduation from high school, admission to university, maintenance of playing eligibility, and in most cases athletic scholarships, and either graduating or on route to graduate from university at the time of the interviews. Some of them even held part-time jobs while in university to help subsidize their tuition and living costs. All of those who graduated from university at the time of their interview either obtained gainful employment or admission to a graduate or professional program.

The athletic and academic success of my participants is even more impressive when you consider that many of their immigrant parents lacked experience with the Canadian educational system. Despite this, 18 of the 20 participants have graduated since the interviews commenced (two participants are doing a fifth year), which is a credit to their ability to enact agency, successfully navigate the Canadian educational system on their own, and take advantage of the opportunities presented to them in Canada. In other words, education alone is not always enough, as the barriers in the form of stereotypes about students, athletes, Black males, and immigrants, combined with transition experiences centered around autonomy, the emulation of role models and of developing career opportunities means Black students must be ready willing and able to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them in Canada. In the context of post-secondary education, many of my participants and their parents viewed a college education as inferior to a university education, and thus the expectation was that the participant would attend university. This mentality demonstrates the reverence that the prestige, recognition, and status of university holds over college, which is a source of pride for immigrant families and friends.

The important premise in my research is that I wanted to know how Black Canadian male student-athletes experienced issues that compare to what we already know from literature on Black student-athletes in the USA. Blackness is sometimes taken for granted, as stereotypes continue to circulate that construct these individuals in terms of their race as Black men, rather than by any other construct such as socioeconomic status or Canadian nationality. Specifically, the participants in this study expressed instances where the intersection of their skin colour with their academic capabilities, culminated in the perception that they were unable to achieve social mobility in anything other than sports. Additionally, my participants did not refer to Blackness or racism by name and instead revealed their interpretation of the social construction of race. However, in some cases, participants only discussed experiences of racialization and marginalization after I probed with further questions. This showed that they were aware of the effects of stereotypes but did not reflect on them prior to being interviewed for this project. This may demonstrate that for these student-athletes, Blackness was relevant, because it was how they were categorized by others and through their own perspectives. Nuancing the participants' Blackness by including their immigrant status served to add a dimension to their experiences of racialization. However, the success of these Black Canadian male student-athletes cannot, nor should it, be attributed to their race or immigrant status alone. Just as it is the intersection of social, cultural, historical, and socioeconomic status that makes the success of Black Canadian students possible (Shizha, 2016), I argue that the same intersection of factors contributes to the success of these particular Black Canadian male student-athletes.

Where are they now?

The participants in this study were able to enact positive change in their own lives, evidenced by their successful transition out of university sports. Since the interviews commenced, an additional participant completed a Master's program, bringing the total number of participants who enrolled in graduate studies to three, with Flash remaining as the lone participant enrolled in professional program. From a sports perspective, four of participants are still participating in sports at a competitive level. The following Table 3 outlines where each of my participants are now, roughly two years after their interviews.

Table 3

Student-athlete	Post-interview status
Nicholas	Obtained bachelor's degree. Obtained a bachelor's degree in Education. Obtained a Master's degree in Sport Management. Works full-time as a high school health and physical education teacher. Helps to coach track-and-field at the university level.
Denzel	Obtained bachelor's degree. Working part-time. Still running track-and-field.
Flash	Graduated from the Faculty of Law. Passed his Bar exam and is now a Lawyer.
Fred	Obtained bachelor's degree. Obtained his Master's degree.
Victor	Obtained bachelor's degree. Works full-time at an IT company. Continuing to maintain his own business.
John	Obtained bachelor's degree. Working full-time. Considering going back to school in about a year if he is not happy with his job at that time.
Kenny	Obtained bachelor's degree. Currently works part-time while setting up his own business.
Carter	Obtained bachelor's degree. Plays professional basketball in Europe.
Mike	Obtained bachelor's degree. Started his own tech business. Also works as a fitness instructor/personal trainer.
Bob	Works full-time while taking courses to complete his undergraduate degree.
William	Obtained bachelor's degree.
Riley	Obtained bachelor's degree. Obtained a Master's degree. Pursuing a second Master's degree. Passed his CPA exam.
Yusuf	Obtained bachelor's degree. Works full-time in law enforcement. Plans do to more schooling and hopefully pursue a Master's degree in the future.
Kevin	Obtained bachelor's degree. Working manual labour and playing club rugby.
Jamal	Obtained bachelor's degree. Professional football player in the CFL.
Gordon	Obtained bachelor's degree. Works as a substitute teacher with aspirations to play football in Europe.
James	Obtained bachelor's degree.
Mark	Came back for fifth year of undergraduate studies.
Jay	Obtained bachelor's degree. Working part-time while pursuing graduate degree.
Frank	Came back for fifth year of undergraduate studies.

Although the participants' internalization of stereotypes may have impacted their transition experiences, their overall success suggests that it did not lead to their disengagement from academic pursuits. This is likely because these are successful individuals, who had aspirations for athletic and academic success prior to entering university. Despite the impact of stereotypes emerging in the interviews, these successful Black Canadian male student-athletes overcame them as they navigated the Canadian university educational system and U SPORTS in preparation for their transition out of university sport. It is also likely that those who do not make it to university or those who end up quitting university are the ones further impacted by these issues.

Limitations of the study.

One of the limitations of the study was that the participants' success in maintaining their student-athlete status meant that I was unable to study those who either got cut from the team or were ineligible to participate. As a result, I did not investigate those whose transition experiences were altered because they no longer were a part of the team. If such participants existed, their transition experiences out of university sport would have likely focused more on educational avenues, since their professional sport opportunities would have been removed. However, those with a strong athletic identity would have likely removed themselves from university entirely if they became ineligible to participate, particularly if their only goal was to become a professional athlete. Furthermore, I was unable to focus on student-athletes who failed academically and were subsequently asked to withdraw from their programs. Had such participants existed, their transition out of university sport would have been very different.

Another limitation of this study was the limited number of parents (n=3) interviewed. This was mainly due to difficulty in recruiting, which suggested that perhaps most parents were

not interested in participating in this study. The low numbers could have also resulted from the student-athletes themselves deciding that their parents, who were immigrants, were uncomfortable with the language barrier of speaking English for the interviews. Another possibility could have been that the student-athlete did not think that anyone played a significant role or influenced their transition out of university sports. In the end, parents were important to understanding stereotypes and balancing athletic and academic responsibilities. However, the input from the coaches whom I also sought to interview was not relevant in understanding the transition experiences of student-athletes. It was found that the coaches were not active in the student-athletes' future endeavours. I included them because I thought they would have played a role, but the fact that data obtained from the two coaches interviewed did not pertain to the transition experiences of the student-athletes demonstrated the irrelevancy of their input in the transition experiences of these participants. The coaches' responses were more relevant to the sports careers and/or to understanding the challenge of maintaining an athletic and academic balance, highlighting the need for these student-athletes to be autonomous and navigate their transition on their own.

Moreover, the questions asked during the interviews regarding the participants' Canadian high school experience and their parents' immigration status led to an underlying assumption that the participants were from elsewhere. Although I did not ask specifically about the participants' immigration status, questions about their parents' immigration status and my own case as a Black immigrant male produced the idea that these participants likely identified with nationalities outside of Canada, since many of the Black youth that I went to school with were also from immigrant families.

Finally, there were some topics within the literature that were not discussed by my participants. This included the role of sport in reproducing masculinity and the role that shades of skin colour played in the lives of Black boys and girls. Regarding masculinity/feminization, the literature talked about sport being a masculine domain that was used to prevent Black males from becoming feminine (Carrington, 1998). The participants in this study did not spontaneously expand on their experience of masculinity as student-athletes other than to point out that their Blackness and athletic status increased the expectation that they were to be sexually promiscuous. This is related to the hypermasculinity and heteronormativity predominant in the sports concerned, particularly football and basketball. Perhaps the fact that the participants wanted to do things on their own with regards to transitions emphasized assertive characteristics of masculinity that were embodied in other aspects of their lives.

Issues of skin complexion/shade of skin colour involved a separation between dark and light skinned or mixed-raced Blacks. Although this is prevalent in the literature, participants only alluded to this separation after being prompted by the researcher to expand on their experiences of Blackness, which they understood to mean the complexities of skin colour/skin shade. This was a particularly poignant topic for participants of mixed-race heritage who described being profiled and stereotyped by both Whites and Blacks as being less Black because of their lighter complexion. They expanded on this idea by stating that darker skinned males tend to be viewed as tougher and authentic, whereas lighter skinned or mixed-raced males are seen as soft or timid and therefore need to engage in behaviours that would accentuate their Blackness.

In retrospect, it seems logical that students would be more willing to talk about their experiences than unsuccessful students (Nieto, 1992). Thus, focusing on student-athlete perspectives allowed us to examine the conditions within their experiences that made them

successful students and successful athletes, whether that was their academic status, athletic status, race, immigrant status, support networks, coping strategies, role models, or career opportunities. However, as Black Canadian male student-athletes, it cannot be overstated that these young men have had to endure and overcome a litany of obstacles on their way to success. As successful young men, my participants were aware of the obstacles that sought to limit their potential. Nevertheless, they managed to traverse the Canadian educational system to transition out of university sport and into graduate school, professional school, professional sports, or the labour market, suggesting that the current Canadian school system does indeed work well for both Whites and Blacks, if they are willing to put in the work. Their lack of cultural capital may have resulted in their having to work harder than their non-Black and non-student-athlete peers. However, their acquired success will only serve to aid the cultural capital and pursuit of success of future generations of Black Canadians.

Future lines of inquiry.

As I near completion of this project, new questions and points of inquiry have developed that could use further examination. First, an obvious change would be to do a comparative analysis on these same transition experiences, but with White Canadian male student-athletes, to see if there are any marked differences between their transition experiences and the transition experiences of Black Canadian male student-athletes. American authors indicated a difference among Black and White American student-athletes, so it would be interesting to see if these same differences or new differences emerge within the Canadian context.

Another obvious change would be a comparative analysis between male and female student-athletes. Canadian male student-athletes have limited professional athletic opportunities, but the professional athletic opportunities for females are even more scarce. For instance, are

these females more focused on education, and are stereotypes about Black women in sports classified differently than stereotypes about non-Black women in sports? It would therefore be interesting to see if and how female professional athletic opportunities change their approach to life after sport, particularly if such a study classified these women by race.

I would also be curious to learn how the role of non-immigrants impacts the university experiences of their children. We saw that children of immigrant parents were more likely to navigate their transition on their own because of their parents' lack of experience within the Canadian educational system. It is assumed that non-immigrant parents with Canadian university experience would be better equipped to guide their non-immigrant children through the university system. However, it was observed that despite Flash and Jamal's mothers' university experience, they did not report seeking their guidance. Was this because Flash and Jamal felt more comfortable engaging in autonomous behaviour? Was this because they felt that their mothers would be too involved? Was it because they did not want to burden their single mother with their issues? Or was it that their mothers decided not to get involved because they did not want to remove that sense of agency from her sons? All of these are fascinating areas of interest that can hopefully be developed in future research.

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Appendix A: Letter of Ethics Approval

File Number: H05-16-01

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/29/2016

Université d'Ottawa University of Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice**Health Sciences and Science REB****Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)**

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Humphrey	Nartey	Health Sciences / Human Kinetics	Principal Investigator
Christine	Dallaire	Health Sciences / Human Kinetics	Supervisor

File Number: H05-16-01**Type of Project:** PhD Thesis**Title:** Black Canadian Male Student-Athletes Transitioning Out Of University Athletics**Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)**

06/29/2016

Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

06/28/2017

Approval Type

Approved

Special Conditions / Comments:

N/A

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room 154 Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 6N5 Canada

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1



File Number: H05-16-01

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/29/2016

Université d'Ottawa University of Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above

named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled “Special Conditions / Comments”.

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the “Modification to research project” form available at:

<http://www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms.html>

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms.html> If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Signature:

Riana Marcotte

Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research

For Daniel Lagarec, Chair of the Health Sciences and Sciences REB

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room 154 Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario
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Appendix B: Consent Forms



Université d'Ottawa
Faculté des sciences
de la santé

École des sciences de
l'activité physique

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health Sciences

School of Human Kinetics

Consent Form – Student-athletes - Individual Interview

Title of the study: The Transition Experiences of Black Canadian Male Student-Athletes Out Of Competitive University Sport

Name of Researcher: Humphrey Nartey, Ph.D. Candidate

Institute: University of Ottawa

Faculty: Health Sciences

Department: School of Human Kinetics

Name of Supervisor: Christine Dallaire

Institute: University of Ottawa

Faculty: Health Sciences

Department: School of Human Kinetics

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above mentioned research study conducted by Humphrey Nartey and Christine Dallaire.

Aim of the Study: The aim of this study is to understand how Black male Canadian student-athletes make sense of their transition experiences out of university sport.

Participation: My participation will consist of engaging in an individual interview that will be approximately 1 hour and thirty minutes in length.

This interview is scheduled for (_____)

It will be audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts may be returned to me to review for accuracy, and I can then make revisions and corrections if required.

I would like to receive a copy of the transcript via email: *(please initial here)* _____

Risks: There are no risks associated with this study. My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer my personal experiences as a Black Canadian male student-athlete. However, there may be some discomfort in sharing my personal experiences. Therefore I am encouraged to take my time when answering any sensitive questions

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and/or may choose to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty if I experience any discomfort when sharing these experiences.

Benefits: For the participants – This study will provide an opportunity to reflect on transition experiences and the factors that enable or constrain these transitions. Specifically, from a Canadian perspective, this study will advance knowledge on a topic that has little to no research available.

Practical implications – This study may lead to the development of university policies and/or increased conscious awareness of athletes, families and coaches regarding the challenges that Black Canadian male student-athletes encounter when transitioning out of competitive university athletics.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurances from the researcher that the information I share will remain strictly confidential. Only the research team will have access to the audio recording and the transcript which will both be identified with a pseudonym. I understand that the contents of this interview will be used for research analysis and publication. Furthermore, all information related to this interview will be kept in a secure password protected document to protect my confidentiality. **Anonymity** will be protected in the following manner: M name and all other identifiable information will be changed to protect my identity in transcriptions and any future publications of data collected from this interview.

- I choose _____ as a pseudonym to help protect my anonymity ____ (*initial*).

Conservation of data: The data collected including audio clips, transcripts and notes will be kept in a secure manner. The data will remain electronically on the researcher's password-protected laptop computer as well as on the password-protected server at the Faculty of Health Sciences throughout the study. During the study, the signed consent forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office. Upon successful defense of the study, the consent forms will be transferred to a locked filing cabinet in a locked storage space at the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa thereby safeguarding the identity of the participants. The signed consent forms will remain in the locked storage space for a period of five years following successful thesis defense and publication and will be destroyed in August 2022 along with the electronic data (recordings, transcripts and list of participants). Throughout this time only the research team will have access to this information.

Voluntary Participation: I understand that I will receive no compensation for taking part in this study. I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all individual interview data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be removed from the study, unless permission to use it is granted. Given that group data is highly dependent on the group discussion, my group interview data will remain if I decide to withdraw from the study.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Humphrey Nartey of the School of Human Kinetics, in the Faculty of Health

Sciences at the University of Ottawa, whose research is under the supervision of Professor Christine Dallaire.

I am asked to forward the family member recruitment email and coach recruitment email that I will receive to a family member and/or coach who has been the most influential in my transition experience so that they too can be interviewed. I remain eligible to participate in the study whether or not a family member or coach is interviewed.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep, and the other is for the researcher.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

If the interview brings up issues I wish to discuss with a professional, I am encouraged to contact the Career Development Centre or Career Services at my participating academic institution.

Consent Form – Parents/Guardians

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de la santé

École des sciences de
l'activité physique

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health Sciences

School of Human Kinetics

Title of the study: The Transition Experiences of Black Canadian Male Student-Athletes Out Of Competitive University Sport

Name of Researcher: Humphrey Nartey, Ph.D. Candidate

Institute: University of Ottawa

Faculty: Health Sciences

Department: School of Human Kinetics

Name of Supervisor: Christine Dallaire

Institute: University of Ottawa

Faculty: Health Sciences

Department: School of Human Kinetics

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Aim of the Study: The aim of this study is to understand how Black male Canadian student-athletes make sense of their transition experiences out of university sport.

Participation: My participation will consist of engaging in an individual interview organized around a set of open-ended questions, aided by probing questions. Each interview will be approximately 1 hour in length.

This interview is scheduled for (_____)

It will be audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts may be returned to me to review for accuracy, and I can then make revisions and corrections if required.

I would like to receive a copy of the transcript via email: (*please initial here*) _____

Risks: There are no risks associated with this study. My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer my personal experiences as a parent/guardian of a Black Canadian male student-athlete. However, some discomfort may be associated with sharing my personal experiences. Therefore, I am encouraged to take my time when answering any sensitive questions and/or may choose to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty.

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Benefits: For the participants – This study will provide an opportunity to reflect on transition experiences and the factors that enable or constrain these transitions. Specifically, from a Canadian perspective, this study will advance knowledge on a topic that has little to no research available.

Practical implications – This study may lead to the development of university policies and/or increased conscious awareness of athletes, families and coaches regarding the challenges that Black Canadian male student-athletes encounter when transitioning out of competitive university athletics.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurances from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. It will not be shared with the athlete. Only the research team will have access to the audio recording and the transcript which will both be identified with a pseudonym. I understand that all the contents of this interview will be used for research analysis and publication. Furthermore, all information related to this interview will be kept in a secure password protected document to protect my confidentiality. **Anonymity** will be protected in the following manner: My name and all other identifiable information will be changed to protect my identity in transcriptions and any future publications of data collected from this interview.

- I choose _____ as a pseudonym to help protect my anonymity ____ (*initial*).

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Voluntary Participation: I understand that I will receive no compensation for taking part in this study. I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be removed from the study, unless permission to use it is granted.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Humphrey Nartey of the School of Human Kinetics, in the Faculty of Health

Sciences at the University of Ottawa, whose research is under the supervision of Professor Christine Dallaire.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep, and the other is for the researcher.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Consent Form – Coaches



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École des sciences de
l'activité physique

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health Sciences

School of Human Kinetics

Title of the study: The Transition Experiences of Black Canadian Male Student-Athletes Out Of Competitive University Sport

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Institute: University of Ottawa

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Department: School of Human Kinetics

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Institute: University of Ottawa

Faculty: Health Sciences

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This interview is scheduled for (_____)

It will be audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts may be returned to me to review for accuracy, and I can then make revisions and corrections if required.

I would like to receive a copy of the transcript via email: (*please initial here*) _____

Risks: There are no risks associated with this study. My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer my personal experiences as the coach of a Black Canadian male student-athlete. However some discomfort may be associated with the sharing of personal experiences. Therefore, I am encouraged to take my time when answering any sensitive questions and may choose not to answer a question or withdraw from the study completely without penalty.

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Benefits: For the participants – This study will provide an opportunity to reflect on transition experiences and the factors that enable or constrain these transitions. Specifically, from a Canadian perspective, this study will advance knowledge on a topic that has little to no research available.

Practical implications – This study may lead to the development of university policies and/or increased conscious awareness of athletes, coaches and families regarding the challenges that Black Canadian male student-athletes encounter when transitioning out of competitive university athletics. Being privy to this information can only help to aid in recruitment practices among coaches and team personnel.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurances from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. It will not be shared with the athlete. Only the research team will have access to the audio recording and the transcript which will both be identified with a pseudonym. I understand that all the contents of this interview will be used for research analysis and publication. Furthermore, all information related to this interview will be kept in a secure password protected document to protect my confidentiality. **Anonymity** will be protected in the following manner: My name and all other identifiable information will be changed to protect my identity in transcriptions and any future publications of data collected from this interview.

- I choose _____ as a pseudonym to help protect my anonymity ____ (*initial*).

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Tel.: (613) 562-5387

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There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep, and the other is for the researcher.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

If the interview brings up issues I wish to discuss with a professional, I am encouraged to contact the Career Development Centre or Career Services at my participating academic institution.

Appendix C: Student-Athlete Interview Guide

I would like to learn about your experiences as a student-athlete transitioning out of competitive university sport

Section A: Academic Experience

1. Did you attend high school in Canada?
 - 1a) For how many years (from which grades) did you attend high school in Canada?
 - 1b) Which program are you majoring in?
 - 1c) Which year of eligibility are you in?
 - 1d) Where did you grow up?
 - 1e) Did you move?
 - 1f) Do you have any siblings?
 - 1g) Are you or your family immigrants?
 - 1h) Which culture do you ascribe yourself to?
 - 1i) How old are you?
2. Can you tell me what motivated you to attend university?
 - 2a) Were you encouraged to attend university?
 - 2b) How were you encouraged to attend university?
 - 2c) By whom (parents, family members, high school teachers, friends, others)?
3. How did you ultimately make your decision to attend university?
 - 3a) Was the decision solely yours?
 - 3b) Did anyone influence your decision?
 - 3c) Could you have chosen to attend college instead?

4. How did you decide on which university to attend?
 - 4a) Was the decision solely yours?
 - 4b) Did anyone influence your decision?
 - 4c) How were you helped in making that decision?
5. Tell me about your university sport experience.
6. Which varsity sport do you play/ did you play in university?
 - 6a) How did you select your sport?
7. What motivated you to compete in varsity sports while in university?
 - 7a) Were you encouraged to participate in varsity sports in university?
 - 7b) By whom (parents, family members, high school coach, university coach, teammates, friends, others)?
8. What are your thoughts on the student-athlete experience?
 - 8a) What are some of the advantages of being a student-athlete?
 - 8b) What are some of the disadvantages of being a student-athlete?
 - 8c) Is it worth it then, to be a student-athlete?
9. How do you understand the label: Student-athlete?
 - 9a) What does “student-athlete” mean to you?
 - 9b) Do you think you identify with one role more than the other? If so, which one?
 - 9c) How do you identify with one role more than the other? Example
 - 9d) Why do you feel that you identify with one role more than the other?
10. What would you say is your status/reputation on campus?
 - 10a) Among teammates?

10b) Among other athletes?

10c) Among your non-athlete class-mates?

10d) Among the general student population?

10e) Are all your friends athletes?

i) Do you wish you had more friends that were non-athletes?

11. How did/do professors treat you?

12. How were/are you treated by school administration?

13. Do you enjoy the student-athlete lifestyle?

13a) Why or why not?

13b) If he doesn't - What could be done to make it more enjoyable?

14. How did you balance school and athletics?

14a) Did anyone help you with this balance?

14b) Who helped you balance academics and athletics?

14c) How did they help you balance academics and athletics?

14d) Did anyone deter you from athletics to focus on academics?

14e) Did anyone deter you from academics to focus on athletics?

14f) Were you encouraged to take a specific or particular program?

15. Were there any sacrifices made to attend this university?

15a) What were these sacrifices?

16. Did you make any sacrifices to be a student-athlete?

16a) What were these sacrifices?

Section B: Sport Experience

17. Why do you play sports? / What do you hope to get out of playing sports?
 - 17a) How has participating in sports helped you?
 - 17b) Who are you without your sport?
18. What role if any did scholarships play when choosing which university to attend?
 - 18a) How important was it for you to have a scholarship?
 - 18b) How important was it for you to have a scholarship on this team?
 - 18c) Did you consider acquiring a U.S. scholarship?
 - 18d) Why or why not?
19. Did you consider attending a school in the NCAA without a scholarship?
 - 19a) Why or why not?
 - 19b) Are there differences between the NCAA and CIS? What are they?
 - 19c) Do you like how the CIS handles it's athletes, or how the NCAA handles it's athletes?
20. Ultimately you chose to attend the CIS. How did you come to this decision?
 - 20a) What did you find favourable about the Canadian sport system?
 - 20b) What have been the benefits of staying in Canada?
 - 20c) What have been the challenges of staying in Canada?
21. How relevant is the sport that you play in Canada, particularly in a Canadian university?
22. Do you/Will you miss anything about the student-athlete lifestyle?
 - 22a) If yes - What do you miss/What will you miss about the student-athlete lifestyle?
23. What impact did/do your teammates have on your life?

23a) Where are your teammates now?

23b) Are you/were you able to socialize with athletes from other sports?

23c) Are you/were you able to socialize with non-athletes

24. What impact if any did athletics have on your academic experience?

24a) Did people think you were a dumb jock?

24b) Was less expected of you academically and intellectually because you were an athlete?

Section C: Transition Experience

25. Describe your experience transitioning out of university athletics (or how are you planning or thinking about the upcoming transition?)

25a) What, if anything, could others have done to make your transition easier?

25b) Is there anything you wish you could have done to make your transition easier?

25c) What are your thoughts on athletes being “babied” or “spoon-fed” resources in university, while non-athletes have to navigate through school on their own. Do you feel that as a result, non-athletes are better equipped for life after sport than athletes?

26. What did you do to prepare yourself to transition into university athletics?

27. What did/what are you doing to prepare yourself to transition out of university athletics?

28. How were you helped/how are you being helped when transitioning out of university sport?

28a) Who helped you?

28b) How did they/how are they helping you?

- 28c) Where did you seek/where are you seeking help?
- 28d) What advice did/what advice are they giving you?
- 29. What impact did/do your parents have on your transition?
- 30. What impact did/does your coach have on your transition?
- 31. What impact did/do others (family members, significant other, friends, profs...) have on your transition?
- 32. What were your goals/expectations of yourself when you began undergrad?
 - 32a) Did they unfold as you expected?
 - 32b) Yes – How?
 - 32c) No – Why not?
- 33. What aspirations do you have for yourself after undergrad?
 - 33a) Are you considering more school?
 - 33b) Are you considering entering the workforce?
 - 33c) Do you have any concerns regarding your transition out of sport?
 - 33d) If yes – what are these concerns?
- 34. What do you think participating in sport has helped you to achieve?
- 35. What impact has sport left on you?
- 36. What career aspirations do you have for yourself?
 - 36a) How do you define success for yourself?
- 37. Has participating in sports affected your marketability to employers?
 - 37a) How? In what ways?
 - 37b) Has it made you more marketable or less marketable?
 - 37c) How has it made you more/less marketable?

37d) Why do you think it has had this impact?

38. Has anyone helped you to become more marketable to employers?

38a) Who has helped you?

38b) How have they helped you?

39. What would being able to go pro mean to you?

40. Do you want to go pro?

40a) Why or why not?

41. Do you think you can go pro?

41a) Why or why not?

42. Have you thought about playing overseas?

43. Have you thought of playing in a semi-pro league?

44. What do you know now about the student-athlete lifestyle that you wish you knew when you were in first year?

44a) If you could do it again, would you still be a varsity athlete?

44b) Would you focus more on athletics or academics?

Section D: Race experience

45. Would you say that stereotypes have had an impact on your student-athlete experience?

45a) What kind of stereotypes?

45b) How/in what ways have stereotypes impacted your student-athlete experience?

45c) Why do you think stereotypes have impacted your student-athlete experience?

46. What, if anything do you attribute your life experiences to (ie. Blackness, immigrant, SES, etc.)?

46a) What would you say has been the biggest impact on your school experience (ie. Blackness, SES, immigrant, etc.)?

46b) How do you introduce yourself? Hi I'm.....and I'm a(n).....

47. Do you think your parents' influence on your life is due to their Blackness or another factor (ie. Socioeconomic status, immigrant, age)?

47a) Are your parents immigrants?

47b) If yes – Which country are they from?

47c) If no – what is your cultural background?

47d) Do you identify with that culture or heritage?

48. Do you feel being a Black Canadian student-athlete has impacted your experience or has played a role in your experience?

48a) In what ways has being Black impacted your experience in school?

48b) Do you feel that you want or need to prove people wrong?

49. Do you think being Black (Blackness) defines your academic and/or athletic experience?

49a) If so, how?

49b) What role does Blackness play in your life?

50. What impact, if any did/does race have on your academic experience?

50a) Were there any positive experiences? Elaborate

50b) Were there any negative experiences? Elaborate

51. Do you think you have been treated differently in your academic career because you are Black?

51a) By peers or profs?

52. What impact, if any did/does race have on your sporting experience?

52a) Were there any positive experiences? Elaborate

52b) Were there any negative experiences? Elaborate

53. Do you think you have been treated differently in your athletic career because you are Black?

53a) Do we expect more from the Black athletes than the White athletes?

54. How do you define race?

54a) What does race mean to you?

55. What impact did race have on your student-athlete experience?

56. Is Blackness different than race?

56a) How?

56b) Or why not?

57. How do you define Blackness?

57a) What does Blackness mean to you? – light skinned vs. dark skinned?

58. Studies have been done that show young Black males, particularly in the Toronto area are pushed towards sports due to their perceived athletic superiority. Did you feel as though you were pushed into sports?

58a) Were you pushed into a particular sport?

59. What impact, if any, did/does race have on your transition out of sport?

59a) Were there any positive experiences? Elaborate

59b) Were there any negative experiences? Elaborate

60. What impact, if any, did/does race have on your transition out of school?

60a) Were there any positive experiences? Elaborate

60b) Were there any negative experiences? Elaborate

61. Do you think race plays a part in your everyday life?

61a) Why?

61b) Does it help you or hurt you?

i) How?

62. Are there advantages to being a minority in sports?

62a) What are these advantages?

63. Are there disadvantages to being a minority in sports?

63a) What are these disadvantages?

64. Are there advantages to being a minority outside of sport?

64a) What are these advantages?

65. Are there disadvantages to being a minority outside of sport?

65a) What are these disadvantages?

66. Is being Black an important part of your identity?

66a) Do you feel more Canadian than Black, or more Black than Canadian?

i) Do you actually identify as 'Black Canadian' or rather as
(whatever culture identified above)?

ii) Or as Canadian without any qualifier?

iii) Or as Black with the Canadian qualifier?

67. We're talking as if Black culture is all the same and it is not. Which culture do you
attach yourself to? Canadian, African, Caribbean, etc.?

67a) More specifically, which country?

68. Research suggests that for some young Blacks they feel a part of a wider North American or American Black culture than they do a Canadian Black culture. How do you feel?

68a) Do you feel that you belong to Canada, or do you feel like an outsider?

69. Does the Canadian culture impact you?

69a) If so, how?

70. Does the Canadian culture impact the sport you play/played?

70a) If so, how?

71. Does the Black popular culture (or the culture they attach themselves to – as described above – African, Caribbean...) impact you?

71a) If so, how?

72. Does the Black popular culture (or the culture they attach themselves to – as described above – African, Caribbean...) impact the sport you play/played?

72a) If so, how?

73. You play/played _____. Why not volleyball or hockey? Is it because _____ is a sport that is valued by Black popular culture?

(If they answered “NO” to the stereotypes question, can re-ask the stereotypes question again to see if their response changes after going through the race section).

74. Are there any areas/topics that you would like to discuss?

75. Who should we interview that has been an influential member in your transition out of sport (parent, coach, family member, friend, significant other, prof...)?

Appendix D: Parent Interviews

Section A: Academic experience

1. Can you tell me what motivated your son to attend university?
 - 1a) Was he encouraged to attend university?
 - 1b) Who encouraged him?
 - 1c) How was he encouraged?
 - 1d) Did you encourage him?
 - i) How did you encourage him?
2. How did he ultimately make his decision on which university to attend?
 - 2a) Was the decision solely his?
 - 2b) Did you as the parent have any influence on his decision?
 - 2c) Did anyone else influence his decision?
 - 2d) Did he seek any help when deciding on which school to attend?
 - 2e) From whom did he seek help?
 - 2f) How was he helped when deciding on which school to attend?
3. Which varsity sport does your son participate in/ did your son participate?
 - 3a) How did he select his sport?
4. What motivated him to compete in varsity sports while in university?
 - 4a) Was he encouraged to participate in varsity sports in university?
 - 4b) By whom (parents, family members, high school coach, university coach, teammates, friends, others)?
5. What are your thoughts on the student-athlete experience?
 - 5a) What are some of the advantages of being a student-athlete?

- 5b) What are some of the disadvantages of being a student-athlete?
6. How do you understand the label: Student-athlete?
 - 6a) What does “student-athlete” mean to you?
 - 6b) Do you think your son identifies with one role more than the other? If so, which one?
 - 6c) How does he identify with one role more than the other?
 - i) Example?
 - 6d) Why do you feel that he identifies with one role more than the other?
7. Which role would you like him to identify with more?
 - 7a) Student or athlete?
 - i) Why?
8. As a student-athlete, how did/does your son balance academics and athletics?
 - 8a) Did anyone help him?
 - 8b) Who helped him balance his academics and athletics?
 - 8c) How did you provide academic and athletic balance to your son?
9. Did anyone deter him from athletics to focus on academics?
10. Did anyone deter him from academics to focus on athletics?
11. Were there any sacrifices that your son made to attend a particular university?
 - 11a) What were these sacrifices?
12. Were there any sacrifices that your son made to be a student-athlete?
 - 12a) What were these sacrifices?
13. Were there any sacrifices that you made to help your son in his pursuit of being a student-athlete?

13a) What were these sacrifices?

Section B: Sport experience

14. Why does your son play sports?

14a) How has participating in sports helped him?

14b) What do you hope he got/gets out of participating in varsity athletics?

15. What role if any did scholarships play when choosing which university to attend?

15a) How important was it for you, that your son had a scholarship?

15i) How important was it for your son to have a scholarship?

15b) How important was it for you, that your son had a scholarship on this team?

15i) How important was it for your son to have a scholarship?

15c) Was acquiring a U.S. scholarship an option?

i) Why or why not?

15d) Did your son ever consider attending a school in the NCAA without a scholarship?

i) Why or why not?

16. What differences did he (you) find between the Canadian sport system and the American sport system?

17. What did he (you) find favourable about the Canadian sport system?

18. What have been the benefits of him staying in Canada?

19. What have been the challenges of him staying in Canada?

20. How did the sport that he plays impact his decision to choose to attend a Canadian university?

Section C: Transition experience

21. Describe his experience transitioning out of university athletics (or how they are planning or thinking about the upcoming transition)
22. What did your son do to prepare himself to transition into university athletics?
23. What did your son do/what is your son doing to prepare himself to transition out of university athletics?
24. What did you do as the parent to prepare for his transition out of university athletics?
25. Did anyone else help him with his transition out of university sport?
 - 25) Who helped him?
 - 25b) How did they help him?
 - 25c) Where did/has he sought help?
 - 25d) Who gave him advice?
 - 25e) What kind of advice?
26. How would you describe your son's transition experience out of sport?
 - 26a) What, if anything, could have been done to make his transition easier?
 - 26b) Is there anything you wish you could have done to make his transition easier?
27. How do you feel about your son transitioning out of sport?
28. What were your goals/expectations of your son when he began undergrad?
 - 28a) Did they unfold as you expected?
 - 28b) Yes – How?
 - 28c) No – Why not?
29. What are your goals/aspirations for your son after undergrad?

- 29a) Do you have any concerns regarding his transition out of sport?
- 29b) If yes – what are these concerns?
- 30. What do you think participating in sport has helped your son to achieve?
- 31. What impact has participating in sport left on your son?
- 32. What career aspirations do you have for your son?
 - 32a) What influence have you had on his career aspirations?
 - 32b) How have you set up your son for career success?
 - 32c) What role or influence should parents in general have in the lives of their male student-athlete?
- 33. Has participating in sports affected your son’s marketability to employers?
 - 33a) How?
 - i) In what ways?
 - 33b) Has it made him more marketable or less marketable?
 - 33c) How has it made him more/less marketable?
 - 33d) Why do you think it has had this impact?
- 34. How have you helped him to be more marketable to employers?
- 35. What would your son entering the professional ranks mean to you?
- 36. Do you want him to go pro?
 - 36a) Why or why not?
- 37. Do you think he can go pro?
 - 37a) Why or why not?
- 38. Would you support him if he wanted to play sports overseas?

39. What do you know now about the student-athlete lifestyle that you wish you knew when he was in first year?

39a) If he could do it over, would you still want him to be a varsity athlete?

39b) Would you want him to focus more on athletics or academics?

Section D: Race experience

40. Would you say that stereotypes have had an impact on your son's student-athlete experience?

40a) What kind of stereotypes?

40b) How/in what ways have stereotypes impacted his student-athlete experience?

40c) Why do you think stereotypes have impacted his student-athlete experience?

41. Do you think your influence on your son's life is due to your Blackness or another factor (ie. Socioeconomic status, immigrant, age)?

41a) Are you an immigrant family?

41b) If yes – Which country are you from?

41c) If no – What is your cultural background?

41d) Which cultural or heritage have you raised your son to identify with?

42. In what ways has being Black impacted your son's experience in school?

43. What impact if any did / does race have on your son's academic experience?

43a) Were there any positive experiences?

i) Elaborate

43b) Were there any negative experiences?

i) Elaborate

44. What impact if any did / does race have on your son's athletic experience?

44a) Were there any positive experiences?

i) Elaborate

44b) Were there any negative experiences?

i) Elaborate

45. Do you think your son has been treated differently in his athletic career because he is Black?

45a) Do we expect more from the Black athletes than the White athletes?

46. Has race or Blackness played a role in your experience as the parent of a Black student-athlete?

46a) If so, how?

i) As the parent of a Black student

ii) As the parent of a Black athlete

47. Has race or Blackness played a role in your son's experience as a student- athlete?

47a) If so, how?

i) As a Black student

ii) As a Black athlete

48. Is Blackness different than race?

48a) If so - How?

48b) If not - why not?

49. How would you define race?

49a)What does it mean to you?

50. How would you define Blackness?

50a) What does it mean to you?

51. Is Blackness different than race?

51a) If so - How?

51b) If not - why not?

52. Are there advantages to being a minority in sports?

52a) What are these advantages?

53. Are there disadvantages to being a minority in sports?

53a) What are these disadvantages?

54. Are there advantages to being a minority outside of sport?

54a) What are these advantages?

55. Are there disadvantages to being a minority outside of sport?

55a) What are these disadvantages?

56. Do you think race plays a part in your son's everyday life?

56a) If so, how?

57. What impact, if any, did/does your son's race or Blackness have on his transition out of sport?

58. Does the Canadian culture impact your son?

58a) If so how?

59. Does the Canadian culture impact the sport that he plays/played?

59a) If so, how?

60. Does the Black popular culture impact your son?

60a) If so, how?

61. Does the Black popular culture impact the sport that he plays/played?

61a) If so, how?

62. Studies have been done that show young Black males, particularly in the Toronto area are pushed towards sports due to their perceived athletic superiority. Did you feel as though your son was pushed into sports (by coaches, teachers, peers, family)?

62a) Were they pushed into a particular sport?

63. What role or influence should parents in general have in the lives of their student-athlete children?

64. Research suggests that for some young Blacks they feel a part of a wider North American or American Black culture than they do a Canadian Black culture. What are your thoughts?

(If they answered “NO” to the stereotypes question, can re-ask the stereotypes question again to see if their response changes after going through the race section).

65. Are there any areas/topics that you would like to discuss?

Appendix E: Coach Interviews

Section A: Academic experience

1. Which sport do you coach?
 - 1a) How long have you been a coach at this university?
 - 1b) Have you coached anywhere else?
2. Can you tell me what motivates your player(s) to attend university?
 - 2a) Were they encouraged to attend university?
 - 2b) How were they motivated?
 - 2c) Who motivated them?
3. How do you recruit players?
 - 3a) What aspect of your recruiting is tailored to your player(s) academics?
 - 3b) What aspect of your recruiting is tailored to your player(s) athletics?
4. Did you need to appease anyone other than the athlete in the recruiting process?
 - 4a) If so, who else did you need to appease?
 - 4b) How did you accomplish this?
 - 4c) What aspect of your recruiting was tailored to the parent's academic interests?
 - 4d) What aspect of your recruiting was tailored to the parent's athletic interests?
5. Do you know if you as a coach had an influence on your player(s) decision to attend this university?
 - 5a) If yes – Describe your influence?
 - 5b) If no – How was he helped/influenced when deciding on which school to attend?
 - 5c) Are your player(s) able to socialize with other athletes?

6. What are your thoughts on the student-athlete experience?
 - 6a) What are some of the benefits?
 - 6b) What are some of the drawbacks?
7. How do you understand the label: Student-athlete?
 - 7a) What does “student-athlete” mean to you?
8. Which role do you think your player(s) identify with more? Student or athlete?
 - 8a) How do they identify with one role more than the other? Example
 - 7b) Why do you think they identify with one role more than the other?
9. Which role would you like your player(s) to identify with more? Student or athlete?
 - 9a) Why?
10. How did your player(s) balance academics and athletics?
 - 10a) Were/Are there any structures in place to help him/them achieve this balance
 - 10b) Did anyone help him?
11. How do you provide athletic and academic balance to your players?
12. How do you coach in an environment that focuses on school?

Section B: Sport experience

13. What do you hope your player(s) got/get out of their participation in varsity athletics?
 - 13a) How has participating in sports helped him/them?
14. What impact did scholarships have when selecting your player(s)?
15. How did your player(s) approach the issue of scholarships?
 - 15a) How important was it for them to have a scholarship?
 - 15b) How important was it for them to have a scholarship on this team?
 - 15c) Did any of them consider acquiring a U.S. scholarship?

15d) Did any of them consider attending a school in the NCAA without a scholarship?

16. How did/does the sport that your student-athlete(s) play(s) impact his/their decision to attend a Canadian university?

Section C: Transition experience

17. Describe the transition experience of your player(s) out of university athletics (or how they are planning or thinking about the upcoming transition)

18. What did your player(s) do to prepare himself/themselves to transition into university athletics?

19. What did/what are your player(s) doing to prepare himself/themselves to transition out of university athletics?

20. What did you do as the coach to prepare him/them for his/their transition out of university athletics?

21. What impact did you as the coach have on his transition?

22. Did anyone help him with his transition out of university sport?

22a) Who helped?

22b) How did they help?

22c) Where did he/they seek help?

22d) Who gave him/them advice?

22e) What kind of advice?

23. How would you describe your player(s) transition experience out of sport?

23a) What, if anything, could have been done to make his/their transition easier?

23b) Is there anything you wish you could have done to ease his/their transition?

24. How do you feel about your player(s) transitioning out of sport?
 - 24a) How do you feel/handle a player who wants to quit the sport/team?
25. What were your goals/expectations of your player(s) when he/they began undergrad?
 - 25a) Did they unfold as you expected?
 - 25b) Yes – How?
 - 25c) No – Why not?
26. What are your goals/aspirations for your player(s) after they leave your program?
 - 26a) How have you set up your player(s) for career success once they leave your program?
27. What do you think participating in sport has helped your player(s) achieve?
28. What impact has sport left on your player(s) lives?
29. Do you have career aspirations for your player(s)?
 - 29a) If so, what are they?
30. Has participating in sports affected your player(s) marketability to employers?
 - 30a) How? In what ways?
 - 30b) Has it made him/them more marketable or less marketable?
 - 30c) How has it made him more/less marketable?
 - 30d) Why do you think it has had this impact?
31. How have you helped your player(s) to become more marketable to employers?
32. What would your player(s) entering the professional ranks mean to you?
33. Do you want him/them to go pro?
 - 33a) Why or why not?
34. Do you think he/they can go pro?

34a) Why or why not?

35. How have your player(s) grown as a man/men from their first year to now?

36. How have you grown as a coach from when your player(s) were in first year to now?

37. What do you know now about the student-athlete lifestyle that you wish you knew when he/they was in first year?

38. Do you feel student-athletes are “spoon-fed/babied” to the point that it makes their transition out of university and athletics more difficult than the transition of non-athletes?

Section D: Race experience

39. Would you say that stereotypes have had an impact on your player(s) student-athlete experience?

39a) What kind of stereotypes?

39b) How/in what ways have stereotypes impacted his/their student-athlete experience?

39c) Why do you think stereotypes have impacted his/their student-athlete experience?

40. What impact, if any, did your player(s) race have on his/their sporting experience?

40a) Were there any positive experiences? Elaborate

40b) Were there any negative experiences? Elaborate

41. What impact, if any did your player(s) race (or Blackness) have on his/their transition out of sport?

41a) Were there any positive experiences? Elaborate

41b) Were there any negative experiences? Elaborate

42. How might race play a role in the student-athlete experience?

- 42a) How does his race impact his athletics?
- 42b) How does his race impact his academics?
- 43. Do you think your players are treated differently based on their race?
 - 43a) Do we expect more from the Black athletes than the White athletes?
- 44. Are there advantages to being a minority in sports?
 - 44a) What are these advantages?
- 45. Are there disadvantages to being a minority in sports?
 - 45a) What are these disadvantages?
- 46. Are there advantages to being a minority outside of sport?
 - 46a) What are these advantages?
- 47. Are there disadvantages to being a minority outside of sport?
 - 47a) What are these disadvantages?
- 48. Does the Canadian culture impact your student-athletes?
 - 48a) If so, how?
- 49. Does the Canadian culture impact the sport that they play/played?
 - 49a) If so, how?
- 50. Does the Black popular culture impact your student-athletes?
 - 50a) If so, how?
- 51. Does the Black popular culture impact the sport that they play/played?
 - 51a) If so, how?
- 52. What role or influence should coaches in general have in the lives of their student-athletes?
- 53. Are there any areas/topics that you would like to discuss?