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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

21st Century College to Career Transition:

A Case Study Exploration of a Former United States Intercollegiate Division I Student-Athlete

Who Participated in a Revenue Generating Sport

by

Kadar Lewis

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

2016

21st Century College to Career Transition:

A Case Study Exploration of a Former United States Intercollegiate Division I Student-Athlete

Who Participated in a Revenue Generating Sport

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This dissertation written by Kadar Lewis, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

April 4, 2016
Date

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This study examined the career development experiences of one African American man, a former student-athlete in a Division I revenue generating football team. This study focused on his experiences as a student-athlete who participated in football as he transitioned out of elite athletics. Division I collegiate athletics represents a highly sought opportunity (NCAA, 2015h). However, this opportunity may reduce college completion and disrupt maximal career development (Hartman, 2014; Van Rheenen, 2013). This qualitative case study of one participant explored the nuanced influences and pathways the participant used to enter his current career after completing college. Mark Savickas's (2002) Career Construction Theory (CCT), a constructivist non–*a priori* narrative theory, served as the theoretical framework. Qualitative interview data were collected during a progressive series of three separate in-depth, face-to-face interviews. Data were first analyzed using an inductive, open-coding process. Four patterns emerged from the data relative to the participant's career development experiences:

ambivalence, performance prioritization/competitive spirit, practical mind-set/good judgment, and value of selected communities, which helped him decide on the ideal career environments.

Findings were then analyzed via the Savickas CCT tenets of successful career construction that include life themes, self-concepts, and life design. Findings include (a) the participant executed a largely linear pathway developing his career since retirement from elite athletics, (b) the participant experienced minimal challenges to reaching his current level, and (c) that participation in collegiate football provided valuable career development experiences. Additionally, the findings demonstrated a positive career development based on the participant's alignment of CCT tenets life themes, self-concepts, and life design.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory section to my dissertation, I provide an overview of the topic and its salience regarding education and social justice. Specifically, I situate the research within the context of college access, collegiate athletics participation, and career development theories. These topics are interrelated and connect to issues of equity of college access for underrepresented minority students as well as socioeconomic indicators demonstrating the importance of college access for future economic and career success. Underrepresented students commonly used sports participation to access college, which may serve to provide college entry but also may entail unique barriers to achieving college completion and career development afterward. I explore how a former collegiate student-athlete constructed his career after completing his college degree, including the impact his college access pathways and sports background may have had on his career.

College represents an important milestone in the life of a student (Jones, 2014). The college experience provides an opportunity to learn, grow, and improve oneself for the future. Currently, completing a bachelor's degree provides an opportunity for achieving a stable career with moderate to high lifetime earnings, or advancing to further graduate school studies (Carnevale & Cheah, 2015). Increasingly, the global economy requires completion of postsecondary education in preparation for careers influenced by continually emerging information technologies. In the United States, acquiring a middle-skill or high-skill, non-manual labor job increasingly requires a bachelor's degree (Carnevale & Cheah, 2015).

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As attending college becomes an increasingly important need and expectation, college access and college completion represent often elusive but necessary goals to improve one's future earning power and social status within the United States and throughout the world (McKillip, Rawls, & Berry, 2012). Data on college access and completion demonstrate an uneven rate of student achievement based upon gender and ethnic/racial background (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). These statistics reveal a gap in postsecondary degree attainment such that Hispanic and African American students trail their Asian and White peers, and women generally attain bachelors' degrees more often than do men (Harper, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Another trend revealed by the literature demonstrates a college access gap based on socioeconomic status. The top resourced, more selective colleges and universities educate a larger portion of higher socioeconomic status students compared to lower resourced, less selective colleges and universities (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). College access intervention programs for low-income, first-generation, and minority students remain an important way for working toward equitable results. Challenges remain to fulfilling the goal of equal access and successful degree attainment across racial, gender, and socioeconomic statuses (Horng, Evans, Foster, Kalamkarian, Hurd, & Bettinger 2013).

Role of College Athletics in College Access

College athletics represents a vehicle used by underrepresented students to access postsecondary education. Harper, Williams, and Blackman (2013) noted a great overrepresentation of African American men on revenue generating sports teams at 76 flagship universities making up the most prominent six Division I collegiate athletic conferences. These 76 universities include institutions throughout the United States with high concentrations in the

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Northeast, Atlantic Coast, Southern, Midwest and West Coast regions, such as Syracuse, North Carolina, Florida State, Kansas, and Stanford. Revenue-generating collegiate sports include football and men's basketball; these generate nearly $1 billion annually from media contracts, corporate sponsorships, game ticket sales, and merchandising (Osborne, 2014; Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015). Between 2007 and 2010, on average across these 76 institutions of higher learning, African American men made up slightly less than 3% of the student body but approximately 57% of varsity football and 64% of varsity basketball teams. In addition, Harper et al. (2013) have cited a lower college graduation rate for African American male athletes compared to African American nonathletes, all student-athletes, and all undergraduates.

NCAA Division Structure

Annually, college athletic departments facilitate intercollegiate competitions for approximately 460,000 amateur athletes (Van Rheehan, 2013). Three major divisions of competition exist within the United States' intercollegiate athletics landscape: Division I, Division II, and Division III (NCAA, 2015g). Additionally, college athletes compete for spots in community colleges throughout the country, with more than 490 participating schools in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCA, 2015).

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) divisions represent a hierarchy of different levels of competition whereby top athletes and top revenue generating sports are concentrated within one top division, and less committed or talented student-athletes are concentrated within the lower two divisions (NCAA, 2015g). Within the college athletics hierarchy, Division I represents the most intense and time-consuming (for athletes) and lucrative (for universities) level of athletic competition, with approximately 170,000 athletes participating

in sports each academic year (NCAA, 2015a; Osborne, 2014; Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015; *USA Today*, 2014). Within Division I, another hierarchy exists between the revenue generating sports—football and men's basketball—and all remaining non-revenue generating sports. Annually, the NCAA takes in nearly $800 million in revenue, which it disperses back to its member universities (Osborne, 2014; Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015). Over 90% of this revenue is generated by football and men's basketball via sponsorship and broadcast contracts. In essence, the revenue generating sports subsidize costs of the non-revenue generating sports for most major Division I athletic departments.

Risks exist for African American male student-athletes using athletics to access a college education. These risks include the burden of the time and physical energy needed to both train and compete in athletics, while one is attempting to develop oneself academically, socially, and career-wise (Adler & Adler, 1991; Harper et al., 2013; Leonard, 1986; Van Rheenen, 2013). Concerns exist within society at large and among athletes, college coaches, administrators, faculty, and researchers, regarding the potential exploitation of collegiate athletes, specifically in the revenue generating sports (Adler & Adler, 1991; Leonard, 1986; Van Rheehan, 2011; Van Rheehan, 2013). Some concerns include underprepared student-athletes entering universities in which they are not ready to succeed academically, and student-athletes being funneled into career limiting, ill-fitting, or meaningless degree programs via a practice Adler and Adler (1991) researched, titled "academic clustering." Other concerns include student-athletes leaving their university prior to degree completion, losing their athletic scholarship via the coach's decision, academic ineligibility, or exhausting their athletic eligibility prior to degree completion (Adler & Adler, 1991; Hartman, 2014; Leonard, 1986; Van Rheehan, 2011, 2013). The NCAA wields the

power to sanction member institutions' teams whose student-athletes do not make adequate progress toward their degrees within specified timeframes; however, the above mentioned unequal college completion rates continue. The prominence of American college athletics warrants further study to discern more about how these issues impact the lives of student-athletes. This study explores the case of an African American former athlete who participated in a revenue generating sport, and examines his career transition after completing his college athletics career and graduating from college.

Background

Personal Interest

Both my personal and professional experiences influenced my desire to work as an educator to assist potentially marginalized youth in their quests for educational excellence. My experiences—both as an African American student attending college preparatory schools and elite universities, together with my professional experiences as an educator working with diverse students including African American males—have helped me understand the unique challenges African American males face in order to successfully complete bachelor's degrees. Additionally, my one-year career experience as a collegiate student-athlete also influenced my interest in this subject matter. I've studied as a student-athlete, as well as counseled both collegiate students and student-athletes regarding their academic, social, and career development.

Statement of the Problem

Participating at the highest levels of athletic competition as a Division I collegiate athlete represents a highly regarded opportunity (NCAA, 2015h). However, this opportunity as presented to athletes participating in the revenue generating sports of football and men's

basketball may belie increased risks for failed college completion, and impede the athletes'

maximal career development (Hartman, 2014; Van Rheehan, 2013). Savickas's (2002) Career

Construction Theory posits that both internal and external factors influence career development

for young adults. The emerging adulthood period of 18–25 years of age, which coincides with

the core years of collegiate athletic participation, generally provides the time to experiment with

varying identities in order to eventually arrive at a more informed ideal personal and career track

(Arnett, 2000). However, the time commitment required to participate in Division I revenue-

generating collegiate athletics may negatively impact the career development of student-athletes,

leading to stymied or incomplete career development. This study explored the college to career

development experiences of a former Division I varsity football player by adding an in-depth

case study of one to provide an alternate perspective to the current body of quantitative research,

and adding to the existing body of qualitative research exploring postathletic career development

transitions (Kornspan, 2014; Park, Tod, & Lavallee, 2012).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Nathaniel Williams

(pseudonym), a former NCAA Division I student-athlete who participated in a revenue

generating sport as he transitioned into his postcollege, postathletic career. Specifically, this

study used qualitative research to explore these lived experiences, providing a different

perspective than the existing body of quantitative research, and adding to the existing body of

qualitative research to answer the following questions:

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1. What are the experiences of a former National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football player who transitions from college to a postathletic career?

   a. What challenges, if any, does he face as he transitions into a career upon completing college as a student-athlete?

   b. What impact, if any, does participation in Division I College Football have on his career development?

Purpose of the Study

This study used qualitative case study methodology to explore the college to career transition experiences of an African American male, a former Division I collegiate student-athlete, who participated in the revenue generating sport of football. This study adds to the literature using Career Construction Theory to examine the postathletic career development of a former collegiate student-athlete (Savickas, 2002). In addition, this study responds to the call for additional qualitative research in the form of phenomenological narrative case studies on the topic of college to career transitions for elite athletes (Kornspan, 2014; Park, 2012).

This study used qualitative research methods to highlight the lived experiences of the college to career transition for an elite athlete who may be challenged by numerous risk factors such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family background. Research has demonstrated that college graduation rates may decrease when one of the following risk factors are present: male gender, African American ethnicity (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015), first-generation college status (Tate, Caperton, Kaiser, Pruitt, White, & Hall, 2015), low-income socioeconomic status (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013), and foster care family background (Bastche, Hart, Ort, Armstrong, Strozier, & Hummer, 2012). This study illuminates the unique

voice of an underrepresented African American male who competed within elite athletics for the

Division I revenue generating sport of football.

Context

Participation Within United States Intercollegiate Athletics

United States collegiate athletics holds a significant role in American culture. Additionally, college athletics helps shape the cultural experience on college campuses for non-athletes and athletes alike. In 1906, U.S. university presidents formed the intercollegiate athletics governing body, which would subsequently become the National Collegiate Athletic Association (ASHE, 2015), in order to protect athletes from exploitative practices occurring at that time. The NCAA reports its core values such as respect, caring, fairness, civility, honesty, integrity, and responsibility are equally important on and off the field (NCAA, 2015c). The NCAA governs three athletics divisions named Division III, Division II, and Division I (NCAA, 2015g). These three divisions organize competitions between similar schools in order to match the level of play, creating relatively even playing fields. These three divisions prioritize athletics to different degrees and thus attract different caliber athletes between them. For example, Division I schools offer athletic scholarships, which include free tuition and other benefits to students, while Division III schools do not. Division I schools tend to attract the higher level of athletics relative to Division II or III schools.

The NCAA oversees competitions for all four-year colleges and universities. The National Junior College Athletics Association oversees competitions among all two-year colleges. Within NCAA-governed colleges and universities, approximately 40 total sports are offered for competition for both male and female athletes in both individual (e.g., tennis) and

team activities (e.g., soccer). Currently, NCAA collegiate athletics annually involves more than

450,000 athletes combined in the Division I, II, and II levels (Van Rheehan, 2013).

NCAA Division I athletics maintain the highest level of competition relative to the other

NCAA Division (II and III) institutions. Division I athletes commit the most time and energy to

compete in their sports and receive the most material benefits, (e.g., athletic scholarships, expert

coaching, complimentary clothing, and academic and moral support from the university

community), relative to the other divisions (NCAA, 2015a; Osborne, 2014; Sanderson &

Siegfried, 2015; *USA Today*, 2014). Divisions I and II offer approximately $1.5 billion in

athletic scholarships each year. Within NCAA Division I athletics, approximately 350 colleges

and universities, fielding 6,000 teams, representing 170,000 student-athletes are represented.

Van Rheehan (2013) asserted:

> It is important to acknowledge that of the approximately 460,000 American college
> athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics any given year, there are only an
> estimated 30,000 Division I College football and [men's] basketball players (NCAA,
> 2008). And, according to the NCAA (2011), only 30% of Division I football and 26% of
> Division I men's basketball programs post revenues over expenses. (p. 566)

Within NCAA Division I competitions, a separation exists between revenue generating and

nonrevenue generating sports. Football and men's basketball generate revenues, while most

remaining sports generate financial losses for their respective athletic departments. NCAA

Division I football and men's basketball generate hundreds of millions of dollars annually,

primarily via game attendance and media rights to televise the competitions (Osborne, 2014;

Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015).

The widespread media coverage, largely defined by televised games, of Division I

collegiate football and men's basketball results in the tremendous revenue generated each year.

As a byproduct, recruiting the most talented athletes creates an intense competition among coaching staffs. Parallely, Division I athletic departments compete vigorously for top athletic directors and head coaches. Head football and men's basketball coaches earn lucrative six or seven-figure annual salaries, and they receive generous bonuses for successful championship seasons (Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015).

The athletic scholarship provides material benefits to Division I collegiate athletes (NCAA, 2015k). In addition, athletic recruitment provides increased college access for highly recruited athletes (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013). Athletic recruitment allows coaches to identify strong candidates to add to their teams. These athletes must meet minimum academic standards to gain admittance to the university (NCAA, 2015e). However, these standards are typically lower than what the majority of students meet in order to gain admittance.

Each Division I football team may allocate 85 athletic scholarships each year to its student-athletes. Athletic scholarships may be full or partial. Athletic scholarships may be one year in duration, or may be offered in multiyear increments. Not all athletes receive full scholarships. Divisions I and II schools offer athletic scholarships, annually up to $2.7 billion in aggregate (NCAA, 2015k). NCAA Division I member schools provide more than $1.5 billion in athletic scholarships annually. One-year athletic scholarships are renewable largely, or solely, at the discretion of the coach. Approximately 2% of high school athletes achieve athletic scholarship to compete within intercollegiate athletics, making their receipt a significant and elite accomplishment (NCAA, 2015k).

University Support Offered to Athletes

As cited by Hartman (2014), Wieberg (2012) noted that in 2011 the NCAA began allowing colleges to offer multiyear scholarships. This represented a change from one-year scholarships to multiyear scholarships nearly 40 years in the making (Gibson, 2012). In a 2013 survey analysis, a sample of colleges competing at the highest level of Division I athletics showed that less than 10% of all athletic aid was offered as multiyear scholarships (Wolverton & Newman, 2013). The multiyear commitment was intended to balance power between coaches and student-athletes; however, coaches are adopting the trend slowly. Some athletic directors push back against this idea, considering it too great a commitment to make for a young student-athlete (Wolverton & Newman, 2013). As cited by Hartman (2014), a National College Players Association (2009) survey analysis recorded a 22% turnover rate for scholarships granted within top Division I men's basketball programs.

Additionally, as my research participant asserted during our interviews, universities provide significant support to student-athletes participating in football. The 2007–2008 State University (pseudonym) student-athlete handbook from one of the years he attended, retrieved online, described support services available to him across multiple categories. Support services included multiple resources across categories including general student support, academic support, and health-related support. Within general student support, State University offered the participant life skills, career development, academic recognition, and fellowship opportunities, among others. To support college completion, State University offered academic support including a dedicated academic support center, technology equipment such as laptop computers

and calculators, tutors and academic mentors, textbook procurement, mandatory tutor-supported study halls (in season), and priority course enrollments, among other things.

Significance of the Study

Gaining a deeper understating of the college to career transition experiences of a former NCAA Division I student-athlete who participated in a revenue generating sport may benefit athletes, university staff, and the general public interested in college sports and equitable college access. First-person, detailed qualitative accounts exploring how college to career transitions actually take place are lacking in the current body of literature chronicling transitions for elite college athletes to nonathletic careers after college (Kornspan, 2014; Park, 2012).

The significance of the study provides an alternate perspective to the quantitative body of research regarding collegiate career maturity. This alternate perspective includes the participant's detailed, first-person narrative account of how participating in college football has impacted his career development after completing elite athletics participation. The research results should better inform student-athletes on how they can prepare themselves for their career transition out of elite athletics. Also, this research provides an additional perspective for university coaches and administrators to help better support their student-athletes' career development after college completion.

This study holds great importance at the present time given the increasingly significant role sports in general, and specifically collegiate sports, play in United States popular culture. Athletic competitions involve, to some degree, the majority of Americans, each year (Hanna, 2012). Upward of 160 million Americans connect to sports each year via personal participation, direct relationship to competitors, coaches, fans, or through employment and volunteer service.

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It is important to note the contrast between youth sports and collegiate athletics as the emphasis and benefits evolve. Nathaniel's case illustrates how he began youth participation in football for personal enjoyment and self-esteem, and how he then participated collegiately for enjoyment, college access, and career development benefits.

Research (Hanna, 2012) demonstrated that youth participate in sports for physical, emotional, psychological, and social benefits. Specifically, those connected to sports cite the following benefits:

- Fun
- Competitive glory
- Social/emotional/psychological relationships between fellow athletes and coaches
- Self-fulfillment; self-actualization

Additionally, the attraction to sports begins in youth for many documented beneficial developmental reasons such as academic achievement, self-esteem, social adjustment, and psychosocial development. More so, research (Hanna, 2012) has highlighted potential benefits to sports participation such as:

- Goal setting
- Time management
- Sense of morality
- Appreciation for diversity

Longitudinal studies (Linver et al., 2009), cited by Hanna (2012), have demonstrated that youth athletes also exhibit less risk-taking behavior, greater connections with school, stronger peer relationships, greater family attachment and more frequent interactions with parents, and greater involvement in volunteering.

Importantly, sports create meaningful contact between youth and adults, critically important when youth emerge from homes without positive adult role models. Sports provide an opportunity for children to safely navigate and negotiate between right and wrong as they learn to interact with peers and adults. Hanna (2012) also cited research by Taliaferro et al. (2008), which suggested sport might lower suicide risk among male and female participants, with multisport athletes exhibiting lower risks. Benefits also include enhanced mood and lower bouts of depression, greater psychological resilience, and development of social capital (Hanna, 2012). Sport participation also provides community benefits both for participants and nonparticipants in making good use of idle time, and rallying the community around teams/players to support.

Conversely, the transition from youth sports, which ends at the high school level, to collegiate athletics represents an important distinction for athletes. Many athletes discontinue competitive club/interscholastic competition after high school; typically less than 5% of high school athletes continue their sport at the college level. According to Hanna (2012), reasons cited by youth on discontinuing sport past adolescence into high school and beyond include:

- No longer found it fun/enjoyable
- Discovered new interest(s)
- Lacked necessary talent
- Increased academic focus
- Desired more leisure time
- Found it too expensive
- Parents forced retirement/or no longer forced or supported participation
- Found it too competitive/too focused on winning
- Developed body shame/shyness
- Friends retired from participation

At a time when the popularity of collegiate revenue generating sports and their respective domestic professional leagues are increasing, this research aims to highlight the voice of the

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majority population of collegiate student-athletes who may be marginalized in the process. Multiple research studies have revealed mixed feedback regarding athletes' perceptions of being exploited while participating in revenue generating sports (Adler & Adler, 1991; Leonard, 1986; Van Rheehan, 2011, 2013). A review of mostly quantitative literature cited by Kornspan (2014) revealed mixed results regarding how participating in Division I athletics impacted athletes' career maturity. Some studies indicated little or no differences in career maturity, while other research indicated significant negative differences between athlete and nonathlete career maturity. Additionally, some research indicated no difference in career maturity between athletes who participated in revenue generating sports versus those who participated in nonrevenue generating sports. Thus, I conducted this in-depth qualitative case study of one participant to uncover the nuanced experiences of a former Division I collegiate student-athlete in order to provide a detailed first-person account juxtaposed against the current body of literature.

Multiple parties involved in collegiate athletics and higher education may benefit from understanding this phenomenon at a deeper level. First, athletes who are considering playing or are recruited to play Division I collegiate athletics in a revenue generating sport will benefit from hearing authentic college and postcollege experiences via a retrospective, peer account of a former Division I athlete. They might be able to make better decisions regarding the recruiting process such as which coaches to trust, which schools to attend, and ultimately how to best structure their collegiate academic, social, and career development experiences to yield the greatest benefit to themselves both athletically, and in planning for their future, nonathletic career.

In addition, college staff working directly or indirectly with student-athletes may benefit from this research by gaining additional insights into the lived experiences of the student-athletes they are responsible for supporting. Coaches might gain another perspective and, it is hoped, adjust any negative coaching behaviors they may exhibit, such as limiting the academic and nonsport developmental opportunities of their players. University administrators and faculty and academic support staff will ideally react with increased vigilance to minimize marginalization of student-athletes. Additionally, administrators and the like may become more aware of any failed oversight and accountability of their athletic coaching staff. Last, the general fan base of college revenue generating sports may become more aware of risks associated with the student-athletes they enjoy watching. Perhaps fans may be motivated to hold the entire National Collegiate Athletic Association, and its affiliated schools, to higher levels of scrutiny and accountability in order to ensure no undue exploitation of student-athletes occurs in the exercise of the annual football and men's basketball competitions.

Implications for Social Justice

This research holds great implications for social justice based on the potential loss of career development opportunities due to collegiate student-athletic participation. Specifically, this dissertation explores social justice considerations related to potential financial and educational exploitation of an underrepresented minority student-athlete who may have used athletics participation to access his bachelor's degree. As cited by Van Rheehan (2013), Harris (2000) reported that some elite African American collegiate student-athletes raised concerns that "schools value their athletic competency but not their academic potential" (p. 561). Rhoden

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(2010) highlighted that exploitation may occur because revenue generating collegiate student-athletes have little power to influence or control their sporting environments.

As a reward for their contributions to the team, elite collegiate student-athletes typically are awarded an athletic scholarship, which pays the costs of their educational expenses (NCAA, 2015k). These athletic scholarships are typically renewed on an annual basis, with the head coach making the final decisions regarding which athletes receive full and partial scholarships each year (Hartman, 2014; NCAA, 2015k). In addition, due to the enormous revenues generated by football and men's basketball programs, numerous calls have been made for revenue generating athletes to be compensated at levels higher than what some regard as a subsistence wage—their academic tuition and cost of living expenses (Beamon, 2008; Leonard, 1986; Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015; Van Rheehan, 2013).

With disproportionate overrepresentation of African American males within Division I football and basketball teams (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013), and graduation at lower rates than the general student body (U.S. Department of Education, 2015), other student-athletes, and non-athlete African Americans (Harper et al., 2015), these student-athletes could be getting short-changed very necessary career development experiences (Hartman, 2014; Lally, 2007; Van Rheehan, 2013). This research addresses a literature gap by illuminating more detail regarding lived experiences of a former student-athlete who completed college and is currently developing and building his non-athletic career. I explore whether my participant risked losing his chance to prepare for a career aside from professional sports by participating in Division I level football.

Theoretical Framework

Career Construction Theory

Savickas (2002) posited Career Construction Theory (CCT) as a 21st-century career development framework to examine and support overall individual life design. He built upon static 20th-century frameworks he considered outdated to address the contextual realities he observed facing 21st-century workers by asserting CCT as a nonlinear, nonpositivist, and non–a priori career development framework. CCT asserts individuals construct their careers based on aligning life themes (environment) and self-concepts into an ideal life design. Individuals construct their careers based on the meaning ascribed to this alignment, rather than on a predetermined career role or position.

Savickas's Career Construction Theory suggests the idea of life design as a paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. Savickas et al. (2009) identified key career planning attitudes including optimism, adaptability, and knowledge. Savickas, through qualitative research, developed his Career Construction Theory, centered on individuals using narrative to make meaning of career choices and career paths. Savickas (2001) observed how career storytelling allowed individuals to selectively highlight different experiences to produce a narrative by which one lives, for example, a life design process via narrative. I uncovered the life design narrative of my research participant, and learned the role his collegiate athletic experiences played in his ability to achieve his career ideal plans. Following Savickas's model, I gave special attention to the participant's narratives, points of emphases, departures, and omissions, for clues to his ideal professional path and meaningful life themes.

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I used Career Construction Theory to examine the college to career transition experiences of a former Division I collegiate student-athlete who participated in a revenue generating sport. Using the Savickas framework, I specifically examined the impact that participating in this sport had on the research participant's career transition.

Method

The methodology for this research included a narrative phenomenological case study of one individual former student-athlete. I began with a review of the literature related to my research question. This review provided reference points for literature regarding career development theory, collegiate athletics participation, college access and completion, and transitions between college and career (Yin, 2009). I used qualitative research methods, specifically a series of face-to-face, semistructured, progressively in-depth interviews to gather information toward building a case study of one to explore answers to my research question. The qualitative methodology illuminated the experiences of a purposively selected participant. I intentionally selected the specific research participant for this case study of one. I chose to study this participant because of his mostly atypical characteristics as an African American male former Division I collegiate revenue generating student-athlete football player, who completed a bachelor's degree more than five years prior to my study. The participant currently continues to develop a non-athletic career, which served as the focus of the study.

Additionally, I secured this specific participant because of the academic and athletic success he achieved while he played college football his entire undergraduate tenure. He achieved academic success, such as making the honor roll, alongside great football success of significant playing time all four years, election as team captain, and also recognition as a top

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player in his local conference. Case study methodology proved appropriate for this investigation

to capture nuances of the participant's experience that provided deep insights and new

perspectives to relevant college access and career development topics for elite athletes. The case

study method aided in collecting a rich history of the participant (Yin, 2009). The literature

review provided reference points to measure against the responses of the case study. Through

case study data collection examined against the literature on career development, collegiate

athletics, and college access, I analyzed the ostensibly unique pathway of a collegiate student-

athlete's college to career transition.

Qualitative Data

I used interview data to access information regarding my research participant's college to

career transition experiences. I collected data via three progressive, face-to-face, in-depth

interviews conducted on consecutive weekends during November 2015. I conducted

semistructured interviews to gather the participant's recollections of his precollege, collegiate,

and postcollege career experiences up until the present. I analyzed the qualitative interview data

first using an inductive open coding approach according to Lally (2007) and Russell (1993),

noting four key patterns of ambivalence, performance prioritization/competitive spirit, practical

mind-set/good judgment, and value of selected communities that emerged regarding the

participant's career development experiences. Lally (2007) suggested using emergent codes to

inform future interviews with athletes regarding their career development transitions out of elite

sports. Russell (1993) suggested open coding to develop patterns from qualitative interview

data. Regarding successful career development, I then analyzed the emergent patterns relative to

the three CCT framework tenets of life themes, self-concepts, and life design (Savickas, 2002).

Limitations and Delimitations

Personal Bias

Regarding my positionality within this research, I approached the study as both a researcher and an individual with an athletics background. I am an African American male who used sports participation to access college. I participated as a football player in a manner similar to that of my research participant. Additionally, as a current college sports fan, I approached this project without negative bias against the controversial revenue generating aspects of the intercollegiate sports system. I engaged in this study as an objective researcher seeking new insights, while acknowledging my potential complicities in a system that may need reform for the betterment of individuals like my participant. I used my similar cultural background, alongside past experiences as a student-athlete and my experiences as an educator, to build additional rapport with the participant, which helped elicit his sincere responses. I used the semistructured interview questions, generated from literature review themes, to both address the research questions and avoid potential personal bias.

I limited this case study to one participant who competed in football while attending a large, public California university. I delimited my research to focus on the student-athlete experience. Additional delimitations included securing an African American male former student-athlete participant from a revenue generating sport, who achieved atypical levels of success athletically and academically. Additionally, the research period for collecting qualitative data from the participant occurred over a relatively short period of time; on three consecutive weekends.

Definition of Terms

Academic Clustering: Case, Greer, and Brown (1987) have defined academic clustering as a practice by which institutions and athletic department academic support units funnel student-athletes to specific majors for the purposes of maintaining eligibility.

Role Engulfment, Athletic: Adler and Adler (1991) have defined role engulfment as a concentration of identity into one master role (athlete) to the sacrifice of other previously more salient roles (academic, social).

Soft Skills: The Collins English Dictionary, as cited by Robles (2012), has defined soft skills as desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge. They include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive, flexible attitude.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I introduce the importance of this research regarding the long-term impact of career development upon an important subset of college students: revenue-generating athletes. I discuss factors surrounding the connection of college access and collegiate athletics participation for underrepresented students. In turn, I introduce concepts regarding career development theories that may apply most aptly to modern, 21st-century professionals currently emerging within their careers. The first chapter introduces and outlines the intersection of college access, participation within revenue-generating collegiate athletics, and postcollege career development, in the context of exploring the research question regarding examining the career transition of a former collegiate student-athlete. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature related to these subjects. Chapter 3 offers details on the research methodology,

including the participant and the qualitative methods used to investigate the research question.

Chapter 4 presents the data collected to answer the research question. Chapter 5 discusses the

research results and suggests areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I provide detailed reviews of the literature related to the topic of career development regarding an underrepresented minority student who completed college while participating in a revenue-generating sport, football. The chapter begins with an overview of 20th-century career development theories that led to the formation of Savickas's modern 21st century Career Construction Theory. Chapter 2 concludes with an in-depth analysis and exploration of Savickas's Career Construction Theory and its salience regarding collegiate student-athletes. In between the historical account of 20th-century career development theories and the theoretical framework, I report on relevant subjects and themes found in the literature regarding this research topic. These relevant subjects and themes include specific career development models for elite athletes, dual career development for elite athletes preparing for alternate careers during their playing days, transferable career skills sought by employers, challenges associated with collegiate student-athletics participation including injury, academic clustering, identifying foreclosure and exploitation, college to career transitions, emerging adulthood, and current trends within college access and success.

Theoretical Framework

This study used the Savickas Career Construction Theory (2002, 2005; Savickas & Solberg, 2009; Savickas et al., 2009) to examine the college to career transition of the research participant, a former Division I collegiate student-athlete who played football, a revenue generating sport. Savickas formed Career Construction Theory as a 21th-century extension of prior career development frameworks based on important previous works he cited, including

Super's (1957) stages of career development and Holland's (1963) career identity typology. Through this research, I applied Savickas's Career Construction Theory to examine the career transition experiences of the research participant. Career Construction Theory purports that individuals develop careers based on selected life themes (2002, 2005; Savickas et al., 2009). Savickas claimed career roles are selected by individuals based on their congruence with the life theme held by said individual.

Savickas's (2002) early formulation of the Career Construction Theory proposed a theory based on self, versus societal concepts. His work conceived of individuals forming careers based on life themes. Individuals generated these life themes based on their concept of self, combined with their environmental influences such as family, schooling, and society at large. Savickas formed dichotomies in poetically outlining the process of individual career formation moving from "preoccupation to occupation … essence to interest … tension to intention," and "obsession to profession" (Savickas & Solberg, 2009). According to Savickas (2002), individual life themes center on significance, or the essence of what matters to the individual, which is influenced both intrinsically and extrinsically.

As Savickas's (2002, 2005; Savickas et al., 2009) research evolved, he added more detail and nuance toward his Career Construction Theory to build out this framework. Savickas (2005) expounded on his previous work by defining career construction as the process whereby individuals impose meaning and direction on their vocational behavior. Continuing to build upon Super's (1957) theories, Savickas aimed to advance a more dynamic model for 21st-century career formation. The main difference between Savickas's work and that of seminal authors such as Super, Holland, and the like remains the conception of career in stable versus

dynamic frameworks. Whereby Super posited fixed stages of linear career development, and Holland posited fixed personality characteristics, Savickas acknowledged a combination of internal dynamic and environmental adaptability mechanisms of career pathways and career self-conceptions for successful vocational development in the 21st century. According to Savickas (2005), we invite emerging adults to contribute to society via extending their personality using work roles.

Savickas asserted (2002, 2005; Savickas et al., 2009) that individuals evolved over the course of their careers by adjusting to their ever-shifting environments while applying meaning to their work activities via self-narratives, a personal constructivism, and a social constructionism. Career development became interpretive and adaptive as young professionals iteratively expressed their self-concepts to reach objectives in the public domain of work. Based on their self-concepts and interpretation of their social context, individuals threaded their career narratives using past, present, and hoped-for future career-related experiences. Different from industrial and postindustrial models of the 21st century, Career Construction Theory asserts a nonlinear, nonpositivist, and non–a priori career development conception. Instead, Savickas concluded individuals reveal their reality via dialogue focused on certain relevant experiences and omitting others.

Savickas's framework states that through narrative, individuals revealed their vocational personality, career adaptability, and life theme. His Career Construction Theory extends the original 20th-century career development model proposed by Parsons (1909) regarding person-environment fit. Savickas augmented these person-environment fit theories by highlighting the important role played by an individual's private self-concept combined with his or her public,

observable "linear" career experiences, traits, and reputations. The legacy of 20th-century career development theories reflects a stable economic environment that posits and supports stable linear career pathways for large swaths of citizens. Savickas purports that 21st-century postindustrial, information technology society presents more fragmented globalized economic realities necessitating his advanced theoretical framework for individual career development. According to Savickas, the objective career development frames of the 20th century fail to recognize subjective interpretations of self, work, and life to reveal individual purpose which provide deeper meaning to career activity, connection to life themes, and continuity to past, present, and future vocational behavior.

Savickas concluded that individuals enter professions hoping to execute on their self-concepts. Presumably, individuals remain on a career path to more fully realize their self-concepts, enhancing their self-esteem to the greatest degree possible within a given environment at a given time. In this regard, career construction may substantiate and validate an individual's self-concept. This conclusion makes Career Construction Theory an ideal framework to use in analysis of a former collegiate student-athlete's postcollege career development experiences considering the well-documented self-concept engulfment experiences (Adler & Adler, 1991) many Division I athletes experience during their playing days.

Savickas et al. (2009) further developed his Career Construction Theory focused on the theme of life design and its salience to 21st-century economic conditions. Savickas described the 20st-century postindustrial economic environment as offering workers employment stability in exchange for their loyalty. He compared this more stable past to a more dynamic 21st-century postindustrial information technology-driven globalized economy.   He described the 21st-

century economy as more dynamic, offering individuals more fluidity, less predictability, and more frequent and difficult job transitions. The exchange shifted from organizations offering valuable employees stable employment for their loyalty to organizations offering employees short-term opportunities to earn money and learn new skills in exchange for maximal short-term productivity. In Savickas's 21st century Career Construction model, 20th-century concepts such as vocational identity (Holland, 1963), career planning, career development, and career stages (Super, 1957) have given way to individuals creating individual career scripts. The age-old question "What shall I do with my life?" has remained, yet Savickas conceived a fluid narrative self-concept by the individual, different from a fixed career matching process, or predictable linear stage developmental process. Career Construction Theory asserts career development as a continuous process requiring lifelong learning and adapting new skills and job roles to implement individual self-concepts. The through line of this process became one's self-concept narrative, or the stories one told to maintain internal and external continuity of vocational choice or career.

Career Construction Theory places the individual in the center of a life designing process whereby vocational choices function as a critical component. Designing a life requires making vocational choices to match the needs of the individual with the needs of his or her context. Savickas's Career Construction Theory addresses questions of how one crafts one's ideal existence via careers. According to Savickas, individuals iterate this life design career construction process via cycles of experimental vocational action and reflective dialogue to arrive at their best outcomes.

Savickas departs from previous 20th-century research on vocation regarding his non-linear, subjective viewpoints on individual personality traits. Unlike 20th-century vocational researchers, Savickas considered the self as continually developing within a rapidly evolving context. Reflecting on 21th-century employment trends, Savickas cited U.S. government statistics noting young Americans are changing jobs, on average, every two years (Savickas & Solberg, 2009). Additionally, he noted that approximately 70% of all jobs end before five years.

Savickas posited career construction as individual identity formation. He asserted individuals thread their life themes through the choices and changes that help design the life they desire. Rather than a stable personality, Career Construction Theory posits an evolving identity that can shift with one's environment but leaves one wholly empowered to design one's ideal life.

Through narrative analysis, Savickas (2005) witnessed individuals expressing multiple subjective self-concepts coexisting, which conflicted with linear 20th-century theories of career development. Savickas's research has highlighted the success of narrative analysis in leading an individual to design his or her ideal life. Savickas posited that Career Construction Theory empowered individuals more relevantly than previous career development models based on economic and social conditions no longer applicable to United States culture.

In conclusion, Savickas's research led to his creation of an intervention framework for counselors working to support individual career development. This framework aims to support life design interventions in recognition of five assumptions regarding individuals and work including multiple "contextual possibilities, dynamic processes, non-linear progression, multiple realities, and personal patterns" (p. 239). The model derived from social-constructionist

epistemology, noting an individual's knowledge and identity are produced cognitively and socially alongside the meaning one ascribes to socially, historically, and culturally coconstructed realities. Savickas designed the framework as lifelong, holistic, contextual, and preventive. The framework aims "to increase clients' adaptability, narratability, and activity" related to their career construction (p. 245). In Savickas's lexicon, adaptability addresses ability to change, narratability addresses ability to string together a continuous life theme through the changes, and activity addresses one's engagement level in meaningful, life design/life theme actions.

College Access and College Completion, Historical National Trends

U.S. systems of higher education produce college graduates varying by race and ethnicity. Specific racial and ethnic subgroups complete bachelor's degrees at differing rates. The problem of differing higher education completion rates presents universities with significant challenges. Additionally, institutions of higher education have the opportunity to prioritize equitable outcomes for historically underrepresented minority groups.

Currently, Americans are accessing college more than ever before. However, graduation and completion rates have improved only marginally for all students. Horng et al. (2013) documented one challenge that "many students do not have the necessary information and support to navigate the complex college search, application, and selection processes" (p. 55–56). Historically underrepresented groups of students, including African American males and low-income individuals, have increased bachelor's degree attainment but at a slower pace than African American females or first-generation students over the past 20 years (Hu, 2011).

Having a postsecondary education has become a precursor to middle- or upper-class earnings and financial stability (Jones, 2014). Jones (2014) cited research asserting that it has become a more common expectation that all students attend college after high school (Krei & Rosenbaum, 2001; Rasinski, Ingels, Rock, & Pollack, 1993). This research has demonstrated that both associate's degree and bachelor's degree holders earn considerably more than individuals without these credentials. One marker of this trend is represented by a correlation between the geographic concentration of bachelor's degree completions and median incomes. Jones (2014) also suggested that benefits to bachelor's degree holders include improved health, increased leisure time spent with family on their children's educational development, and more engagement in civic activities.

College access and completion relate significantly to economic and lifestyle outcomes for individuals. Increased education typically translates into increased short-term and long-term earnings. The United States's economy competes on a global scale. Technology permeates all aspects of work and life, expanding the need for highly educated workers. This economy has evolved to compete with modern times. One major change toward the end of the 20th century was the reduction of manufacturing and production jobs, which were replaced by more highly skilled technical and service jobs (Carnevale & Rose, 2015). According to researchers Carnevale and Rose, "The percentage of U.S. workers with high-skill, high-wage jobs is actually larger today than ever before" (p. 2). Another telling figure: in analyzing 2012 data Carnevale and Rose noted "the proportion of high school dropouts fell from 38% of working-age adults to just 10%, while workers with at least some postsecondary education went from one-quarter to 61 percent" (p. 2).

In the past 50 years, the percentage of American workers holding bachelor's or graduate degrees went from 13% to approximately 32%. Over this same time period, wages earned by bachelor's and graduate degree holders increased from 20% to approximately 52% of all wages earned. Over this same time period, high school educated individuals represented approximately 72% of the workforce, earning approximately 63% of workforce wages, declining to 39% and 28%, respectively. Clearly, the U.S. economy has evolved to favor college-educated individuals, specifically heightening the importance of college access, especially for underrepresented groups. Employment growth reflects more office jobs, in financial/business services, healthcare, and education sectors, where more than 60% of Americans work in "these higher-skill workplaces" (Carnevale & Rose, 2015, p. 3). The marketplace rewards this favorability by compensating individuals with postsecondary education over 80% more than others, laying downward pressure on high school educated worker wages. Highly skilled managerial and professional jobs, for which bachelor's or graduate degrees are prerequisites, represent 35% of total U.S. employment. The loss of low-skilled jobs over this time period is approximately 25%; the decline now totals about 29% of all U.S. employment.

College access and success outcomes vary largely across racial and socioeconomic differences. Caucasian and Asian, alongside middle- to upper-income, students tend to access and complete bachelor's and graduate degrees at higher rates than African American and Latino, and low-income and first generation students. One phenomenon related to these inequitable outcomes noted by researchers is the concentration of Caucasian and upper-income students within the top-tier institutions of higher learning (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). The inequitable outcomes may reflect top-tier schools spending significantly more per student on instruction than

other institutions (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). Current research highlights inequitable college access concentrations. Specifically, Carnevale and Strohl (2013) wrote:

> White students are increasingly concentrated today, relative to population share, in the nation's 468 most well-funded, selective four-year colleges and universities while African-American and Hispanic students are increasingly concentrated in the 3,250 least well-funded, open-access, two- and four-year colleges. (p. 7)

Carnevale and Rose (2015) added, "African-American and Hispanic students who attend the top-tier schools have a graduation rate of 73%, while just 40% of African-American and Hispanic students who attend other institutions end up graduating" (p. 21). Carnevale and Rose (2015) concluded that the American higher education system reflects inequity that underrepresented students experience at the K–12 level, which is then magnified by the sorting effect of well-resourced, versus under-resourced, colleges/universities and subsequently magnified in the labor market. Among multiple factors, Carnevale and Strohl (2013) noted selectivity being a chief one, and said that higher spending may contribute to "higher graduation rates, greater access to graduate and professional schools, and better economic outcomes in the labor market, when comparing with white, African-American, and Hispanic students who are equally qualified but attend less competitive schools" (p. 7). The result of this sorting leads to graduates from top-tier, more selective colleges and accessing greater employment and higher wage earning positions in the labor market, on average earning more than $2 million dollars over their lifetimes.

Rising costs of college. As college access has become more necessary for long-term middle- or upper-income earnings, it has also become more challenging thanks to increased costs of attendance. States have reduced their funding for college, and colleges have passed on some of their increased costs directly to the student consumers (Mitchell & Leachman, 2015). In current dollars, government funding of higher education in many states remains below

prerecession (circa 2008) levels. Essentially, for underrepresented minority students such as lower income African American males, increased costs constrict access by pricing some of them out of the opportunity. Budget cuts, in addition to placing increased financial pressure on students, may also threaten educational quality by diminishing higher educational offerings and services to include reduced faculty positions, course offerings, computer labs, and library services.

Supiano (2014) documented the challenge of conflicting goals surrounding college access. Specifically, decreased college affordability strains both access and completion goals by increasing the difficulty of their attainment. College costs have risen since 2008, while incomes have decreased or remained flat, exemplifying the conundrum of increasingly making college accessible, and completable, for all desiring students. Since the 1965 Higher Education Act, U.S. government spending on higher education has increased to 100 times its prior levels, yet the struggle to reach relative equity continues.

College access intersecting with college athletics. Mahiri and Van Rheenen (2010) used qualitative focus group interview discussion research to uncover student-athlete narratives related to their athletics participation challenges and benefits. Division I student-athletes, especially revenue generating ones, rationalized their "over-dedication" to sport and simultaneous academic "under-dedication" to matters of practical survival. One participant remarked:

> It was wiser for me to spend one hour on homework and five hours on basketball, because then I may have a 2.0 but a scholarship to college. If I studied for five hours, I might get a 4.0 but still have no scholarship, and still be flat broke, and not be able to go to college. So sports were never conceived of as a game. It was work, and in many ways for us it was more significant than academics. (p. 73)

Mahiri and Van Rheneen (2010) also cited narratives from public figures, successful in politics and business, who were former elite athletes. Former governor of Minnesota Jesse "the Body" Ventura and American Express CEO Ken Chenault both parlayed athletic experiences into successful careers outside of sport, citing their athletic experiences as helpful training grounds for their postathletic careers. Thus, another potential benefit to athletics participation may lie in its meritocratic nature. Contrary to concerns raised by Hartman (2014) regarding the arbitrary nature of coaching decisions to play athletes, or rescind scholarships, perhaps sport represents a field where talent is purely rewarded. For example, it is rare that complaints are raised regarding underrepresentation of Caucasian athletes in certain sports such as basketball, which is dominated at the collegiate and professional levels by African Americans. Quite contrarily, collegiate athletics provides a well-worn pathway to otherwise closed or limited institutions of higher education.

Participation within United States Intercollegiate Athletics

Introduction. College athletics participation requires significant time and dedication. In exchange for great efforts of training, and sacrifices of personal time, student-athletes experience great joy when they are successful. Harrison's (2009) research recorded college student-athletes' daily experiences. Athletes described typical feelings of daily exhaustion and stress from managing busy schedules. They also expressed enjoyment of competition and the elevated social status afforded them due to their sport participation. The following sections describe important aspects of collegiate student-athlete participation. The next section discusses NCAA polices that support student-athlete collegiate participation.

Bylaws and notable policies affecting collegiate athletic participation. The NCAA

has enacted academic rules for student-athlete eligibility to help maintain its commitment to

reduce abuses to student-athletes (Lombardi, Downs, Downs, & Conley, 2012). According to

Lombardi et al. (2012), Progress Towards Degrees (NCAA, 2015f) and Academic Progress

(NCAA, 2015d) measures represent two NCAA regulations aimed at reducing academic risks for

student-athletes. For example, Division I teams must aim to support their student-athletes'

completing 40% of their degree requirements by the beginning of their third year, 60% by start

of the fourth year, 80% by start of fifth year, via the Progress Towards Degrees regulations

target. Individual athletes who do not make adequate progress toward their degrees risk losing

eligibility to play (NCAA, 2015f).

Academic Progress Rate targets aim to measure aggregate student-athlete eligibility and

campus retention (NCAA, 2015b). Athletic programs falling below a prescribed aggregate

average level of either measure ensures combined risk penalties of lost practice time, to be

replaced by required academic activities. Additional potential penalties include being banned

from regular or playoff competitions, coach suspensions, loss of scholarships, and restricted

NCAA membership. Both regulations have been in place for over 10 years, and had been

preceded in the mid-1990s by academic reform dialogues to shape these current regulations

(NCAA, 2015b).

The NCAA offers support services to provide for the academic, emotional, and physical

well being of student-athletes. Additionally, each member institution tailors its institutional

support of student-athletes based on their unique student-athlete needs. The NCAA encourages

and supports student-athletes by offering guidance and specific programming on the following

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topics: student-athlete affairs; life skills; future NFL Professionals Workshop; NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committees (SAACs); campus and conference services (financial support to host student workshops); postgraduate internship programs, grants, programs and scholarships supporting career development and diversity initiatives; graduate school test preparation services; and Leadership Development Programs and Resources (NCAA, 2015i). The following section presents some common issues collegiate student-athletes may encounter during participation.

Challenges Facing Student-Athletes Participating in Division I Athletics

In an auto-ethnographic narrative analysis, one former student-athlete, Hartman (2014), described her mostly negative experiences playing Division I women's basketball. She was abruptly cut from the team after three years of successful participation. With little explanation, her athletics scholarship was terminated. Her experience is telling, although the outcome unique. She described her experience of power imbalances between herself and teammates and the coaches who treated players, at times, in abusive ways (e.g., grueling workouts, demeaning language, and borderline physical abuse). She fought her case and won an appeal against the coaching staff. Her financial aid was restored without her having to participate on the team.

Hartman (2014) described a culture of silence among athletes finding themselves in a negatively unbalanced power dynamic between themselves and their coaches. As cited by Hartman, Hruby's (2013) research also explored this imbalance. Hruby (2013) documented the subservient position student-athletes can find themselves in, and noted that few teammates challenged it in a similar way to Hartman's successful appeal. Team membership and playing time are the key leverage points that student-athletes desire and coaches wield. A culture of

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silence exists within NCAA-governed sports, which encourages conformity and compliance from the athletes above their own self-interest, and sometimes their better judgment (Hartman, 2014).

Role engulfment. Successful participation within elite collegiate athletics demands significant commitment from student-athletes. Physical, mental, and emotional resources are demanded from each athlete to achieve his or her highest performance. In committing commensurate resources, student-athletes risk their well-rounded identity development. The term "role engulfment" describes a risk faced by elite collegiate athletes who focus primarily on their sporting identity, to the detriment of their academic, social, or career development identities (Adler & Adler, 1991).

As recounted by Schnell, Mayer, Diehl, Zipfel, and Thiel (2013), Brewer (2002) developed the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS), a quantitative tool to measure student-athlete role engulfment. This tool was effective in assessing to what degree student-athletes were "overindulging" in their sporting roles. The significance cannot be underestimated in terms of social justice risks to athletes regarding power dynamic imbalances between player and coach. Bette et al. (2002) and Curry (1993), as cited by Schnell et al. (2013), noted that student-athletes tended to create formidable athletic identities. These strong sporting identities can lead to identity tunnels described by Galloway (2007), which then translate into student-athletes complying strongly with sporting ways of life and shutting out nonathletic influences (Hughes & Coakley, 1991), as cited by Schnell et al.

Cosh and Tully (2014), through qualitative research, recorded the impact of sporting role engulfment on elite collegiate student-athletes. Cosh and Tully's research highlighted the

conscious choice many elite athletes make regarding foreclosing maximal academic performance in lieu of maximal commitment to their sports. Cosh and Tully recorded the phenomenon of collegiate student-athletes consciously aiming to "just pass" their academic coursework. In essence, these student-athletes relegated their academic identities to a lower level, requiring less effort, in order to dedicate more effort to their sport, the most immediately rewarded activity (Adler & Adler, 1991). As previously mentioned, the identity tunnel may influence this role engulfment to the long-term developmental detriment of collegiate student-athletes.

Through qualitative narrative research, Carless and Douglas (2013) noted the agency of elite athletes regarding their lived experiences, regarding sporting identity. Through qualitative interview data collection, Carless and Douglas noted recurring themes of student-athletes choosing to play the role of athlete, live the role of athlete, or resist the role of athlete. Athletes living their role committed fully to their sport, sacrificing personal priorities. Athletes rejecting the role may still achieve maximal success (championships), yet still confidently reject a narrowed identity in favor of sharing their identity with nonsport roles and influences. Athletes playing the role contrive their identity without giving maximal effort, while intending to give the appearance of full commitment (Carless & Douglas, 2013).

Academic clustering. Academic clustering is also a risk to student-athletes that arises from their sport participation. Academic clustering occurs when athletic teams or athletic departments conspire to limit the academic options of their student-athletes (Case, Greer, & Brown, 1987). The ultimate aim becomes to maintain player eligibility for competition, instead of affording students-athletes the academic freedom to explore their true interests. The university can ignore, or become complicit, in these practices.

Risk taking. Athletes face physical and psychological participation risks based on a tendency to tunnel their identity toward sporting roles. Ochse (1991) found evidence that identity tunnels serve to reduce the perceived options athletes have. This perceived, or real, limiting of options can create a sense of being trapped within an athletics role. Ochse (1991) found a link between reduced options and increases in risk-taking behaviors. Additionally, psychological and physical risks present themselves to athletes arising from their competitive natures, whereby athletes become increasingly comfortable risking their health, such as ignoring physical pain in order to maintain their competitive status. Additionally, Ochse cited studies on highly gifted people illustrating that a distinct desire for perfectionism goes along with a great willingness to take risks, which may explain the willingness of the current research participant—a highly competitive football player—to accept great physical risks in order to reach peak performance in his sport.

Exploitation. The financial revenue generated from football and men's basketball creates conversations regarding exploitation of Division I collegiate student-athletes. Such student-athletes are compensated by receiving athletic scholarships, which entitle them to free attendance to their college. The aggregate value of this scholarship may range between approximately $20,000 and $55,000, depending upon the university of attendance and the student-athlete's home state of residence. Discussions about the nature of exploitation surrounding participation in Division I collegiate revenue generating sports typically follow one of two lines of argument (Stripling, 2015; Van Rheenen, 2013; Wolverton, 2015). One, student-athletes are exploited because they are not more generously included in sharing the enormous sums of revenue generated by their athletic efforts via media contracts or merchandising

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revenues from jersey sales or video games bearing student-athlete names and likenesses, and thus they should unionize or be more highly compensated. The other line of exploitation dialogue centers on student-athletes being denied their full ability to receive a college education, because of the opportunity cost of their enormous time commitment to participate in their sport of choice.

Use of student-athlete name and likeness. Related to the debate of whether athletes are financially exploited, former collegiate men's basketball star Ed O'Bannon filed suit against the NCAA alleging its denial of his, and his peer revenue-generating athletes', rights to profit from use of their names and likenesses in merchandising, upon graduation. The suit is ongoing, but according to Stripling (2015), O'Bannon recently won a victory whereby the court affirmed "the NCAA had violated antitrust rules by restricting players' ability to trade on their images and likenesses, including jersey sales and video games" (para. 3). Essentially, the court finding for O'Bannon hinged on the supposition that absent NCAA regulations, commercial merchandising would likely compensate certain collegiate athletes to use their name and likeness, which amounted to an undue injury. The case continues, but this recent development supports the rights of players and threatens the supposition of amateurism—the fundamental principal of U.S. college competitions, for all collegiate student-athletes, specifically the revenue generating ones.

Calls for student-athlete unionization. The most popular collegiate revenue generating sports, football and men's basketball, create for the NCAA a progressively tenuous relationship with its fundamental principle of amateurism. Recently, calls for unionization among football players have presented themselves as a challenge to this fundamental principle. During their playing days, Druckman, Gilli, Klar, and Robison (2014) demonstrated that college athletes' opinions on exploitation and unionization evolve during their careers. According to their results,

athletes recently completing collegiate careers feel stronger about being exploited, are more

supportive of college athletes being compensated beyond their scholarships, and are more likely

to endorse forming collegiate players unions.

Sanderson and Siegfried (2015) aptly highlighted the elastic labor supply of collegiate

revenue generating athletes existing in spite of current controversial "labor" conditions.

According to Sanderson and Siegfried (2015), the attractiveness stems from the extreme

attention and fame players experience, in addition to the potential for alumni or athletic team

supporters, aka "boosters," to supply athletes with jobs after college and, for the select 1-3%, a

lucrative professional sports contract. Annually, all Division I football teams fill their rosters

with recruited athletes, in additional to student-athletes joining as "walk-ons," meaning

nonrecruited and typically less talented players, at the relatively low wage of athletic scholarship

only.

Other aspects of potential financial exploitation of student-athletes. According to

Van Rheenen (2013) and Duderstadt (2000), a former college football player and current

Division I university president noted:

> Some universities take advantage of their student-athletes, exploiting their athletic talents
> for financial gain and public visibility, and tolerating low graduation rates and
> meaningless degrees in majors like general studies or recreational life. (p. 559)

Universities provide financial support to athletes, and coaches primarily determine which

student-athletes remain on their teams and which student-athletes receiving playing time and

maintain scholarships. In an effort to reach maximal performance, remain on the team, and

maintain their scholarships, Division I student-athletes may foreclose their academic identities in

favor of athletic ones, to the detriment of their long-term futures (Adler & Adler, 1991). This

risk is evidenced by the quote recorded above by Duderstadt, where some university administrators may be content to allow student-athletes to graduate at significantly lower rates, or graduate with degrees lacking viable career pathways.

As cited by Van Rheenen (2013), Duderstadt (2000) noted some that economists estimate top high school recruits add significant revenue to their respective college campuses. These eventual professional NFL or NBA athletes can add an estimated $500,000–1,000,000 in annual revenues for their college teams (Brown, 1993; Fish, 2009; Marshall, 1994; Zimbalist, 1999, 2001). In addition to the aforementioned enormous media revenues and game ticket sales, the revenues generated for institutions contribute to the dialogues regarding financial exploitation of elite collegiate student-athletes. As noted by Duderstadt (2000), some authors (Edwards, 1970; Sack, 1979; Sailes, 1986; Scott, 1971) challenged these imbalances, while other authors' (Coakley, 2009; Edwards, 1973; Eitzen, 1993; Lapchick, 2001; Rigauer, 1981; Sellers, 2000) research explored and highlighted the resultant alienation, isolation, and powerlessness experienced by these elite Division I revenue-generating collegiate student-athletes.

In response to criticism of academic exploitation, Duderstadt (2000) highlighted the paternalistic framework used to examine the student-athlete plight. Essentially, student-athletes hold a promise, but not a guarantee, for either athletic participation or academic success. The nature of education is, analogously to athletics, participatory. Student-athletes must act to realize their full potential on both accords. The challenge arises in athletes finding their core psychological needs, as reported by Hogan (1982), for status and for belonging, fulfilled by intercollegiate sport participation, to the potential detriment of their academic and career development. Valued primarily for their athletic achievements, Division I student-athletes may

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respond by decreasing the salience of their academic roles, potentially to the long-term detriment of future career development (Adler & Adler, 1991).

The bachelor's degree completion rates are mixed for a historically disenfranchised group of students: African Americans. Nationally, African American student-athletes graduate at higher rates than African American college students, compared across Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (Harper et al., 2013). However, Harper et al. (2013) noted at many of the top Division I universities, African American athletes graduate at lower rates than their nonathlete counterparts. Participation in Division I revenue-generating athletics would be truly exploitative if, given a genuine desire to succeed academically, student-athletes are precluded as such due to athletic commitments dominating their time, while sanctioned under the approval of coaches and campus administration.

As cited by Duderstadt (2000), research conducted exploring student-athletes' perceptions of being exploited produced mixed results. Leonard (1986) cited Sack's (1979) research, which led to the conclusion that collegiate student-athletes risk increased probability of being denied their academic development relative to nonathlete peers. Feelings of exploitation, in some studies, develop later on in the athlete's playing career, with college seniors feeling more exploited than younger students (Adler & Adler, 1991).

Leonard (1986) noted the multifaceted definitions of exploitation. According to Leonard, researchers define potential student-athletic exploitation in multiple terms, which focuses on fair access to achievement. Leonard (1986) cited numerous researchers (Figler, 1981; Meggyesy, 1971; Shaw, 1972; Coakley, 1982; Hoch, 1972; Eitzen & Sage, 1982; Savage, 1929; Leonard, 1984; Sack, 1979) who studied aspects of collegiate student-athlete exploitation. For example,

Figler (1981) concluded the student-athlete/university relationship became exploitative when either party was prevented from seeking their anticipated benefit, or access was not fully provided to exchange benefits expected of the other party. As cited by Leonard (1986), Figler (1981) stated exploitation occurs when student-athletes are discouraged from certain courses of study based on needing to commit maximal time to refinement of their athletic performance (Figler, 1981). Additionally, student-athletes are exploited when they are recruited, and granted special admittance to a university for which they are academically/intellectually underprepared, in order to compete on said institution's athletic team. Sack (1979), as cited by Leonard (1986) described student-athletes' temptation to compromise their academic development, and bachelor's degree achievement, by taking various shortcuts ranging from academic fraud to choosing nonchallenging majors.

Perceptions of exploitation. Leonard (1986) explored student-athletes' perceptions of exploitation using survey research. He noted a potential gap between public perception of student-athlete exploitation and student-athlete perception. Leonard (1986) cited estimations by Kief (1981) that student-athlete participants in the Division I revenue-generating sports of football and men's basketball "earned" an average hourly wage of $4.70 and $3.75, respectively, based on nearly full-time, year-round involvement. Leonard's survey research measured the level of exploitation felt quantitatively, comparing Caucasian with African American student-athletes' perceptions. He concluded that, relatively, more exploited African American or Caucasian collegiate basketball players perceived themselves as categorically abused or exploited.

Questions regarding response validity may be named in regard to athletes being hesitant to admit negative perceptions in light of their social undesirability. As cited by Leonard (1986), past research has shown that items mirroring social undesirability are less often endorsed than those reflecting social desirability (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1981). This notion led Leonard (1986) to cite Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1962), who examined the potential "pluralistic ignorance" in which a social perception is actually false, although no one believes its falsehood, even when the principal actors debunk the social claim as myth (p. 45).

Van Rheehan's (2013) research regarding athletes' perceptions of their exploitation revealed differences based on type of sport. Students playing within revenue-generating sports were nearly three times as likely to perceive themselves as being exploited compared to students playing nonrevenue-generating sports. Contrary to alternate research cited above, Van Rheehan (2011) found nonrevenue-generating fourth year student-athletes were nearly half as likely to feel exploited compared to their younger peers playing nonrevenue-generating sports. However, Van Rheehan (2013) also found that among revenue-generating college athletes, seniors more commonly perceived themselves as being exploited than did younger underclassmen. Van Rheehan's (2011) research also revealed differences in self-perceptions of exploitation along racial lines. He noted African American revenue-generating student-athletes were four times as likely to feel exploited than were their white peers.

As Van Rheehan (2013) carefully noted, the results of his study account for athletes' perceptions and are not actual "objective" measures of student-athlete exploitation. Beamon's (2008) research used student-athletes as "informants" to recount their feelings of exploitation. The athletes studied expressed angst around their status as commodities, sharing sentiments of

feeling like "used goods" (para. 1). In Beamon's (2008) study, 85% of the student-athletes

graduated with a bachelor's degree, but they perceived exploitation by the university's garnering

a greater benefit for their athletic services than what they received in the form of their degrees.

Van Rheehan (2013) also noted student-athletes' perceptions of their value, by the

university community. African American males especially perceived their value as, first, that of

an athlete, with their student/academic value as secondary or nonexistent. As cited by Van

Rheehan (2013), African American male athletes sensed their academic/social racial invisibility

contrasted against a prominent "hyper-visible" athletic identity (Harris, 2000).

Forms of academic exploitation. Harper et al. (2013) chronicled the disparate

bachelor's degree completion rates recorded across racial lines of revenue-generating collegiate

student-athletes. Through quantitative analysis of existing education datasets, they noted that

African American male student-athletes graduated with bachelor's degrees half of the time,

while 67% of all Division I student-athletes graduated with bachelor's degrees, and 73% of all

undergraduates. Comparatively at these schools, approximately more than half—56%—of all

African American males graduate, which is only slightly (12%) higher than the African

American student-athlete rate. In some of the institutions analyzed, the gaps in

overrepresentation and degree completion grow exorbitantly large. One institution noted that

3.3% of undergraduates were African American males, while over 75% of the players on

revenue-generating teams are African American. Numerous institutions report degree

completion gaps between African American revenue-generating student-athletes and all

undergraduates above 35%. Specifically, the graduation rate gap for my research participant's

alma mater currently averages a spread above 40% in bachelor's degree completion between

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revenue-generating African American male student-athletes and the total undergraduate population, and an approximate 20% gap between all African American undergraduates and these same student-athletes, respectively (Harper et al., 2013).

Harper et al. (2013) continued their analysis of the disparities regarding the presence of African American males on these leading Division I campuses. African American males were significantly overrepresented on these campuses within athletic teams, specifically the revenue-generating sports of football and men's basketball. In aggregate, within the 76 university members of these top six Division I athletic conferences (Atlantic Coast Conference, Big East Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Pac 12 Conference, South East Conference) analyzed by Harper et al. (2013) between 2007 and 2010, African American males made up slightly less than 3% "of full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students, but 57.1% of football teams and 64.3% of basketball teams" (p.1). Specifically, the population percentage gap of the alma mater university from which I recruited my research participant currently averages a spread of over 47% between the African American male undergraduate population and the African American team population within the two revenue-generating sports of football and men's basketball. These statistics resonate with the themes outlined above of academic invisibility combined with athletic hypervisibility experienced by African American athletes on Division I college campuses.

As previously mentioned, the NCAA has taken steps throughout its history to reduce incidence of abuse to student-athletes. Currently the NCAA is redesigning its leadership and life skills programming to support the academic and social development of student-athletes. In 1991, the NCAA launched the Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS)/ Life

Skills program in order to prioritize academic development for student-athletes in today's higher education institutions (Andrassy, Bruening, Svensson, Huml, & Chung, 2014). Andrassy et al.'s (2014) research highlighted student-athletes' need for their coaches (primary campus influencers) to promote and support their development in nonsport activities such as academics, career development, and community service. As cited by Andrassy et al. (2014), noted benefits for student-athletes involving themselves meaningfully in nonsport activities included "personal satisfaction, learning new skills, social connections, social responsibility, improvement in academics, and learning about their community" (Chalk, 2008; Gayles & Hu, 2009, p. 220).

Such activities hold both concurrent and future developmental implications that can benefit the student-athlete in numerous ways. Yet, as cited by Andrassy et al. (2014), student-athletes were challenged to involve themselves in nonsport activities "due to the lack of time availability outside of athletic obligations" (Kamusoko & Pemberton, 2011; 2013, p. 221), or agency acquiescence to coaching staffs "to personally connect them with developmental opportunities" (Jarvie & Paule-Koba, 2012, p. 221). According to Andrassy et al. (2014), Murphy, Petitpas, and Brewer (1996) "highlighted the importance for student-athletes to explore educational opportunities and an identity outside of sport to avoid delayed career development" (p. 221). Career development challenges due to athletic participation have been well documented and are further explored in another section of this literature review.

Contrary to Andrassy et al.'s (2014) research, one group made up of more than 30 African American football players recently flexed their sociopolitical muscles to combat perceived racial discrimination the campus of the University of Missouri (UM). These players began a football strike, in response to a series of alleged discriminatory actions taken by

Caucasian students against African American and other minorities on campus. Joining an African American graduate student in a hunger strike, the players refused to play again until the school president resigned. The school faced, minimally, $1 million forfeiture for the next game, were it not to be played, in addition to the lost local revenue from tourism dollars. The arbiter of their scholarships, the UM football head coach, along with the athletic director, publicly endorsed their strike. The Missouri governor, as well as a U.S. Senator and other public officials weighed in during this period with calls for resolution. Within one week of the hunger strike's commencement and six days of the football team's strike, the UM system president and chancellor both issued their resignations (Fougere & Johnson, 2015). A hunger strike may not have been enough, but the entire university system was strongly influenced by the potential revenue loss of millions of dollars, alongside the potential for ongoing national embarrassment.

Mahiri and Van Rheenen (2010) noted the disparity between athlete academic achievement and achievement of the general student body. Mahiri and Van Rheenen's research citied lower grade point averages across collegiate athletic team members, particularly low for the revenue-generating sports of football and men's basketball at the major Division I universities studied herein. In addition, on average, female collegiate student-athletes perform better than their male counterparts. However, neither performs as well as the general student body. Mahiri and Van Rheenen (2010) wrote:

> The overall average GPA for females at 3.08 was slightly above 3.0, yet the overall average GPA for all undergraduate females was significantly higher at 3.305. Similarly, the overall GPA for male athletes of 2.854 was significantly lower than the overall GPA for all undergraduate males at 3.23. Interestingly, Men's Tennis with the highest GPA of any men's sport at 3.194 and women's field hockey with the highest GPA of any women's sport at 3.198 were both still below the average GPA of 3.27 for all undergraduates. (p. 71)

As cited by Osborne (2014), in the recent 2012–2013 reporting, the NCAA noted revenues of nearly $8 billion (*USA Today*, 2014). This amount includes nearly $1 billion in annual revenue. Most revenue is derived from two large, long-term multiyear contracts with media broadcasters and corporate sponsors. Broadcasts include weekly men's basketball games and the annual men's basketball championship tournament, known as March Madness. Football broadcasts include weekly games and the culminating Football Playoff Championships and series of bowl game finales. Osborne (2014) highlighted the breakdown of revenue consisting of 90% media broadcast (television) and marketing rights, and ticket sales from playoff (tournament, bowl games, etc.) and championship ticket sales accounting for approximately 9%. In comparison, NCAA member institution fees and miscellaneous services total approximately 1%.

Osborne (2014) also highlighted the structural nature of the NCAA formation as a nonprofit organization. This governing body does not control the revenue for the Football Playoff Championship, which is actually administered between the media outlets and the elite Division I conferences themselves. This nonprofit standing holds important implications in maintaining the amateur status, which allows the NCAA to avoid calls to compensate athletes beyond their scholarships, and prevents their collective bargaining through unionization. The NCAA redistributes approximately 90%, or more, of revenues to facilitate the opportunity for student-athletes to compete in their choice of sports (NCAA, 2014). Facilitating the opportunity to compete in amateur athletics amounts to its mission, while the 90% distribution fits within the best practices framework of a nonprofit organization's ideal administrative to programmatic

expense ratio. Burnsed (2014) aptly noted, as cited by Osborne (2014), that Division I schools posted an average athletic department accounting loss ranging from $2 million to $17 million.

Counterarguments to student-athlete exploitation have included analysis of student-athletes' full benefits beyond simply their tuition expenses being covered. Osborne (2014) highlighted the benefit of coaching by experts who help develop the athlete's talents, and largely draw that student to a specific school. College coaches, as cited by Lombardi et al. (2012), often establish first contact with recruited athletes, prominently representing the college (NCAA, 2008a). Some research cited by Lombardi et al. (2012) demonstrated "high school student-athletes are more influenced by the coach than any other institutional factor" (Garbert, Hale, & Montalvo, 1999; Goss, Jubenville, & Orejan, 2006, p. 64). Additionally, student-athletes are afforded the privilege, as determined by law, and not the right to complete within intercollegiate athletics. This privilege provides team members talent development, a partial or full scholarship, use of updated training facilities, free athletic clothing, ample nutritional food, specialized sports medical care, use of specialized equipment, and experiences traveling to competitions, in addition to the variable suite of academic, social, and emotional support services made available based on their campuses' offerings. As cited by Osborne (2014), one researcher (Rishe, 2011) estimated a lifetime value exceeding $2 million for student-athletes who achieve a football scholarship to play within Division I at a top-ranked school, who otherwise would not have attended college without achieving said athletic scholarship. Additionally, Osborne (2014) cited Chalfin, Weight, Osborne, and Johnson (2015) and Weight, Navarro, Huffman, and Smith-Ryan (2014), who noted research concluding other "intangible benefits developed or acquired through athletics participation," including "leadership skills, the ability to work within a team toward a

common goal, time management and task prioritization, and persistence," that have real value in the workplace and in life (p. 146).

This dissertation aims to explore the tensions between the potentially beneficial and potentially negative aspects of student-athletic participation within a Division I revenue-generating football program for an African American male. While participating in football at the Division I level affords unique, highly coveted athletic experiences which may also support skills development practically applicable after the sporting career is finished, participation may also be economically, or academically, exploitative and limit the career and complete identity development of said participants. This tension proves a matter of social justice as African American males use athletics within revenue-generating sports to access colleges often unattainable without athletic preferential admissions and participation (Harper et al., 2013). This dissertation aims to explore the experiences of a former student-athlete's college to career transition after termination of his elite football participation. The following section discusses health risks due to injury that college football players face which may impact their long term successful career development.

Injury risk. Recent attention has increased awareness of potential risks surrounding football participation. Sailors (2015) wrote, "While evidence continues to be gathered, it seems indisputable that there is at least a strong correlation between playing football and suffering from debilitating brain damage" (p. 270). Football has always presented an injury risk, however modern medical science is experiencing a medical renaissance investigating links to new possible associated ailments. Sailors (2015) offered a philosophical critique questioning the sport's moral acceptability based on "(1) harm to the players, (2) objectification of the players,

and (3) harm to others done by the players" (p. 269). She concluded that football is morally

unacceptable and that participating within the sport is akin to slavery on two accounts. First,

playing football likely leads one to degenerative brain disease that compromises one's ability to

make faculties. A stretch argument Sailors posited is that youth are socialized into the sport

based on parental coercion, which leads them toward exploitation via player objectification.

Also, Sailors (2015) cited Branch (2011) in arguing that football is akin to slavery because of the

financial exploitation universities conduct, generating millions of dollars off the "unpaid," or

underpaid, labor of student-athletes. Sailors also cited Dixon's (2001) arguing that university

athletic departments are morally culpable for providing the opportunity for players to injure

themselves and injure other players. Mahiri and Van Rheenen's (2010) first-person qualitative

research recorded athlete perspectives such that:

> Athletes really do become alienated, they talk about your life is over when you're 21, when your knee blows out. I see it as a danger to view sports as "a way out." You follow the illusion of trying to make it out. (p. 65)

Mahiri and Van Rheenen's research, which explored participant perspectives regarding athletics

participation, found that sports provided a significant influence at an important youthful

developmental period as young athletes were forming self-identities.

In recent years, more knowledge has emerged regarding the risks repeated minor and

major concussive blows pose to the long-term health of football players. While football remains

the most popular American sport, youth leagues are losing participation due to concerns

regarding concussions or repeated sub-concussive head injuries (Findler, 2015). The head trauma

disease, Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), involves the buildup of debilitating brain

damage over time, which has been posthumously linked to deceased former football athletes,

some as young as high school age participants. Lakhan and Kirchgessner (2012) defined CTE as "a neurodegenerative disease that is believed to result from repetitive brain trauma" (p. 1). CTE has been linked to declines in memory and cognition, depression, suicide, impulsiveness, aggressiveness, and dementia/Alzheimer's disease. Given the popularity of contact sports, and considering the effects of brain trauma found in other individuals (with careers in the military, heavy construction, etc.) with concussive or repeated blast episodes, CTE has been named a public health concern warranting further and more conclusive study (Lakhan & Kirchgessner, 2012).

Risks to successful career development for college football players include potential financial or academic exploitation and damaged cognitive function due to serious injury. The next section discusses previous research approaching the question of student-athlete career development and transitions into careers upon retirement from elite competition.

Career Maturity of Student-Athletes

Kornspan (2014) conducted a comprehensive literature review of 36 career maturity research studies related to collegiate student-athletes. His efforts revealed six demographic variables and five psychosocial variables persistent across research studies reviewed. Kornspan (2014) also highlighted quantitative instruments used to measure and assess career maturity for student-athletes, including the flowing:

- Career Maturity Inventory (CMI; Crites, 1978)
- Career Development Inventory (CDI; Super et al., 1981)
- Career Decision Scale (CDS; Osipow, 1987)
- Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996)
- Career Factors Inventory (CFaI; Chartrand, Robbins, Morrill, & Boggs, 1990)

- Career Futures Inventory (CFuI; Rottinghaus, Day, & Borgen, 2005)

Lally (2007) used qualitative methods to interview elite athletes regarding their successful transition into nonathletic careers. Lally's (2007) research focused on dual career development for elite athletes. According to Lally's (2007) findings, elite athletes can ease their transition out of sports and into a nonathletic related career by creating two concurrent identities before their sporting career ends. The term "dual career" development was coined to describe the phenomenon of athletes actively planning for their postathletic futures, and protecting and holding with integrity their identity during the often-challenging transition process. Specifically, Lally (2007) noted transitions were eased by athletes having associated with individuals who were not reminding them, or praising them, for their current athletic identity. Lally (2007) reported athletes attributed their successful transition out of elite sports and into new careers based on intentional reduction of the importance of their sport (and sporting identity), while simultaneously actively exploring future career roles.

Conversely, some researchers have concluded that the transition may not present difficulties to most elite athletes. As cited by Lally (2007), several authors (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Baillie & Danish, 1992; Curtis & Ennis, 1988; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985) have concluded that athletics retirement does not negatively impact the individual. However, Lally's (2007) analysis contrasted this notion with the caveat uncovered by other researchers (Adler & Adler, 1989, 1991; Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000; Sparkes, 1998) that elite athletes who strongly identify themselves with the role of athlete (i.e., living the part, as mentioned above) experience significant difficulties with self-identity upon transitioning out of their sport. Erpič, Wylleman, and Zupančič's (2004) survey research indicated nuanced differences in that athletes with more

educational attainment experienced fewer difficulties transitioning into careers after elite sports

participation concluded. Erpič et al., (2004), Blann (1985), Kennedy and Dimmick (1987), and

Sowa and Gressard (1983), however, noted that student-athletes find it challenging to devote

adequate time to career and postgraduate plans. Alfermann et al. (2004) concluded that planned

retirement from elite athletics participation produces more positive transitions than unplanned

retirement.

Lally (2007) used a phenomenological approach and multiple interview sets along with

member checking to elicit narrative monologues related to the themes he was investigating.

Lally (2007) noted participants who successfully transitioned into a nonathletic career

acknowledged their low probability of moving from collegiate to professional athletics, and also

remained open to peer influencers who actively explored their respective future career interests.

Family also played a positive influential role by raising questions "about what they were going to

do next" (p. 96). Also, self-realization of their athletic limitations represented the mental and

emotional preparation student-athletes needed to actively plan a successful transition from elite

collegiate athletics to a nonathletic career. The NCAA estimates collegiate student-athletes

maintain a 1–2% probability of competing at the professional level, depending upon their sport

of choice, with men's basketball being the lowest and football somewhat higher (NCAA, 2015h).

Park, Tod, and Lavallee (2012) cited research demonstrating that academic dedication

and career development assisted collegiate student-athletes in transitioning to nonsport careers

(Lantz, 1995). However, Park et al. (2012) also noted research demonstrating student-athletes

perceiving themselves as constrained via limited career options due to a lack of personal

development (Chow, 2001; Stronach & Adair, 2010; Swain, 1991). One caveat to these research

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indicators includes athletes' unwillingness to engage in future planning activities for fear of losing focus on, and diminishing, their current athletic performance (Petitpas, Danish, McKelvain, & Murphy, 1992).

According to Alfermann et al. (2004), intentionality is the trait that helps elite athletes transition into future, nonathletic careers. Alfermann et al. (2004) asserted "athletes, who plan retirement in advance, do not waste their energy in wrong directions and, hence, are able to mobilize and use their resources more effectively than athletes who do not plan their retirement" (p. 70). As cited by Alfermann et al. (2004), several qualitative studies identified risks related to athletes experiencing distress upon athletics career termination. As cited by Wylleman, Alfermann, and Lavallee (2004), numerous authors (Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Ogilvie, 1987; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982), asserted these risks included substance abuse, depression, "eating disorders, identity confusion, decreased self-confidence, and attempted suicide" (p. 8).

Summary of Transitions Between College and Career

Park et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive review of published literature chronicling the transition of athletes out of competitive sports. Park et al. (2012) reviewed 126 studies—55 quantitative, 56 qualitative, and 15 mixed methods. The resultant themes included 15 variables associated with the experience quality of athletes' transitions out of sports and four factors related to resources available to athletes to support this transition. Park et al.'s (2012) 15 variables associated with the quality of athletes' transitions out of sports included athletic identity, demographical issues, voluntariness of retirement decision, injuries/health problems, career/personal development, sports career achievement, educational status, financial status, self-

perception, control of life, disengagement or dropout, time passed after retirement, relationship

with coach, life changes, and balance of life. Park et al.'s (2012) four factors associated with

available resources for athletes during transition out of sports included coping strategies,

preretirement planning, psychosocial support, and support program involvement. Park, Lavallee,

and Tod (2013) recommended:

> To assist athletes' career transitions … practitioners need to provide athletes with both
> proactive (e.g., career planning, education in transferable skills) and reactive support
> (e.g., coping with emotions, supporting the identity reformation process) programs to
> help them prepare for their career transition out of sport and to adjust to postsport lives.
> (p. 44)

As cited by Park et al. (2013), one methodological risk noted by Kerr and Dacyshyn

(2000) and Lavallee and Robinson (2007) is that a majority of the studies employ "retrospective

data collection methods," which may imply "memory and recall bias as a limitation" (p. 42).

Germane to this dissertation, Park et al. (2012) identified research gaps in testing conceptual

models such as Taylor and Ogilvie's (1994) as an example. Methodologically, most qualitative

studies use individual interviews and thematic transcript analysis, while most quantitative studies

use survey instruments and descriptive statistical analysis for data collection and analysis (Park

et al., 2012). Park et al. (2013) also suggested exploring athletes' transitions out of sport via

research methods such as interpretative phenomenological analysis (e.g., Warriner & Lavallee,

2008) and narrative analysis (e.g., Gearing, 1999), and including "focus groups, case studies and

action research methods" (p. 43).

Emerging Adulthood

Emerging adulthood may be an important psychological concept related to gaining increased insights into the period of transition to nonathletic careers for collegiate student-athletes. Arnett (2000) defined this concept to encompass common phenomena applying to 18- to 25-year-olds within postindustrial societies. Emerging adulthood represents a transitional time period whereby young adults experiment with roles in order to define their future career and life paths. Arnett (2000) cited researchers (Rindfuss, 1991; Wallace, 1995) in establishing that "Emerging adulthood is the only period of life in which nothing is normative demographically" (p. 471). Arnett (2000) continued, "Emerging adults tend to have a wider scope of possible activities than persons in other age periods because they are less likely to be constrained by role requirements, and this makes their demographic status unpredictable" (p. 471). During this period, experimentation leads to narrowing options into more stable choices in career and personal life. As cited by Arnett (2000), top ways in which research demonstrated that individuals define the transition to adulthood include accepting responsibility for one's self and making independent decisions (Arnett, 1997, 1998; Greene et al., 1992; Scheer et al., 1994), alongside establishing financial independence. Significant for the population transitioning out of collegiate student-athletics, Arnett's (2000) research highlighted the shift of locus of control, which relates to athletes moving from coaching staffs and athletics to a redefinition of reference points, which create challenges for some athletes.

Career Development Theories: 20th Century Historical Account

Career Development theories attempt to help workers and those who support them address the questions surrounding how to best align people with their work (Savickas et al.,

2009). Career Development theories have been well researched, with numerous theoretical models developed over the 20th century. As cited by Navarro (2012), researchers such as Parsons (1909), Super (1957), Holland (1959), Ginzberg (1972), Crites (1978), Gottfredson (1986), Chickering and Reisser (1993), and Lent (1994) investigated and authored important career development theories during this time period. These 20th-century theories were built upon by Savickas (2001, 2002, 2005), Savickas et al. (2009), Savickas and Solberg (2009), and Savickas and Hartung (2012) to expand into a Career Construction Theory explaining nuances of career development for the 21st century. Savickas's Career Construction Theory serves as the theoretical framework I used to guide my research.

20th century career development theories. Parsons's (1909) research led to a career theory based on matching decisions. Parsons posited that careers developed via a series of attempts to implement a self-concept. His research revealed that individuals developed careers, rationally, by trying to match their inspiration and skills to fit work. Parsons's research led to a Person-Environment theory. This theory purports that P (person/worker) and E (environment/work) match or fit when career development is mature within an individual. Parsons used retrospective analysis, with a phenomenological approach asking research participants to recall their careers, looking backward. Parsons's research supported the claim that career development corroborated individual self-concept. Parsons concluded that career construction is a series of "fit-based" matching decisions.

Super (1963) produced research during the middle of the 20th century that led to his advancement of a career development theory. As cited by Navarro (2012), Super's (1957) vocational development career theory focuses on interactive life stages of career development

which includes the five stages of growth, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement. Super posited that one's career development was couched in one's ultimate needs for stability and continuity. His research focused largely on the importance of self-concept in terms of individual career development (Super, Starishevsky, Matlin, & Jordaan, 1963). Super et al.'s (1963) research led him to outline self-concept dimensions that include gregariousness, dogmatism, choices, esteem, clarity, realism, complexity, and efficacy. Super (1963) went on to also outline self-concept metadimensions, which include consistency, stability, and process of choosing. In addition, Super likely influenced later career development researchers in emphasizing how self-definition, internal and external influences, and various life roles all contribute to the career development process. Highly influential in Savickas's research, Super's (1957) emphasis on linear stages of career development was particularly at odds with Savickas's notion of fluid and dynamic lifelong career development.

John Holland's (1959) research led to a normative career development theory based on typology. According to Savickas and Solberg (2009), Holland's work became seminal in creating a lexicon for career researchers based on six types of individual characteristics dominant in determining one's ideal vocational fit. These categories, known later as "Holland Codes," were tested using quantitative instruments, and then used to suggest ideal career paths for individuals. Holland's research led him to conclude that individuals fit into one or more combinations of six broad categories, representing the RIASEC taxonomy, which includes Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. The most successful career development outcomes took place, according to Holland's research, as individuals learned their career type,

learned the parameters of their chosen field within that best fit type, and pursued these ends (Holland, 1959).

As cited by Navarro (2012), the results of another seminal author's research regarding career development led Ginzberg (1972) to conceive it as resulting from the process of understanding oneself—one's interests, capabilities, and values—narrowing the future career possibilities, and making preparations for them. Navarro (2012) also cited Crites (1978), who outlined a definition of career development equating to an individual's creation of reasonable career plans factoring a self-informed, at times self-directed, assessment of interests, goals, and skills, combined with knowledge of professional opportunities and requirements.

As cited by Hirschi (2011), Vondracek, Lerner, and Schulberg (1986) claimed that context functioned to determine career development. Specifically, Vondracek et al. (1986) claimed that individuals used a series of interconnected roles, prioritizing the top one to three roles in order to arrive at career development. Remaining roles were considered peripheral. Vondracek et al.'s (1986) research revealed the important role of mentors, specifically parents, in supporting career development as individuals imitate parents or are influenced by mentors in crafting career identities. As individuals repeat a cycle of prioritizing evolving roles, conflicts emerge, which individuals must resolve via purposeful action, which eventually leads toward an ideal career identity.

Navarro (2012) also cited Chickering and Reisser (1993), who posited occupational purpose, stating that an individual must exert concentrated introspection and personal assessment to develop strong occupational purpose. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) put forth Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as a career development framework that provides a framework

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for understanding both internal and external factors that influence individuals' career

development. SCCT asserts that both external contextual (e.g., family influence) and internal

psychological influences (e.g., self-efficacy beliefs) have significant impacts on one's career

interests, career choices, and satisfaction with work and career. The foundational principles of

SCCT suggest individuals are aided during the early career developmental stages via their self-

actualization, future expectations, and personal ambitions. Additionally, the roles of social

support, expectations, and optimism are highlighted in individual adaptability and resilience

relative to young adult career transitions. SCCT outlines three stages of development in the

transition process, namely (a) anticipation, (b) adjustment, and (c) achievement. Lent, as cited

by Olson (2013), wrote that career development would force new professionals to become active

agents in creating opportunities for themselves. SCCT describes career decision making as a

function of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals.

As cited by Bader (2011), Gottfredson (1996) added to this research base by highlighting

the role social status plays in career development. Gottfredson claimed that career prestige

overshadowed one's personal interests during career development. Gottfredson's research led to

the conclusion that formative career decision making could be dominated by one's perception of

the career role status, while thus suppressing one's intrinsic personal desires and future goals.

Career development model, specifically for athletes. Wylleman and Lavallee (2004)

posited a career developmental model concerning transitions from an athletic career into a

nonathletic competition career. This model outlines the different influential reference points,

support systems, and developmental phases elite athletes use and experience during their ascent,

plateau, and descent from athletic competition. This specific model is important because

research demonstrates that athletes face unique struggles as they transition away from participation in elite athletics.

According to Wylleman and Lavallee (2004), career development emerges from self-organization. Additionally, intentionality in pursuit of career provides a link to purposeful action. Via this Wylleman and Lavallee model, career development evolves through an iterative process led by a cycle of decisions, reactions, and integrative meanings, repeated over time. In this model, individuals aim toward adjusting themselves to more accurately secure meaningful personal and professional experiences with the goal to pursue purpose at work and in leisure. Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) and Stambulova, Engström, Franck, Linnér, and Lindahl (2009) noted elite athletes commonly experience difficulties in transition, which are often either unacknowledged or exacerbated by being shamed for their failures, although structures of elite sports present challenges to their successful shifts. Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) noted that beginning a nonsport professional career has been cited as an important reason for elite athletes to end their athletic career. I selected the Savickas Career Construction Theory in place of Wylleman and Lavallee's model because of its constructive narrative nature and emphasis on being a dynamic theory specifically addressing 21st century career development that extended leading 20th century theories.

Dual career development. Regarding elite athletic career transitions, Alfermann's (2004) research demonstrated that athletes who engage in dual career development, the simultaneous focus on current athletic competition and preparation for future career possibilities after athletic careers cease, fared better in transitioning once their competitive athletic careers concluded. Specifically, Alfermann, Stambulova, and Zemaityte's (2004) research showed that

efforts and planning undertaken by athletes toward learning about or developing a nonathletic

career, prior to their athletic career ending, helped them transition with less difficulty upon

athletic retirement.

As cited by Tekavc, Wylleman, and Erpič (2015), numerous studies (Lavallee, 2005;

Petitpas et al., 2009; Pummell et al., 2008; Reints, 2011; Stambulova et al., 2007) have shown

that dual career development benefits athletes at different levels, including social, health, and

developmental. Developmental benefits to dual career development for athletes include

concurrent transferable skills and personal identity growth, leading to increased chances for

employment afterward. Additional benefits related to dual career development incur upon

athletic retirement whereby former elite athletes enjoy shorter adaptation periods and fewer

crises of identity (Cosh, Crabb, & Tully, 2015).

Successful career transitions are greatly aided by noncognitive skills, which are called

soft skills or transferable career skills. For example, these skills include communication,

leadership, and time management, among others. This next section identifies transferable skills

research and discusses how it has shown to be important to career success.

Career Development: Transferable Career Skills Sought by Employers

Soft skills, or noncognitive and nontechnical skills, play an important role in transitioning

into employment opportunities. Flaherty (2014) defined soft skills as the nontechnical

characteristics that create hireability, or desirability in employing someone who is otherwise

technically proficient. Kechagias (2011), as cited by Gibb (2014), defined soft skills as the

"intra- and interpersonal skills essential for personal development, social participation, and

workplace success" (p. 33).

Numerous lists of the most important soft skills regarding attainting and maintaining

employment exist. There has been no consistent consensus regarding which noncognitive soft

skills are most important to employers (Flaherty, 2014). Robles's (2012) mixed-method survey

research reported the most important 10 soft skills perceived by a sample of business executives

included: integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude,

professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic. This study found that business

executives perceived communication, integrity, and courtesy to be the soft skills most important

for workplace achievement. According to Robles, "Executives overwhelmingly indicated that

integrity and communication were the top two soft skills needed by employees in today's

workplace" (p. 455). Stevenson and Starkweather (2010) also reported via survey research that a

sample of executives most valued six noncognitive competencies: leadership (as in decision

making), organizationwide communication (empathy/code switching), verbal communication,

written communication, (positive) attitude, the ability to deal with change and ambiguity. In this

study, Stevenson and Starkweather (2010) noted these noncognitive soft skills were valued

above technical competencies such as previous germane work experience, educational

background, and technical expertise. Using other qualitative research methods, Heckman and

Kautz (2012) reported that teamwork (70%) and communication (25%) skills were recorded as

most important for developing professionals.

Ingols and Shapiro (2014) noted soft skills such as collaboration, leadership, and the

ability to get along with others (interpersonal skills) were more valued relative to technical skills

by employers. Harvey (2001) and Yorke (2006) noted, as described by McIlveen, Beccaria, and

Burton (2013), that the concept of employability is not firm but instead lacks consensus among

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academic communities. Perhaps the concept's relativity reflects the relativity observed regarding

lack of agreement on the most important soft skills. Additionally, a lack of consensus may

reflect different careers and their different requirements for entry and success.

Belzer (2001), according to Stevenson and Starkweather (2010), specified that knowledge

of corporate culture and individual dynamics were also important soft skills. Belzer's research

focused on what made project managers succeed. Belzer concluded that these specific soft skills

were critical to success in workplace settings regarding project management. Additionally,

Belzer's research demonstrated that important project management soft skills included

"leadership, problem solving and decision making, team building, flexibility/creativity, and

trustworthiness" (p. 665).

Specifically regarding the career transition process, Stevenson and Starkweather (2010)

noted that common characteristics present within successful (executive, white collar) workplace

candidates were "multilevel communication, the ability to complete projects and the ability to

deal with ambiguity and change" (p. 669). Leadership, communication skills, and adaptability

were cited numerous times as most important to successful workplace careers. As cited by

Heckman and Kautz (2012):

> Alfred Binet, the creator of the first IQ test (the Stanford–Binet test), noted that: to
> succeed in his studies, one must have qualities which depend on attention, will, and
> character; a certain docility, a regularity of habits, and especially continuity of effort.
> (p. 454)

As cited by Robles (2012), soft skills are actually misnamed, and are not skills in a

traditional sense. According to Parsons (2008), as cited by Robles (2012), soft skills are actually

character traits, common sense, and self-directed habits. *The Collins English Dictionary*, as cited

by Robles (2012), defines soft skills as "desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that

do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude." Soft skills are character traits, attitudes, and behaviors—rather than technical aptitude or knowledge. Soft skills are the intangible, nontechnical, personality-specific skills that determine one's strengths as a leader, facilitator, mediator, and negotiator.

Heckman and Kautz (2012) noted that soft skills act to both forecast and create workplace and life success. As cited by Robles (2012), some research (John, 2009; Zehr, 1998) argues for soft skills' high significance in career transition success. Robles (2012) cited Evenson (1999), who concluded that teaching soft skills could provide the edge, making students more successful in the hiring process within their chosen field. Klaus (2010), as cited by Robles (2012), concluded that a technically proficient candidate lacking soft skills may achieve career success at a lower level compared to candidates with both strong technical and soft skills. Robles (2012) noted that Sutton (2002) found many occupations ranked soft skills as top priority for new candidates, while Sheikh (2009) and Smith (2007) surmised soft skills proved to be the most vital skills throughout the workplace hierarchy.

Teaching and Assessing Soft Skills

As cited by Gibb (2014), research by Kechagias (2011) found matching mentor professionals with younger professionals was a means to impart soft skills. In a study of dental students, Kechagias (2011) noted that mentorship played an important role in helping young dental students gain important skills such as teamwork and communication. Robles (2012) cited some research that concluded educators were challenged to teach and assess soft skills (Holtom & Bowen, 2007; Zehr, 1998). Kechagias (2011) noted that imparting soft skills was possible,

and useful, for improving individual maturity, learning, and workplace success specifically for college graduates and emerging professionals. Evenson (1999) asserted soft skills could feasibly be included in school curricula by distributing lesson content throughout the semester.

Summary

In Chapter 2, I provided a detailed review of the literature related to the topic of career construction in relation to college access and Division I student-athletics participation regarding an underrepresented minority student who completed college while participating in a revenue-generating sport of football. The chapter begins with an overview of 20th-century career development theories, which led to the formation of Savickas's modern 21st-century Career Construction Theory. Chapter 2 concludes with an in-depth analysis and exploration of Savickas's Career Construction Theory, and its salience regarding collegiate student-athletes. In between the 20th-century career development theories overview and the theoretical framework presentation, I enumerate relevant college access and collegiate athletics subjects and themes found in the literature regarding this research topic. These relevant subjects and themes include specific career development models for elite athletes, dual career development for elite athletes preparing for alternate careers during their playing days, transferable career skills sought by employers, challenges associated with collegiate student-athletics participation including injury, academic clustering, identity foreclosure and exploitation, college to career transitions, and emerging adulthood. Additionally, I highlight current trends within college access and success such as rising costs and completion disparities based on gender and ethnicity, demonstrating the increased difficulty for African American males to complete their bachelor's degrees. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 3, I outline my qualitative case study research methodology to answer my overall research question. I also detail the method used to build the literature review. Additionally, I outline the approach I used to identify the research participant, the data collection, and the analysis plan.

In building the literature review, I conducted extensive content research using the online library databases to secure articles on several areas of my proposed research. Specifically, I used the OneSearch+ features to locate references across multiple databases including ERIC, Education Full Text, Proquest Dissertations, WorldCat, and Sport Discus. I also employed nonlibrary resources including Google Scholar and Google Books. I used combinations and derivations of the following keywords to locate articles, books, and doctoral dissertations: *career maturity*, *athletes*, *student-athletes*, *career development inventory*, *career decision*, and *career decisiveness*. Once I located significant articles, books, and dissertations, I reviewed them and used their literature reviews and references to identify additional sources for inclusion in my literature review. I reviewed relevant documents until I repeatedly found key sources representing key elements of my review. At that point, I organized the literature into the previous sections and drafted the full literature review.

I made the decision to use case study methodology, with a single case for my research. The literature provides several salient features of singular case study methodology that indicate the power and appropriateness of this approach. Yin (2009) noted five valid grounds for using a case study of one, of which I used three to form my research proposal: (1) studying a case to test

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a theory, (2) studying a case that is extreme in nature—something rare, and (3) studying a more typical case that may provide fresh insights into a typical event or set of circumstances. The additional two justifications not relevant to this research included single cases that have rarely been previously studied and are longitudinal. The latter two reasons do not apply, as elite athlete career development transitions have been studied extensively, and as this study represents my first attempt to study this participant. Interestingly, the single case that I looked at is both an extreme case in that the individual's story is unique in several aspects, and also a typical case, in that many aspects are common to a larger group of college athletes of color.

The unique or extreme aspects of Nathaniel's case include Nathaniel's successful completion of college in spite of typically limiting characteristics such as his demographic background as an African American male; his chaotic family background, which included factors such as being first generation in his family to attend college and being a foster care youth; and his participation within college football. The common or typical aspects of Nathaniel's case are his status as an African American college football player who used athletics to access college. I selected Nathaniel as the research precipitant precisely because he presented a combination of both unique and common characteristics I desired to more deeply explore.

I aimed to use this case study of one to tell a unique story by analyzing the career development experiences of this atypical participant. I explored to what degree Nathaniel's demographic background, college access experiences, and collegiate athletic participation influenced his career development via Savickas's Career Construction theoretical model. Through the interview process, relative to the literature review, I explored which of my participant's experiences were typical and which proved to be unique.

Spindler (1987) also provided a rationale for case studies of one participant. In a seminal work, the Beth Anne case, Spindler noted that the case of primary school student Beth Anne was "selected out of a much larger group—not for . . . representativeness but rather for its ideal-typical characteristics" (p. 241). This case "pulls together in one configuration dynamic processes that are present in some form in many other cases" (p. 241). Beth Anne was picked by the author for further study because of the mismatch between her teachers' perceptions of her as a well-adjusted student and evidence that there were considerable educational issues for this individual. Not only was the student fabulously maladjusted, but also the case is seminal in that her academic achievements and behavioral conformity distracted her teachers from the high psychological cost of these seemingly idealistic qualities. Spindler (1987) observed an important phenomenon through this case study. He noted how self-sustaining belief systems sometimes function to rationalize away conflicting information. Beth Ann appeared to live an ideal upper middle class existence but was actually living a marginalized and isolated one. Analogously, I believe my research participant revealed a contrast between his idealized existence as a high-profile collegiate student-athlete, and the challenges he and former teammates experienced to live said existence.

Additionally, Hartman (2014) created an auto-ethnographic, narrative article recounting her experiences as a scholarship recipient Division I collegiate women's basketball player. Her research provided unique insights into the experiences of collegiate athletes, going beyond the glamorous media portrayals of privileged student-athletes. Hartman (2014) vividly told of her struggles to continue her education after she was abruptly cut from her team without notice via a seemingly capricious coaching decision. I aimed to add to this body of research with a long

format narrative account exploring the nuanced experiences of a male scholarship recipient former Division I student-athlete who recounted his past collegiate experiences in the context of his current career development pathway.

Lindemann (2009) suggested personal narratives as a vehicle to provide insight into lived experiences, specifically from the sporting community, which is inaccessible through other forms of research. Lindemann (2009) wrote, "As authors attempt to capture their bodily experiences in the community of sport, they illustrate the process of writing by explicitly acknowledging the inability of social science research and writing to fully capture the lived experience" (para. 28). According to Lindemann (2009), narrative allows for dynamic, authentic identity creation. Fundamental to Career Construction Theory (Savickas & Solberg, 2009), narratives provide agency to participants to create authentic interpretations of their career identities, and life designs.

Lally (2007) cited the "importance of the interviewer-participant relationship in a phenomenological study" in positing the value of the interviewer providing some relevant information of himself or herself to the participant (p. 88). As cited by Lally (2007), I reviewed the research plan with the participant and began each interview with an overview or grand tour question (Berg, 1995; Seidman, 1991; Wolcott, 1995) such as, "Tell me about your family life growing up," or "Describe your experience as a collegiate football player," (p. 90). Also as cited by Lally (2007), I created field notes, after I recorded the participant's personal narrative during the three interviews to capture relevant nonverbal behaviors in order to enrich data analysis, and elaborate and clarify the participant's narrative references, specifically regarding career identity

construction in relation to his retirement from competitive sports (Weiss, Smith, & Theeboom, 1996).

Similar to Lally's (2007) methodology for interviewing elite athletes regarding their postathletic career transitions into new vocational areas, I created a list of probes generated from ongoing transcript analysis to engage further dialogue regarding topics from earlier interviews and "to check my emerging interpretations with the participant's" (p. 90). Using emergent open coding practices, as cited by Lally (2007), I analyzed my interview data immediately after having each interview transcribed, in preparation for the subsequent interviews (Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993; Côte, Salmela, & Russell, 1995; Miller & Kerr, 2002).

Regarding analysis, as cited by Russell (1993), I initially "separate[d] the first transcribed interview into a series of meaning units" or, as coined by Tesch (1990), "segments of text that express a single thought or idea" (p. 131). These meaning units were then mapped to my research question and the themes outlined through the literature review. I also used member checking, as described by Lally (2007), of interview transcripts to ensure trustworthiness and accuracy from the participant's perspective. Member checking provided the opportunity for the research participant, Nathaniel Williams (a pseudonym), to confirm or correct his statements, as well as process our dialogical narrative experiences for reflection and further expansion where appropriate. Nathaniel took the opportunity to confirm nearly all his statements, and expound upon topics of most interest to him.

As mentioned above, Park et al. (2012) identified research gaps in testing career development conceptual models such as Taylor and Ogilvie's (1994). Additional research gaps were identified by Kornspan (2014) regarding narratives for career transitions of elite athletes

into nonathletic careers. Methodologically, most qualitative studies use individual interviews

and thematic transcript analysis, while most quantitative studies use survey instruments and

descriptive statistical analysis for data collection and analysis (Park, Lavallee, & Tod, 2013).

Park suggested further research exploring athletic transitions out of sport via interpretative

phenomenological analysis and narrative analysis including "focus groups, case studies and

action research methods" (p. 42).

The data were first processed using an inductive open coding method as described by

Russell (1993). According to Russell (1993), "elements, categories, patterns and relationships

between properties emerge from the analysis of the data and are not predetermined" (p. 129).

This coding process worked well to find patterns within Nathaniel's narratives, based on the

Savickas framework of subjectively constructing meaning within his career. I read through each

interview transcript several times to identify meaning unit elements, coded these, organized them

into categories, and finally grouped the categories into patterns. The patterns that emerged from

the data through this process were: ambivalence, performance prioritization/competitive spirit,

practical mindset/good judgment, and value of selected communities. This process served to

first decontextualize data, and then recontextualize it based on Smith's (1990) process, as cited

by Russell (1993), which includes the coding experience, inductive inference, and similarity. Per

Glaser and Strauss (1967), as cited by Russell (1993), I confirmed completion of my analysis by

looking for theoretical saturation where data were organized into singular patterns without

needing additional tags or classifications. The patterns used in this study, their description, and

the elements related to each pattern are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Patterns and Elements from Participant Interviews

Pattern Title	Pattern Description	Elements Related to Pattern
Ambivalence	Nathaniel's conflicted thoughts on his career path	Failings in professional football attempts/denial. Multiple professional goals. Career compromises. Academic clustering/History major.
Performance Prioritization/ Competitive Spirit	Nathaniel prioritized/ prioritizes top level performance in most career activities. He is intrinsically and extrinsically motivated by competition.	Puts great effort into all work, and always strives for success. Wants to leave strong legacy. Observed successful behaviors and adopted them to increase his success. Thorough and proactive leader. Always prepared.
Practical Mindset/ Good Judgment	Nathaniel's career path appears linear, despite competing thoughts/desires. He made thoughtful decisions and incorporated examples from peers and mentors to improve himself and grow in knowledge and performance.	Regularly sets short- & long-term career goals. Took rational approach to evaluate pros and cons of different career desires. Focused on pathway that fit desired lifestyle and self-identified skill set. Conscientious, consistent, reliable. Used mentors and Christian faith to make key decisions.
Value of Selected Communities	Nathaniel's perspective on work is based on a community mindset. He values family, school, football, and workplace communities.	School focused, youth focused. Enjoys contributing to valued communities. Cherishes athletic camaraderie. Empathy for teammates/ football players. Wants to set positive example.

Research Questions

The above methodological approach was used to answer the research questions set forth in this study:

1. What are the experiences of a former National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I football player who transitions from college to a postathletic career?

    a. What challenges, if any, does he face as he transitions into a career upon completing college as a student-athlete?

    b. What impact, if any, did participation in Division I college football have on his career development?

I conducted interviews over the course of three sessions. Interviews were semistructured with preplanned questions (See Appendix A). I created ample space for additional questions to emerge in the interview process. Interview questions were developed from the research, following themes outlined above in the literature review. I also developed interview questions from the theoretical framework of Savickas's Career Construction Theory, aiming to uncover the process whereby the participant formed his new career path upon retiring from elite athletics.

Within this framework, I explored the participant's past experiences of college access and family history. Next, I explored the participant's experiences of being a Division I revenue-generating collegiate student-athlete, and developed questions on topics outlined in Chapter II regarding his perceptions of exploitation, power imbalances between himself and coaches, academic clustering, and role engulfment.

Additionally, I explored the participant's sense of his ability to conduct dual career development while participating as a Division I revenue-generating student-athlete. I also asked

the participant questions related to the themes of developing transferable or soft skills, alongside the relation of his chosen course of undergraduate study to his career path and objectives. Additionally, I asked open-ended questions to assess the participant's perspective on his career path, his satisfaction with it, and to what degree his collegiate student-athlete participation impacted and influenced his career transition from college to his current career.

Research Design

Context

The research participant completed his bachelor's degree from State University (a pseudonym) in 2008. State University is located in a major urban city within the United Sates. According to information from State University's website, the university educates more than 40,000 students each year, including nearly 30,000 undergraduates and more than 10,000 graduate students in myriad bachelor's degree, master's degree, and professional/doctoral level programs. The student body is diverse, including international students. However, the student body does not reflect the demographics of the United States. African American males are underrepresented in the university relative to their United States population. State University aims to create, disseminate, preserve, and apply knowledge to improve our global society. To this end, State University values free access to information, open dialogue, and diversity in all endeavors. Additionally, the context includes a robust and historically successful athletics department. For example, State University claims dozens of team national athletic championships, including football.

ENROLLMENT

Summary, Fall 2014

Total	43,301

Undergraduate	29,585
New Freshmen	5,679
New Transfers	3,107
Graduate	12,323
Interns and Residents	1,393

Full Time

Undergraduate	29,033
Graduate	12,934

GENDER

Women	56%
Men	44%

African American / Black	4.0%
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian / Pacific Islander	33.5%
Hispanic	19.1%
White	27.1%
Domestic, race/ethnicity unknown	3.1%
International	12.6%

Figure 1. Summary of State University fall enrollment, 2014.
(Note: The source of this data is confidential, to preserve the research participant's anonymity.)

Participant

The study's participant is Nathaniel Williams (a pseudonym). Nathaniel was purposively selected due to his unique characteristics I aimed to study. He is a bachelor's degree holder (in history) from State University who successfully competed within Division I college football each year during his undergraduate tenure. Additionally, Nathaniel graduated more than seven years prior to this study. In that time he has successfully launched a postathletic career working in education as a teacher, fundraiser, and football coach. Nathaniel is an African American male college graduate who completed his bachelor's degree in spite of personal characteristics that could have prevented it. As outlined in the literature review above, Nathaniel's ethnic background, low-income socioeconomic status, foster care youth experiences, male gender, and participation in college football typically reduce the probability of college completion. He is unique and thus atypical as an underrepresented minority college completer. While overrepresented as an African American male playing college football, he is underrepresented as a successful college graduate from State University. From Nathaniel's case I learned about his unique experiences regarding an atypically successful elite athlete's transition into a nonplaying career after college graduation and bachelor's degree attainment.

Procedures

In conducting this case study, I interviewed a single former collegiate student-athlete alumnus from local State University who graduated nearly eight years prior. He completed his elite athletic playing career approximately five years ago after retiring from a brief professional football career. In November 2015, I conducted a progressive series of three in-depth interviews over the course of three consecutive weekends. I also selected Nathaniel for his availability and

willingness to participate for the duration of the study. I interviewed the participant for approximately two hours per session.

Each interview began with its own focus based on the themes uncovered within the literature review. Interview questions were based on the following themes: collegiate student-athletics participation, exploitation, role engulfment, academic clustering, college access, transferrable skills development, undergraduate bachelors degree relevance to career path and career goals, dual career development, emerging adulthood, individual demographics/family history and career construction/career narrative. I grouped interview questions with themes based on a loose chronology of precollege, college, and postcollege experiences.

During the first interview session, I asked the participant questions regarding the themes of individual demographics/family history and college access. During the second interview session I asked the participant questions regarding the themes of collegiate student athletics participation, exploitation, role engulfment, academic clustering and dual career development. During the third and final interview session, I asked the participant questions regarding the themes of transferable skills development, undergraduate bachelor's degree relevance to career path and career goals, and his ongoing career construction/career narrative.

These groupings allowed in-depth exploration of many topics to answer my research questions regarding career development experiences of the participant. Separating the interviews into multiple parts provided ample time to explore the nuanced experiences related to career development for this former Division I revenue-generating student-athlete. Between sessions, I also shared interview transcriptions with the participant. Sharing transcripts with the participant allowed him to fact-check, and make clarifications or corrections. I provided him the

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opportunity to speak spontaneously during the face-to-face interviews, but also reflect on his responses and propose clarifications afterward. Last, the interview structure and procedures aimed to progressively build toward answering the research question. Career Construction Theory posits that career development is built over time, influenced by myriad factors, and dynamically related to current economic conditions. In analyzing the findings, I used Savickas CCT to understand and discuss patterns noted within Nathaniel's responses to better understand how the participant was influenced by his experiences as a student-athlete, in developing his current career path. The data collected were first processed using an inductive open coding method as described by Russell (1993).

I collected and analyzed data from one participant. I selected my participant to utilize the strength of a case study of one, according to Yin (2009). Specifically, the participant I recruited possessed many salient characteristics related to themes found in the college access, college student-athlete participation, and Career Construction Theory literature. I sought a participant whose background characteristics aligned with the literature. Regarding college access literature, the research participant possessed the following characteristics: former foster care youth, low-income family background, African American race, and male gender. Regarding college student-athletics participation, the research participant played a revenue-generating sport (football) and possessed characteristics such as successful Division I football participation (significant playing time and athletic honors), participation in sports his entire college career until graduation, attendance at a local university (to ease access for myself as the researcher), completion of his bachelor's degree within six years of inception, and some academic success (high GPA or academic honors). Regarding Career Construction Theory, the research participant

had permanently transitioned from elite sports and had spent over five years building a new career after completing his college degree, making him an ideal candidate for this research study.

To conduct interviews, I secured neutral space in public restaurants. I arranged meetings at locations convenient for the participant to reach. I aimed to create a comfortable and inviting environment for each interview. I recorded the participant, with his permission, using one audio recording device. Interview durations in their entirety lasted approximately 90–150 minutes per interview session, including recording times, and before and after recording discussions. I scheduled and completed all interviews within three consecutive weekends during November 2015.

Data Collection/Instrumentation

I created interview questions based on the theoretical framework and other significant literature reviewed herein. My interview questions explored the salient experiential issues of career construction relative to the experiences of an African American former collegiate student-athlete who competed within a revenue-generating sport, football. The full list of interview questions based on themes and categories from the literature review appears in Appendix A.

Data Processing and Analysis

I collected data by conducting face-to-face interviews with the participant. I also took notes to record visual cues, as well as recorded each interview using one recording device. I submitted digital recording files to www.rev.com for professional transcription. I then analyzed the completed interview transcriptions, searching for patterns. As described by Russell (1993), I conducted an inductive pattern analysis. Interview data were gathered via questions generated from multiple salient themes in the literature review and the theoretical framework.

Internal and External Validity

Between sessions, I conducted member checking by sharing interview transcriptions with the participant (Lally, 2007). Sharing transcripts with Nathaniel afforded him the chance to check his responses, and make changes where he deemed necessary. Also, transcript review supported the overall reflective narrative aspects of Savickas's Career Construction Theory by allowing the participant to meditate on his responses in preparation for the next interview. I provided the participant numerous opportunities to speak openly during each face-to-face interview. Last, the interview structure and procedures progressively built toward answering the research question by beginning with the participant's most distant recollections and ending with his current state and future goals. Interview data were analyzed using an inductive open coding process.

Throughout my analysis, I sought to understand how the participant made meaning of his environment and life experiences relative to career development. I first explored the former student-athlete's career aspirations to provide a context for how he approaches career development. Next, I examined his responses for potential life themes touched on throughout transcribed recollections of personal experiences, which unpacked what was most influential to his processes of career construction. Finally, I used his narrative accounts of life experiences to learn how he constructed career identity (Self-Concept) and life trajectory (Life Design).

Limitations, Delimitations, Assumptions

This study on the participant's college to career transition is delimited to a focus on a student-athlete's career development experiences after completing college. There are numerous populations to segment and research, but I have chosen a student-athlete to focus my research in

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order to explore his unique life path. This unique path includes unique opportunities for praise, adulation, and access, but also intense pressures and temporal demands. Also, I delimited this study by collecting data over a short and intensely focused period of time. Through this research I assumed my positionality as an African American educator and former college football player helped elicit truthful responses from the participant that were analyzable and authentic data.

Summary

This chapter describes the methodology used in this case study and presents the patterns that emerged from the pattern analysis. I used qualitative methods to investigate the phenomena of a former collegiate student-athlete transitioning into a nonathletic career after completing his bachelor's degree. I used multiple interviews to explore his career development experiences via Savickas's Career Construction Theory. Using a single case study, I uncovered rich, detailed narratives to add to the existing body of literature regarding college to career transitions for elite athletes.

In Chapter Three I outline my research methodology to answer my overall research question. I conducted a detailed literature review of the salient topics related to college access, collegiate athletics participation for a Division I student-athlete, and subsequent career construction, and I describe the participant selection processes. Additionally, I describe the methods of data collection and analysis in this single case study in light of the research literature gaps, and in search of answers to my research question. Chapter Four presents the findings from the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This research aims to explore the career development experiences of an African American male former Division I revenue-generating student-athlete who competed within football. The interview data reveal four significant patterns present within Nathaniel Williams's career development experiences. Nathaniel's career experiences since transitioning from college to his current career level are strongly influenced by the patterns enumerated in chapter 3: ambivalence, performance prioritization/competitive spirit, practical mindset/good judgment, and value of selected communities. In Chapter 4, I first briefly restate the research context, the research methodology used to collect and analyze data, and a summary of my research findings. I will share the results from this research in detail, including examples of the aforementioned four chief patterns.

Via the extensive literature review, I developed questions based on the salient themes of college access, collegiate student-athletics participation and Career Construction Theory. All interview questions aimed to explore the following research question and subquestions:

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of a former National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I football player who transitions from college to a postathletic career?

   a. What challenges, if any, does he face as he transitions into a career upon completing college as a student-athlete?

   b. What impact, if any, did participation within Division I college football have on his career development?

The Case of Nathaniel Williams

The participant self-reports as an African American male, 30 years old. He possessed a large athletic build, standing over 6 feet 3 inches in height, and greater than 250 pounds. This was a reduced weight from his college playing days, when he weighed closer to 300 pounds at the time. He was recently married to a Latina of similar age, and they planned to have children in the future.

Nathaniel mentioned his early years growing up were tumultuous. He was born in Texas, and later moved to California after briefly living in Indiana. He grew up in a family with eight siblings. His parents divorced early in his life. Although his mother achieved a master's degree, she did not support his educational goals to reach college. Both parents were legally deemed unfit parents, and thus faded from his life before he reached high school. Nathaniel bounced from home to home, school to school, staying with different family members and friends during his early youth and adolescent years. Eventually he became a ward of the courts—a foster care youth—for an extended period of time. This period involved much travel in and out of state. These experiences impressed a strong sense of gratitude, humility, and resilience upon him.

Nathaniel's early attraction to football reflected the athlete role models he gravitated toward early in life. His attraction to football as a youth also reflected findings in the research (Hanna, 2012) citing the benefits of participation, including self-esteem, peer camaraderie, positive interactions with adults, and physical fitness. He stated:

> For me, it was an outlet of to not be home, actually. I loved hanging out with my friends . . . and . . . I knew I was a special player. I just knew I was good at it.

With this positive reinforcement, and escape from a somewhat tumultuous family life, Nathaniel was emboldened by sport, specifically football participation, at an early age. Influenced by televised football contests beginning in fourth grade, he started lifting weights to get bigger and stronger. In sixth grade he set the goal to play professional football. Consistent with research on elite athletics participation for adults, Nathaniel began sacrificing his health by prematurely strength training, in order to compete.

Beginning in ninth grade, Nathaniel experienced several important positive turning points. He gained long-desired stability in school and his family. Nathaniel moved to a small Southern California city and entered the local public high school. Nathaniel's older brother Mike (pseudonym) became his guardian. Nathaniel gleefully remarked how during high school he "was able to have one home, one school my whole time." He reflected upon, and expressed, his sincere gratitude for, reaching this point of educational and family stability during his four years of high school.

During high school, Nathaniel blossomed into a star football player. He competed for his varsity high school team four consecutive years beginning in ninth grade, which is an elite accomplishment. Additionally, he helped his teams win three state championships during those four years. For him, reaching college meant competing in the next level of football, which

represented a long-held goal, and the pathway to his longer held goal of playing professional football.

College access and equity. Football was intricately linked to Nathaniel's college access experiences. Although Nathaniel benefited from numerous external and internal positive influences such as an older sister in college, and a guardian/older brother who encouraged him to do well within high school academics, his college access achievement was largely self-motivated and focused on football. Nathaniel entered college at 18 years old, and completed his bachelor's degree at 23 years old. Similar to Lombardi et al.'s (2012) conclusion that coaches heavily influence student-athlete college access decisions, Nathaniel's pathway was strongly influenced by the coaches who recruited him. Strikingly, prior to coaches making contact with him, Nathaniel dreamed of accessing college in order to participate within football. In response to my questions, "When did you believe you were going to go to college, or when did you start to desire to go to college?" he remarked:

> I remember my freshman year I went to the State University game versus Iron College (pseudonym). Ryan Collins (pseudonym) had 300 yards rushing, it was a big-time game! I went with a couple friends, and I told my friends, I was like, "Guys, one day, I want to come here and play college football." At the time, I really didn't know what college was, I thought it was just a stepping stone to play football. I didn't know it was an education or anything, I wasn't aware of it.

Nathaniel made a verbal commitment to State University during his junior year in high school; however, he experienced academic challenges that threatened his college matriculation. When I asked, "Was there ever a time that you didn't think you were going to go to college?" he responded:

> [I]n high school, I didn't pass my SAT. I realized…if I don't pass the SAT, I won't be able to get in. . . . I didn't study at all because I felt like I was top dog, you'll [State University] get me in.

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He overcame this challenge by using his (preprofessional) transferable interpersonal and communication skills. He remarked:

> They were still scared to take a chance on me, but I promised all the coaches. I told them—I was straight up. "I didn't study for these tests; I just didn't do what I should've done. I promise you I'll go to college, I'll pass, and I'll be okay."

The State University coaching staff accepted Nathaniel's explanation and continued recruiting him, helping him matriculate and compete for their team. He did keep his word, by successfully graduating and performing at a high level each year for his college team.

Similar to high school, college also represented a subsequently new form of life stability for Nathaniel. The intersection of his individual demographics and family history led him initially to view college as an oasis. He stated:

> Aside from football, I felt like college would give me another place to call home . . . I realized, in four years in high school, I knew my time was up. My brother told me, "When you graduate high school, you got to move out." I did my research, full-ride [athletic scholarship] school would pay for your food, living, room and board, everything. In my mind, I realized, "Okay, I bought another four or five years of my life to live somewhere."

Nathaniel added his first impressions of his new college home, stating:

> I took a walk around campus, and I realized how big this was. It hit me, like, "Wow, I'm actually here." My freshman year, when I got to campus, I'm really shocked how big it was. I had never toured the campus before.

Interestingly, Nathaniel was a top recruit who had actually taken a recruiting trip to the university, but had not received a complete tour of the campus.

Regarding college access and diversity, I inquired about the racial climate perceived by Nathaniel during his State University tenure. An exclusive public university, State University boasts an African American male population under 4% of the student body, while the football team boasts a nearly 50% analogous population. Despite the university lacking ethnic diversity,

Nathaniel did not experience discrimination or negative encounters on campus due to his race.

He did notice the high probability that most African American males he met on campus were

also participating as student-athletes. He remarked:

> At State University, all my years, whenever seeing that minority [student], African
> American, we knew they had played sport. We used to make jokes, like, "What sport do
> you play?" "I run track." It was hilarious. I remember, it was funny at the time, but
> looking back . . . It's really sad. . . . I hope it changed [since my day]. . . . My last year at
> State, I saw so many more African Americans that were just students and not athletes.
> That made me happy, because I know how challenging it is to get in. I wouldn't have
> gotten into State University, if it wasn't for being a football player.

Nathaniel hoped that more African Americans, and other underrepresented students, were

attending and completing college degrees at State University. The gap between college

completion percentages for the general student body (90%), and the African American football

players (46%) deeply disturbed Nathaniel. We discussed this educational equity disparity during

each of our three interviews. When conducting member checking and transcript review,

Nathaniel restarted the conversation around these challenges. He was hopeful that the issues

were getting better, and that coaches and administrators were offering more support. He also

hoped student-athletes were taking greater responsibility and applying more effort to academics.

Last, he connected this topic to his current work, helping players achieve the same kind of

success he has achieved.

Collegiate student-athletics participation. Nathaniel achieved a high level of success

while participating in college football. He became a full time starter during his first year on the

team. He later achieved All-Conference honors, denoting him as a top player within the 10-team

league. During his senior year, he was elected team captain, unanimously selected by teammates

and coaches. Nathaniel competed at this high level during each of his four seasons on the State University team.

Socially and experientially, Nathaniel greatly enjoyed the camaraderie and unique football playing experiences. He relished the bonds he termed a "brotherhood" between himself and teammates. He credited teammates for helping him mature, and gain practical skills such as money management and communication skills. He also greatly appreciated the game day experiences of competing in front of thousands of fans. Lastly, Nathaniel enjoyed representing his university and making a contribution to the large school community via his successful football efforts.

Academically, the time-consuming football schedule challenged Nathaniel. However, he prominently displayed gratitude throughout the interviews toward the university despite challenges he faced by participating within football during his collegiate experience. For example, Nathaniel expressed gratitude regarding the academic support he received via the athletic department. Nathaniel stated:

> All the access, all the help you got, wow. We had tutors going to the class with us. Then, at night, we have tutoring sessions with them . . . They could take notes. . . . Then, at night, you have tutoring classes. Each class . . . probably . . . 10 football players a class, so all the football players, we stick together. Then, at night, we meet with a tutor again, go over the classes of notes.

Nathaniel believed the academic support was more than adequate to help him and his peers succeed. He stated:

> To fail in college our freshman year, you had to try really hard. You have so much support with the tutors.

Nathaniel also described the centralized State University academic center and study lounges for athletes, which also housed coaches' offices, access to computers, class and textbook

procurement, and peer tutors as the most helpful resources that enabled him to succeed academically.

Academic clustering, role engulfment, and identify foreclosure. Although academics were prioritized and supported by the university, to some degree Nathaniel experienced negative consequences. He spoke passionately about the academic clustering, or forced majors, he experienced due to his football participation. He remarked:

> The downside of it, as an athlete, I didn't get a chance to do things I wanted to do because of my schedule. I was limited to do three majors: history, psych, and poli-sci. I had no choice. History was my major, so I believe, as an athlete, something has to change.

Nathaniel reported that control of players' schedules and time led to elements of role engulfment during his collegiate football participation. He stated:

> Football, working out at 6 AM. Then meetings and everything. My day was from 6 AM to 10 PM at night every day. It was tough.

Due to the role engagement of football dominating his time, Nathaniel had limited availability to engage in social and cultural experiences such as African American-related campus clubs, or creating friendships with nonathletes. Additionally, and positively, limited free time helped reduce his exposure to getting into troubling situations. Specifically, coaches scheduled players' training time, heavily influenced their class schedules, and asserted semiofficial curfews to ensure student-athletes focused on sport and school primarily.

Injury. Nathaniel discussed collegiate student-athletics experiences dealing with various personal injuries suffered and witnessed by teammates. Dealing with injury within the context of football, Nathaniel learned valuable life lessons and transferrable career construction skills he

draws on today. For example, Nathaniel mentioned how football-related injuries helped him apply determination to academic studies during college, and career development after college. He stated:

> I appreciate those values that college really instilled with me. Football really instilled, "Do whatever it takes, get a job done. Get a job done, whatever it takes. Broke a finger in a game? Tape it up, go." Everything, I use that in life. From 18 to 23 years, from high school to college, I learned those key, hard values . . . it plays in my mind to this day. . . . It was a big growing experience for me.

Nathaniel experienced broken bones, knee surgery, and sprained ankles, for which he took cortisone shots to the bone weekly in order to compete in games. In one instance he broke a finger during a game, and was forced by a coach to return to the game within two plays, after receiving a splint to stabilize the joint, and a pain pill to numb the discomfort. Nathaniel also experienced, and witnessed his teammates experiencing, numerous concussions that have left him with lingering migraines, light sensitivity, and occasional forgetfulness. Yet, Nathaniel describes these injury experiences as beneficial to his personal development, adding:

> Nothing ever fazes me nowadays, because I've been through it all. State University … toughened me up academically and athletically. That's why I truly appreciate that as well.

Exploitation. Nathaniel presented a contrarian view on topics related to student-athlete unionization and compensation beyond the athletic scholarship. He believed college athletes should not be paid, but should receive increased stipends if they attend a college in an expensive city such as State University's location. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to play college football, yet felt somewhat exploited given the financial struggles he experienced due to the higher cost of housing within State University's local area. He concluded by stating:

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I think athletes need to appreciate more. When you get to the top like that, as an athlete, you just really want more, but it shouldn't be that way. I remember when I got there, I was so excited. I didn't care what I got. They give you everything you need, anything you need. Everything else is just want, "I want this."

Career path after college. Upon college graduation, Nathaniel embarked upon his first career, playing professional football. Nathaniel reached this long-held goal immediately upon completing his bachelor's degree and completing his college playing career. Nathaniel reached this goal but failed to sustain his professional football career beyond three years.

After completing his three-year professional football career, Nathaniel began preparing for his current career working in education. He first secured part-time positions educating foster youth, and coaching ninth grade high school football. He later spent one year as a fundraising associate for State University external affairs. Next, he became a history teacher at one local Catholic school. Subsequently he secured a dual role in fundraising and football coaching at a different Catholic school. Currently he works in fundraising, substitute teaches, and coaches football for a larger, more prominent Catholic school, having been recruited to this position by a former supervisor at a previous Catholic school. He expressed great satisfaction with his current role, and confidence that his recent and current work experiences would help him reach his current career goal of becoming a head football coach at a large Catholic high school.

Nathaniel's Career Construction: Overview

Nathaniel presented himself as a 30-year-old African American male. He was currently pursuing a career in education. Specifically, he currently worked within multiple roles at a coeducational Catholic high school. His job duties included assistant high school football coach, development (fundraising) associate, and substitute teacher. Nathaniel's position reflected an upward trajectory within his career path. He has attained a succession of education-related work

positions upon his full-time retirement from elite collegiate and then professional athletics.

Nathaniel's long-term career goals included becoming a top division (most competitive) high

school football coach, and athletic director within a parochial school similar to his current

employer. Through the remainder of Chapter 4, I present the data regarding Nathaniel's career

development experiences since college completion, specifically as they reveal four important

patterns: ambivalence, performance prioritization/competitive spirit, practical mindset/good

judgment, and value of selected communities.

Ambivalence

Nathaniel's career development pathway since college to this current point was

influenced by a strong presence of ambivalence. His attitude of ambivalence was demonstrated

repeatedly during our multiple interview sessions. The main object toward which he expressed

ambivalence was his career choice. Nathaniel at times expressed conviction toward his chosen

career path of educator/coach. Within the same interview session, and different interview

sessions, Nathaniel expressed dismay toward his current career path, and a preference for an

alternative career path. In other instances, Nathaniel expressed closure toward no longer desiring

the alternative career paths.

Chosen career path, educator/coach. We discussed Nathaniel's current career path

during each interview session. Throughout each interview session he made contradictory

statements regarding his pathway into Education. During Interview I, for example, when

discussing his choice of college major he remarked:

> Because of my [football] schedule, I was limited to do three majors: history, psych, and
> poli-sci. . . . People say, "What can you do with a history major?" Well, you could teach,
> but that's not really my overall thing I wanted to do.

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However, during Interview II, when asked what dual career development activities he engaged in during college to prepare for his career upon graduation, Nathaniel remarked:

> Okay. I was in college, I knew I was . . . well, my major was history because I knew I wanted to teach. That was like a thing, history major, teach.

In concurrence with literature cited in previous chapters on academic clustering (Adler & Adler, 1991), Nathaniel described feeling constrained to an undergraduate history major in one instance, while seemingly embracing it in another. During that Interview II sequence mentioned above, Nathaniel continued describing the teacher prep courses he took while attending State University and the education and coaching work he did with youth each summer during his undergraduate years. Toward the latter stage of Interview III, Nathaniel expressed an important sentiment regarding his chosen career path. He stated, "With education, I feel like I do what I love coaching football, and be around kids." This statement represented a confirmation of an earlier moment when he remarked:

> I worked really well with kids. I wanted to tailor-make my career to working with kids, whether coaching, or working with at-risk kids, underprivileged kids.

> Nathaniel made the commitment to take his career deeper into the educator pathway.

Regarding his long-term ambitions, he stated:

> I don't want to be a 30-year substitute teacher; I want to be a head football coach, an athletic director.

He aimed to attain these positions within a setting identical or similar to his current employer, a private parochial school. Nathaniel's ambivalence toward this career goal had not stopped him from actively attaining positions, and moving his career within an upward trajectory. Since graduating college, Nathaniel described a succession of increasingly meaningful positions he had attained, all within the field of education, including group home work with developmentally

challenged students, fundraising for his college alma mater and his current job, substitute

teaching, and coaching football. Within the Savickas framework, Nathaniel's experiences

amount to a career path because he selectively narrates them in context with related future goals.

   Alternate career path fantasies. Nathaniel's ambivalence toward his current career

stems from his imagined other career paths. Two alternate career identities emerged during the

interview process. Nathaniel conceived of himself as a potential kinesiologist/sports trainer. He

also conceived of himself as a possible firefighter. Nathaniel strongly desired to pursue

kinesiology studies when entering college. He felt deceived by the coaching staff when he

arrived at State University and realized the curriculum offered no degree in the subject.

Nathaniel reported that during the recruiting process State University coaches informed him that

the school offered a kinesiology major, and he discovered they offered no such major once he

matriculated. Upon reflection, during Interview III he offered closure toward this former

ambition, stating:

> kinesiology, I don't think for now I'd be wanting to do anything in sports training. . . . I
> was so upset that they [State University] didn't have it. But now, ok, that's not where I
> want to be at now.

> Nathaniel's fantasy regarding firefighting has not abated since his precollege days.

Dating back to high school, Nathaniel reflected:

> I always felt like I wanted to be a firefighter. . . . Honestly, I wanted to be firefighter
> more than I wanted to play a football player. If football didn't take me to college, if I
> didn't get a full ride, I definitely would've went [*sic*] full steam ahead to be a firefighter.

Nathaniel felt an extremely strong attraction to the idea of becoming a firefighter. However,

during this same section of Interview I, he described his fourth year after college graduation

when he attempted training courses to pursue this dream. He stated:

After I did a couple ride-alongs and went to a couple hospitals to work a 12-hour shift, internship stuff there, I realized, "Okay, this is not for me." I'm comfortable now knowing that.

Nathaniel remarked that he lacked the commitment necessary to be successful in a firefighting career. Yet Nathaniel's ambivalence toward this strongly held alternate career identity continued throughout our remaining interviews. This ambivalence crescendoed during Interview III, when I asked if he still desired to pursue the firefighter career. He replied, stating, to my surprise:

Yes. You know it's hard to let it go. . . . I didn't think I had it in me to do it . . . I closed that door. I'm definitely at peace with it.

When I asked him to further explain this dynamic, he replied:

I closed the door, but I have the key so I can open it back up.

Professional football. Nathaniel's earliest career goal was to play professional football. He achieved this goal for approximately three years after his collegiate football career ended. His professional football experiences included brief stints competing within the National Football League (NFL), United Sates Football League (USFL), Canadian Football League (CFL), and Arena Football League. He achieved a modest level of success within professional football after college given the average National Football League career lasts approximately three years (Ducking, Groothuis, & Hill, 2015). His modest level of success appeared to produce the ambivalence response during our interview dialogues. For example, Nathaniel was unable to maintain a job within the highest level of professional football for even one entire season. He used a defense mechanism to explain this fact. He stated:

I got released from the Redskins during training camp . . . it is a numbers game; everyone knows the NFL is all about numbers.

During Interview II, Nathaniel described setting the goal to play professional football as a 10-year-old. At the time, the dream slipping away appeared to cause Nathaniel to develop ambivalence toward this goal. He stated:

> It's hard to go to bed every night knowing tomorrow you could be sent home, at the drop of a dime, no matter how good you are, even if you practice bad . . . when you don't have control over your career . . . I couldn't live like that.

Nathaniel's ambivalence resulted from his dream of professional football not matching his reality. In the end, Nathaniel surmised that he possessed the talent to continue professional football, stating, "I still felt like I had a lot of football in me," although his short career proved otherwise. Unfortunately, Nathaniel's talent, and intolerance for uncertainty, did not allow him to achieve this dearly held goal.

Summary of Ambivalence Pattern

Nathaniel's career path since college completion includes experiences of success and failure. His failings, whether caused by circumstantial or personal limitations, appear to produce an ambivalence reaction, an important element of his career narrative and developmental process. While he has settled on his current educator career pathway, he does remain conflicted about his previously held goals of professional football player and firefighter. While he achieved the former, his success did not match his high level of high school or college student-athlete success. Regarding the latter, he explored the firefighter career both during college and after his professional football career concluded. At both times, he voluntarily discontinued these pursuits. These two examples highlight challenges Nathaniel experienced in transitioning into careers upon college completion. Ambivalence appeared to be a coping method regarding Nathaniel's conflict between his self-image dreams and his personal limitations.

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Performance Prioritization/Competitive Spirit

Nathaniel's career development experiences were also informed by his strong desire to

perform well, which was fueled by his competitive spirit. I noted within Nathaniel's chosen

career path of educator/coach his strong work ethic and desire to achieve. His current career

achievements seem attributable to his strong work ethic and desire to be great. For example, in

describing his work ethic, Nathaniel stated:

> I believe every day's a grind. You have to love the grind…whether you're either CEO of
> a company or a dish washer, every day's a grind . . . I believe hard work pays off . . . just
> being committed to everything you do.

Nathaniel's career path seems aptly surmised by his description of the attitude he brings

to each workday. He remarked:

> So with my [current] position at work, even though I'm not the principal, I definitely
> want to lead by example with a great attitude.

He continued:

> So at work I focus on one day. How can I be my best today?

Providing a specific example, Nathaniel explained how he applies consistency to achieve his

desired results on the job. In his current role, he described his approach to substitute teaching:

> I really try to be consistent with . . . the little things . . . arriving on time, following up
> with emails, uh . . . making sure I'm consistent in the classroom. Like when I do sub, I
> don't want to sub one classroom loosely. I make sure I'm consistent throughout all my
> classrooms, so all the kids whenever they do report back to regular teachers that he was
> tough, and good in [the] substitute role.

Regarding his views on long-term career growth, he asserted, "I always want to do

more." He elaborated:

> I feel like I have not hit my peak yet. I feel like I'm a success, but there's a lot more to
> come.

Objectively, Nathaniel has achieved a high level of success if one includes him attaining

a bachelor's degree, playing professional football, and working at a series of increasingly

meaningful jobs in his chosen career field. However, he is driven to achieve more.

Nathaniel's competitive nature began as a youth. He described early recollections of

fitness training as a 10-year-old, in response to his newly set goal of becoming a professional

football player. He continued this performance prioritization pattern into college. Nathaniel

achieved excellent results as a collegiate student-athlete. In response to my question whether he

achieved all of his athletic goals, he replied:

> Looking back, no, I wanted to do more. I wanted to be an All-American . . . I wanted to
> win a [conference] championship. We were close in that a couple years, just didn't do it.
> Fortunately, I was an All-American. I was a high school All-American, so I wanted to be
> a college All-American. . . . [I] was still a first team All-Conference. I did some things
> that I'm also proud of . . . but All-American was something that I really wanted, but I
> have no regrets. I played as hard as I can and I got my degree and that was the biggest
> thing for me, just graduating.

Nathaniel prioritized top performance within both football and academics during college

in preparation for his later career. It became clear that he used his competitive nature to guide

his efforts. For example, he described the interaction of teammates during college whereby they

helped encourage each other. He stated:

> We always compete against each other in the classroom. I remember so many times
> when we took, like, similar classes or if not the same classes, we always want to compete.
> . . . They always pushed me to be better academically and athletically.

In a later dialogue, he shared an anecdote regarding the pathway he took, diverging from many

teammates. He shared:

> My sophomore year, I took Astronomy 3. There was, I want to say, about 35 football
> players in that class. . . . Every one dropped but me. I will never forget that. They said,
> "Why you do that class? It's so hard." The sad thing, because when the classes are hard,

it'll go against your football time so no one wants to do it. They want easy classes the whole time.

Nathaniel's competitive spirit pushed him to approach difficult academic courses with determination. He developed positive work habits during college, and later applied them to developing his career. During college he made the honor roll for two quarters, earning a 4.0 GPA both sessions. Nathaniel also developed the skill of time management while balancing college athletics and academics, which he later applied to create career success.

Another crowning achievement exemplifying his performance prioritization included Nathaniel's election as football team captain for his senior year at State University. When I asked Nathaniel, "What kind of attitude do you bring to the workplace?" he replied by referencing a mentor's advice in context of how he approached his college captaincy, stating:

> Ron Brighton [legendary State University retired basketball coach] always said attitude reflects leadership, and you know, my senior year when I was team captain . . . I wanted to show teammates, "I'm captain, I'm gonna be a leader." So with my position at work . . . I'm always smiling, always happy to be at work . . . you know I have so many teammates I played with or friends … that don't have the type of opportunities I have, and I see them struggling. And I see how, wow, I'm so blessed and lucky to be in the position I am in now . . . so, um, I never have a bad day at work. If I have a bad day a work, I feel I might take it for granted . . . I'm not going to complain because my friends have it worse.

Nathaniel described approaching the captaincy as a servant leader to the football team and surrounding football community. He narrated the significance of this accomplishment, stating:

> Coaches and players vote. [I] received unanimous pick from coaches and players; that was really big for me. It's a tough challenge. Not just athletically, but academically too. [Fellow] players are always going to say, "How are *you* doing with grades?" Well I had a 4.0 or a 3.8, so I showed them my grades. Or whether me going to class and texting my teammates, "Did you make it to class today?". . . players that were struggling I wanted to help them out. So I would send a quick text in the morning, "Make sure you go to class," or "Make sure you go to tutoring" things like that, that a lot of people don't see on the

outside. . . . As a captain you do those things. Whether it's working out in the morning, or working out twice a day so you can be with both groups [of players] as captain, it takes a lot. So I wanted to be *that* captain for the football team. It was an amazing experience walking out before the games as the captain home and away games. It's something big. People always think highly of it. I feel I was really blessed to have been the captain.

His election as football team captain meant a great deal to his performance prioritization self-concept. This achievement validated his self-concept as a successful football player and leader among his peers. It also provided him more ability to give back to the State University community. Additionally, Nathaniel reveals his prioritization of both student and athlete roles by intentionally expressing the nuances of setting a peer example of getting good grades, going to class, and completing required workouts. These examples demonstrate an early prioritization of setting positive examples for peers. Nathaniel identified teammates struggling academically, and took extra efforts to support them. He also made personal sacrifices working out twice daily to ensure he was present to support teammates through training workouts.

Nathaniel also linked past experiences to his current career practice. For example, Nathaniel credits his college football experience with helping developing a work ethic he uses in life today. He stated:

I have to out-work. I feel like if I out-work, I out-play. Coach always told me in college, "Out-work, out-play." I use that in everything I do, "Out work, out-play."

Nathaniel's motto reflects his best advice to himself, according to Savickas & Solberg (2009). This self-talk has served Nathaniel well in creating the work ethic habits driving his current career development success. Nathaniel's thorough and proactive approach to work, and his habit of being well prepared, represent the application of his career development success practices.

Summary of Performance Prioritization/Competitive Spirit Pattern

Nathaniel's career development experiences revealed a pattern of his prioritizing high

performance. He has applied a strong work ethic to his work roles since completing his

professional football career. He appears to be competing with himself, and the objective

standards of coworkers and the work environment.

Practical Mindset/Good Judgment

Nathaniel also exhibited significant patterns of being practical minded and using good

judgment. I noted this pattern as it stood in contrast to his ambivalent multiple career path

conceptions described earlier in Chapter Four. In numerous instances, Nathaniel described his

rational thought process exercised while making career decisions and taking career actions. For

example, regarding his mastery of transferable career skills, Nathaniel described his proactive

approach to work. He stated:

> I do things without being asked to working in advancement; making phone calls, giving
> emails back or signing thank yous . . . things that I'm not told to do, I do anyway because
> I know it's part of the job description and it's a good thing; I don't wait to get told to do
> things. . . . when I'm subbing, and they say get there by 7:55 AM, I get there early because
> I want to look at certain things in the game plan, on the lesson plan. So I do little things
> that they didn't ask me to do … I come to work so early sometimes, I don't need to do it,
> but I have to do it . . . It's part of my routine I picked up from college.

Nathaniel put forth that he developed this work ethic based on his commitment to family

and colleagues. He stated:

> When people are counting on you, it [work ethic] feels like it's like second nature to you.

He added that looking forward to the future commitments in his life, he would use family and

colleagues as motivation for additional career growth:

> So when you have people counting on you, just like I have . . . my future wife and I going
> to have kids one day, and I'm going to have them counting on me, it's just going to

continue and I'm going to get stronger and have better commitment to my job and my wife and my kids.

Additionally, Nathaniel exercised good judgment, and a practical mindset in selecting career mentors. He became adept at integrating positive influences from people around him during high school, college, and during his postcollege career development experiences. Nathaniel named two men, his older brother/guardian Mike (a pseudonym) and former State University coach Ron Brighton (a pseudonym) as key influencers who set behavior standards he copied, and who imparted words of wisdom he lived by in developing his career to this point. Most relevant to his career development, Nathaniel learned maximal commitment from his brother/guardian. He reflected:

> I saw how he committed to me when he took me in as a freshman.

From Nathaniel's ninth-grade year and currently, his brother remained a strong influence on his career commitment to education, hard work, and family. Legendary State University coach Ron Brighton influenced Nathaniel's approach to preparation and attitude. He recalled vividly:

> I remember when Ron Brighton, before he passed away, he spoke to the football team and one of his famous quotes, and I'll always remember this, "If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail." That really stuck with me until this day.

Nathaniel also described another Brighton quote, stating:

> Ron Brighton always said, "Attitude reflects leadership."

Lastly, Nathaniel mentioned his high school football coach providing a key career development imprint on him:

> He taught me when something's that important to you, you do whatever it takes.

From this, Nathaniel stated:

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I had to do whatever it takes. I always had that "whatever it takes" mentality.

Nathaniel's overall career path choices appear to reflect his practical mindset and good judgment. He possessed multiple career goals throughout his youth, and even into adulthood. His good judgment is reflected in the execution of exploring these multiple, conflicting career paths. For example, he attempted professional football immediately after completing his college football career, which logically represents the best opportunity for success given age and physical conditioning. Regarding the history major, and his affinity for youth, he took part in education-related jobs during the summers of his undergraduate years, laying the pathway for postcollege employment. Regarding kinesiology, when I asked if he still had any desire to pursue that career, he remarked:

> That means I have to go back to school, which means I have to pay for my school, which—kind of like, I got a free ride and I don't want to go pay.

He did not want to pay for more schooling, and made a rational choice about the cost to pursue a kinesiology career, having not completed a related undergraduate degree. Regarding his ongoing desire to become a firefighter, he made multiple attempts, and reluctantly abandoned that pathway, for now, stating:

> I didn't think I had it in me.

Another telling example of Nathaniel's thoughtful approach to his career development proved to be his goal setting. Nathaniel set goals and pursued them doggedly until success or failure was apparent. As a youth, he set the goal to play professional football. Later, as a then-retired professional football player, he set the goal to begin his career working with youth. Currently within his highest education-related career position to date, he's set a new goal of

becoming a head football coach and athletic director. Toward this aim, he plans to apply a

similar humble approach to reaching the desired endpoint, as he described:

> [I'm] still learning the game, and the administrative side of running the program, also
> different aspects of the game. This is going to be my fourth year coaching, so I have a lot
> to learn. In order for me to be ready for a head coaching position, I want to be like I
> know I'm ready to take the position when time comes. So my next steps are to continue
> to learn. Be ready when the opportunity comes . . . So now it's just learning the basics. I
> want to go to college level coaching clinics to learn more aspects of offense and defense;
> I'll do whatever it takes.

Summary of Practical Mindset/Good Judgment Pattern

While emotionally ambivalent, Nathaniel took rational, thoughtful action steps to attempt

each career path. He has settled on the educator/coaching path at the high school level. He is

applying a methodical approach to growing in his career trajectory, despite periodic yearnings

for a firefighting career.

Value of Selected Communities

Nathaniel's career development involves a strong commitment to key communities

within his life. He is motivated by his commitment to family, to a football brotherhood, and to

youth at large. These commitments motivated, and continue motivating, Nathaniel to achieve.

For example, Nathaniel stated:

I didn't want to let down the people who brought me up.

In this case he meant his brother/guardian. He stated:

> My brother, if I let him down, all his sacrifice from my freshman year of high school
> would be for nothing. I could not have that on my conscience. When you care about
> someone so much, you never want to let that person down.

Nathaniel also applied this maxim to his college football teammates, and currently applies it to his workplace peers and students/players. When I asked Nathaniel, "How did you stay on track during college?" he replied by referencing his family:

> I think the one that kept me motivated was definitely my younger brothers…I really wanted to set an example for them. . . . They had a lot against them as well, and I wanted to be a role model for them to let them know that even though the odds are against you, you can go to college. They went to all my football games, I brought them on campus. I took them to class a couple times. . . . They saw me go through it. That was the number one big motivating factor to stay on track, and they ended up going to State College, they earned full scholarships academically, not athletically. That kept me on track, I felt like they were counting on me. I believe that changed their mindset of, "I can go to college."

Setting a positive example for his younger siblings provided motivation to succeed in college athletically and academically.

Clearly Nathaniel values the football communities he participated in since his youthful days. He considered high school football among his most successful experiences, as he won three state championships and achieved the All American level. However, Nathaniel expressed similar appreciation for his collegiate football experiences. He stated:

> Oh, my God. Playing college football is something that . . . it's a fraternity of brotherhood . . . all my teammates, all my friends, we still talk to this day.

He then described the game day experiences, stating:

> You never get that rush again . . . of running on the field with 80,000 people screaming, going on the road and upsetting a team that you weren't supposed to win, and we won and then everybody goes crazy. Playing on TV, being interviewed on TV and then going home and rewinding it and watching yourself on TV in the locker room . . . I'd been there five years . . . playing college football was a rush. Then you look back on it, and then you see the guys you played against that are like really successful. Like I remember playing against Adrian Peterson in Oklahoma. . . . Alex Mack, Aaron Rogers at Cal . . . I'm like . . . "oh, yeah, I remember tackling him."

I observed Nathaniel's facial expressions come alive positively during this portion of our

conversations. He vividly recalled, with pride, the experience of both competing alongside his

"brothers" or teammates, and competing against—with some success—opponents who went on

to become highly successful National Football League players. Nathaniel's competitive spirit

and valued communities overlapped regarding the enjoyment he receives recounting the playing

experiences he had, specifically against athletes who became National Football League

superstars. Nathaniel's college football playing experiences remain fresh in his psyche to this

current day.

Nathaniel valued his high school for its nurturing atmosphere, and the success he

achieved. He designed his career to mimic that atmosphere he experienced at a critical time in

his adolescence. Nathaniel found a stable home as a youth, both with his new guardian and his

supportive high school. Discussing his high school experience, Nathaniel stated:

> Now, I work in the private school system, it [the high school I attended] was more like a
> private school there, how the teachers act towards
> the students.

He added:

> I always reflect on my high school career, winning three championships. I have no
> regrets. Best time of my life.

Nathaniel shows value for the students he works with by making himself vulnerable in

order to impart a tough lesson from his life that may help them improve their own. During

Interview I, he recounted sharing a personal anecdote with his current high school students about

almost losing his chance to go to college because he did not properly prepare for his SAT or

ACT exams.

He stated:

That's why now, I always tell my students—I give it to them straight. I tell them, "High school is so much easier than college, really work hard." They complain a lot, "It's so hard!" It's not!

The essence of Nathaniel's allegiance to communities appears to be his gratitude. He remarked:

I had so many people in my life that molded me, it was like building a home, you need certain people, certain coworkers. . . . I'm so thankful for the people I had in my life; coaches, family, brothers, coworkers, friends.

Nathaniel expressed gratitude for the many positive influences members of his various communities contributed toward his current and past success.

Nathaniel's career development was positively enhanced by his valuing these diverse communities. He approaches work as a community affair, one that requires his best performance for the benefit of all within the selected community. Nathaniel's performance prioritization, coupled with his valuing select communities, helped him achieve his current level of career success. For example, election as State University football team captain validated Nathaniel within numerous communities. He served his fellow players as their leader on the field encouraging their athletic efforts, and off the field encouraging their academic achievement. Publicly he represented the university in numerous ceremonial moments and thus sealed a unique legacy within State University's lore. He remarked:

I'm always going to be forever linked to State University. In the locker room there's a big plaque for the MVPs [most valuable players] and the Captains, so I'm a part of that. Things I can show my kids . . . it's a good thing. It was hard work, but I definitely enjoyed it.

Putting in the effort to value these various communities significantly helped Nathaniel in

his current career path development. When asked to further discuss the career benefits he

receives from successfully competing in college football, Nathaniel confidently asserted:

> The good I took away is when I say I went to State U, I was captain of the football team, people always [say], "Wow!" They're so impressed.

Nathaniel became very successful within the State University football community by

valuing it and committing the necessary efforts to achieve. These accomplishments positively

impacted his career after college with their associated social capital. The special status afforded

to football players at State University carried over for Nathaniel after he completed his tenure on

the team. This glorified status, according to Nathaniel, served him to gain respect in his

postathletic career endeavors. Regarding his current educator/coach career path, he stated:

> It's very rare to have a successful college or professional athlete working in schools…. To get jobs, I made sure it's clear on my resume.

He added his belief:

> If I didn't have State University [plus football success], I would not get looked at.

Summary for Value of Selected Communities Pattern

Nathaniel's career development experiences are positively influenced by his strong

dedication to various communities within his life. Nathaniel valued football early on. He later

valued school communities as well. He adopted a service-oriented mindset and applied it to his

career preparatory activities during college. Nathaniel always valued family, and was motivated

to succeed in college and in his career by inspiring, or not letting down, various family members.

Nathaniel's performance prioritization interacted to magnify the benefits he received by valuing

his college and workplace environments. Nathaniel has enjoyed contributing positively to these

various communities. His empathy for disadvantaged students and love of football contributed to his selection of, and success within, his current educator/coach career path.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter Four I presented my research findings for the data collected from three face-to-face interviews of my research participant, Nathaniel Williams. I presented the data findings through the four major patterns that emerged regarding Nathaniel's career path experiences since completing his undergraduate bachelor's degree. Specifically, Nathaniel's career has been most influenced, and positively supported by, the patterns of ambivalence, performance prioritization/competitive spirit, practical mindset/good judgment, and value of selected communities. While Ambivalence has not particularity supported his career success, he has managed it to prevent it from becoming a career obstacle. In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings presented in Chapter 4 in relation to Savickas's Career Construction Theory, and make recommendations for future research related to career development postcollege.

Nathaniel's case proved more unique than I originally anticipated. Although typical in being an African American male who used football participation to access college, Nathaniel's level of achievement during college, and his success in transitioning from college to his current career are atypical. Nathaniel achieved an atypical level of success as a student-athlete at State University. He completed his bachelor's degree from State University, where less than 50% of African American male football players do so. He also achieved the honor roll two quarters during his time at the university, representing another unique accomplishment for student-athletes. Regarding college football success, he earned significant playing time and became a full time starting player throughout his tenure. He was also elected team captain his senior year.

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Lastly, Nathaniel achieved success transitioning into his career after college completion. Savickas (2002) wrote, "The premise of career construction theory is that *career* denotes a reflection on the course of one's vocational behavior, not vocational behavior itself" (p. 152). Thus, Nathaniel's ability to narrate his career experiences, ascribe meaning to them, and set relevant future goals are important aspects of a successful career transition, according to Savickas's CCT.

Social justice concerns emerged for Nathaniel, who specifically discussed college access and completion disparities for underrepresented students. He expressed strong desire to use his educator/coaching career to work toward more college access and increased completion results for the high school students he works with now, and will work with in the future.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This case study of one aims to explore the nexus of college access for an

underrepresented minority student and participation within collegiate revenue-generating

athletics in the context of career construction and transition upon completion of college. I began

the study seeking to explore career development experiences by examining the case of Nathaniel

Williams, a unique case due to the combination of atypical and typical success characteristics

regarding college completion. He did present characteristics one would expect to find together,

such as being an African American male who used football to access college. After initial

investigation, Nathaniel proved to be a worthy case study of one. He presented numerous unique

characteristics and experiences during our three in-depth interviews, which I discuss below. This

study filled a qualitative, first-person narrative gap in the literature, and served to answer my

overall research question:

1. What are the experiences of a former National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I

   football player who transitions from college to a postathletic career?

   a. What challenges, if any, does he face as he transitions into a career upon

      completing college as a student-athlete?

   b. What impact, if any, did participation in Division I college football have on his

      career development?

The qualitative data analysis revealed four key patterns related to his career development

experiences: ambivalence, performance prioritization/competitive spirit, practical mindset/good

judgment, and value of selected communities. Chapter 5 discusses the these four patterns

previously described in Chapter 4 in relation to Savickas's Career Construction Theory, provides recommendations for future research on career development after college graduation, reflects on the study's methodology, and discusses implications for the field of Education.

Research Findings Relation to Savickas's Career Construction Theory

Career Construction Theory conceives of a healthy career development pathway including balanced and authentic interaction between one's self-concept (narratability), life themes (adaptability), and life designs (action). The four patterns described in Chapter 4 indicate a mostly positive career development pathway, examined via the Savickas Career Construction Theoretical lens.

Savickas (2002) claimed that individuals select career roles based on their alignment with the individual's life themes. For Savickas, individuals do not make choices in a vacuum, but by accounting for existing social conditions and social constraints such as racism, sexism, and socioeconomic discrimination. Nathaniel's choices in his current career goals reflect his knowledge of college access equity issues. He hopes to help ethnically diverse high school student-athletes access and succeed in college via football. Nathaniel's life themes reflect the selected communities he displays value toward including the communities of family, football, and school primarily. Savickas (2002) also asserted individuals generate life themes via self-concepts, combined with environmental influences such as family, schooling, and society at large. Through patterns I identified via the data analysis, I noted his concepts of self include a prioritization of performance fueled by his competitive spirit, and practical mindset informed by good judgment and humility.

Savickas, through qualitative research, developed his Career Construction Theory centering on the idea of individuals using narrative to make meaning of career choices and career paths. Savickas (2001) observed how career storytelling allowed individuals to selectively highlight different experiences to produce a narrative by which they live. In other words, for Savickas, narratives assist individuals with their life design. I noted Nathaniel's ambivalence toward his career path, contradicting himself regarding difficult experiences such as failing to achieve long-term professional football success, or failing to become a firefighter. I also noted ways Nathaniel's narratives reveal his life design process that included the positive role collegiate athletic experiences played in his ability to achieve his current career goals of becoming a head football coach and athletic director for a private Catholic school. Nathaniel's various points of emphases, departures, and omissions provided clues to his ideal professional path and meaningful life themes. For example, although he pined for the firefighting career, and made mention of pursuing kinesiology, his repeated emphasis and convincing tone regarding his current coach/educator pathway made clear these were merely musings, and that his current path was the correct one for him. Nathaniel prioritized football participation over firefighting during the transition out of high school when he chose to pursue college football over entering a junior college to pursue a firefighter-training program.

Savickas's Career Construction Theory claims life design may be used as a paradigm for career development in the 21st century. Savickas and Solberg (2009) identified overarching career building effects, including optimism, adaptability, and knowledge, and also described the process of career construction as an individual going from "preoccupation to occupation" or "obsession to profession." Nathaniel's preoccupations and obsessions first included football, and

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next included leaving a positive legacy and not letting anyone down. Using his performance

prioritization and good judgment, Nathaniel thrived as he adjusted to different environments,

beginning with his high school. He narrated a consistent positive attitude, which represented the

optimism to which Savickas ascribed importance. This optimism also appears to have supported

his career success to this point.

Ambivalence

Nathaniel's ambivalence proves problematic within the Career Construction framework.

Nathaniel described multiple instances of career indecision and contradicted himself on

numerous occasions regarding his desired career goals and ideal life designs. However, these

contradictions do not prove significantly harmful in the context of Nathaniel's career action.

While he shared ambivalent feelings, he has pursued with fidelity the current educator pathway

he currently continues on. Savickas made room for multiple, contradictory realities, and

Nathaniel's ambivalence fits into this small allowance.

Performance Prioritization/Competitive Spirit

Savickas (2009) emphasized the importance of career action. Activity represents the

cornerstones of life design. In this aspect, Nathaniel's experiences since college represent one of

his strengths. He had aggressively pursued his most prioritized goals, first to become a

professional football player and subsequently to build a professional career as an educator/coach.

Nathaniel's competitive spirit, one seemingly honed by himself and his previous environments

filled with fellow players and coaches, helped him prioritize top level performances in his most

valued activities.

Nathaniel's career narrative represents success by the Savickas CCT standard because he demonstrates optimism, adaptability, and knowledge while aligning his preferred life theme environments and individual self-concepts to produce his desired life design. Nathaniel's ability to thread a positive narrative through his career experiences equals success with CCT. For Savickas, successful career construction rests on the individual to define him or herself and take action toward goals while maintaining a positive belief in their ability to reach them.

Nathaniel considered himself successful. As reported in Chapter 4, Nathaniel believed he was a success for what he had accomplished, especially in light of the obstacles he had overcome. He is motivated to reach higher levels of success by achieving his current career goals of becoming a high school head football coach and athletic director in the future.

Practical Mindset/Good Judgment

Savickas (2002) stated that life themes are generated by individuals based on their concept of self, combined with their environmental influences such as family, schooling, and society at large. Nathaniel's conceptions of himself as a leader, as someone who does not disappoint people depending upon him, as a hard worker, and as someone dedicated to uplifting youth have led him to pursue his career in education and approach it with high ethics and practical judgment. Nathaniel, while at times expressing incongruent fantasies of firefighting as a career, took opportunities during college to prepare for his career after football. Since completing college, Nathaniel had taken practical steps toward growing and prospering within this educator/coach career.

Value of Selected Communities

Nathaniel's life theme environments strongly favored school and sporting settings. It appeared that he had selected his current career goals and environments logically and systematically, to provide maximal exposure to his favored backdrops. Beginning in ninth grade, Nathaniel found school to be a nurturing place for him. From late in elementary school, Nathaniel valued and was affirmed within sporting environments, specifically football ones. In addition, Nathaniel prioritized family and his community of peers, colleagues, and mentors. Through his career choices, he managed to include nearly each valued segment that reflects his ideal life design.

In the following section, I discuss the four patterns of career development experiences I identified for Nathaniel in light of Savickas's Career Construction Theory's main tenets of life themes, self-concept, and life design. Career Construction Theory posits that career development is constructed over time to help individuals create and live out their life themes, designing their ideal existence (Savickas 2002; Savickas et al., 2009). This process, according to Savickas, is influenced by myriad factors, and dynamically related to current economic conditions. By testing the theoretical framework, my findings revealed the interconnections of Nathaniel's career development via his past personal and schooling experiences. With minimal divergence, Nathaniel's life themes, self-concepts, and life design actions blend complementarily to construct his current career path and future ambitions. More so, due to his dominant self-concepts, his collegiate athletics experiences greatly support his long-term career construction ambitions.

Life Themes and Adaptability Summary

Nathaniel's various environments helped provide the life themes that underpin his current career construction. His ability to positively adapt to environments and capitalize upon them has helped ensure his ability to direct his career in his desired directions. Simultaneously, the environments he experienced dynamically interacted with Nathaniel's self-concepts to influence what he considers his ideal life design, and how his professional career can help achieve it. These environments rewarded his achievements, challenged him to grow transferrable skills, and allowed him to explore his then-current goals. These environments helped Nathaniel decide upon the most ideal work setting, which he has confirmed is a career within football coaching at the high school level.

For example, Nathaniel's early experiences of family instability are juxtaposed against the stability and feeling of "home" he attributed to his high school. Beginning in ninth grade, a critical convergence took place for Nathaniel. He found a permanent home with his older brother (role model) and his wife, he was placed in a positive, nurturing high school, and he was prominently rewarded for his previous childhood passion by starting on the varsity football team, which eventually won the first of three state championships, to which he contributed greatly. I surmise that, although at this time Nathaniel still aspired to become a firefighter, in retrospect these converging experiences, juxtaposed against the previous 10 years of family instability, strongly influenced his current career plans to work in school environments.

Self-Concepts and Narratability Summary

Nathaniel's self-concept began as a youth, feeling special within a community sporting activity. He built upon this original self-concept throughout his adolescent and young adult life.

He, through activity (life design), tested and reinforced his self-concepts via other experiences and influences. This led to Nathaniel incorporating the original concept of "being a special player" toward being a special coach, hoping to create more successful players in the future. Even the process of me interviewing him reinforced his self-concept of being special, unique, and successful within the context of athletics. As we concluded Interview III, Nathaniel said his participation in the interview process:

> made me realize, "Dang [*sic*] man, I accomplished a lot." . . . you kinda [*sic*] forget. But things like this [being interviewed], I appreciate it . . . motivates me to keep going . . . and hopefully I can touch some more kids and get them to my level, if not better than me.

For Career Construction Theory, role models provide clues to the way individuals prioritize life themes and enact ideal life designs (Savickas & Solberg, 2009). The strongest role model influence upon Nathaniel's self-concept remained his older brother, Mike, whom he lived with during high school. Mike provided physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual support to Nathaniel during a critical time, and impressed upon him the importance and impact they could have. Critically, Mike and his wife provided the stability Nathaniel needed to thrive. Nathaniel's focus on his brother's dedication, presence, and mentoring underlie his current choices as a professional educator.

Life Design and Activity Summary

Nathaniel's level of activity provided him the opportunities to interactively test his career ambitions. He explored a firefighter career but decided it was not a fit for him. He abandoned the idea of becoming an athletic trainer after deciding to not pursue further graduate education in that field. Nathaniel competed in professional football for approximately three years, achieving that goal but abandoning further participation due to not enjoying the environment.

Subsequently he used his State University bachelor's degree in history to enter his chosen field of secondary education, by first building transferrable career experiences within analogous roles working as a State University fundraiser and then as a teaching assistant within a foster youth group home. Each opportunity was created using Nathaniel's' personal skills, and was aided by the social capital earned via success at State University.

For example, Nathaniel detailed the calculus he made regarding selecting his educator/coaching career pathway over choosing to become a firefighter, or sports kinesiologist. He remarked:

> [I] still get to spend enough time with my fiancée, my family and friends . . . but still the pay is not the way that a firefighter is . . . money comes and goes, but I think I learned how being with family is the most important.

He juxtaposed the perceived work schedule and salary of coach with that of his competing desire to become a firefighter, stating firefighters spend three days completely away from family, and then four days together, *and* earn more money. He concluded, though, that the schedule and the work itself would not fit his ideal life design. He continued narrating this topic:

> My ideal life is to really spend as much time as possible at home. Make things most convenient for my family . . . I didn't have the prototype lifestyle with parents. With education I can be home by 4 PM, especially during the offseason, help my [future] kids with their homework, be with my fiancée as much as I can, attend their recitals, games, whatever they're doing, watch them grow. I don't want to be that guy that gets home at 6 or 7 pm at night. My brother . . . Sometimes it causes friction. I've seen that. With education . . . it's rewarding, can be at home, get Christmas break, spring break [off]. As a football coach, some days I will have to compromise, stay three hours for film study on Saturday instead of seven [hours] . . . family comes first.

Retirement from Elite Athletics: Challenges Nathaniel Faced Transitioning into His Career

Interestingly, the primary challenges appear to be self-inflicted. Nathaniel's main challenge seems to be his conflicted career goals. He is currently making great progress along his pathway, yet wistfully revisits childhood desires to become a firefighter. He appears attracted to the hero aspect of the work, although repelled by other aspects of it that I cannot exactly identify—perhaps the gory aspects of the job. He remarked that he was unable to fulfill his EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) requirements, and that after a couple of job shadowing experiences (ride-alongs) taking place approximately four years ago, he decided the work did not suit him. Yet during our Interview III, he remarked that he still held the key to reengage this dream, if he so chose. Thankfully, it appeared that Nathaniel's nurturing life theme, the more dominant one, was being fulfilled by his career in education. He, I believe, will continue seeking consistent opportunities to play a heroic mentor role model, while designing his ideal life of prioritizing and "being there as much as possible," spending quality time with his family. The scholastic schedule provides the predictable daily and yearly opportunities to be with his family regularly. Nathaniel prioritized time with family, getting home from work early, and not being apart in explaining his rationale for the current career goal of becoming a high school head football coach and athletic director.

Another issue that may have, or will, present Nathaniel challenges is his health. He reluctantly shared the lingering issues he faced due to his football participation. Specifically, Nathaniel dealt with migraines and light sensitivity, as a consequence, he believed, from repeated blows to the head—regular occurrences in football. Although he did not state he experienced

commensurate problems at work, I surmise this health challenge could make working difficult for him at times.

Impact Division I College Football Had on Nathaniel's Career Development

The second subquestion I set out to answer amounted to how collegiate football participation impacted Nathaniel's career development. In short, it appears that college football participation greatly impacted Nathaniel's career development. Football proved a centerpiece activity for Nathaniel during his undergraduate tenure. He strengthened certain transferrable professional skills of communication, teamwork, and work ethic naturally during football participation. Also, due to his strength of character enacted as a practical mindset and good judgment, Nathaniel made good choices that fortified other nonnatural aspects surrounding football participation such as integrity, responsibility, positive attitude, resiliency, adaptability, and leadership. Based on Nathaniel's choices, he used the football experience to positively prepare for his career after football.

Additionally, collegiate football participation provided Nathaniel important social capital that greatly—according to his accounts—assisted him in securing numerous job positions over the course of his career construction. Specifically, Nathaniel expressed connections between college access and college student-athletics participation experiences, with career development experiences. For example, he discussed his adaptability as a youth who bounced around from home to home up until reaching stability during high school. He mentioned using communication and integrity skills to convince college coaches to assist his college access efforts. Nathaniel also described the time management, determination, and accountability he exhibited to succeed within the all-consuming training schedule required by collegiate athletics

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participation. Nathaniel also linked his past experiences to his current career endeavors as an educator working with high school students. He described sharing "real-talk" with his current students regarding the effort they need to put forth in order to become successful in high school and college. Nathaniel added maxims regarding developing a strong work ethic which was instilled in him via coaches during his high school and college playing days. He proudly stated that he continued using these maxims for motivation to this current day, permeating all aspects of his life.

Nathaniel described his desire to be a role model for his younger siblings, underlying his instincts and pleasure in the role of "teacher," which was part of his current career path. He also described the benefit of his successful collegiate student-athletics participation in relation to the social capital it continues affording him around the area of career opportunities.

In the preceding section, I discussed the results of exploring Nathaniel's career development experiences using the Savickas Career Construction framework. In the following section, I reflect upon the research design I used. I will discuss productive aspects of the design alongside aspects I would reconsider were I to repeat the study.

Reflection on Research Methods

I used qualitative methods to investigate the phenomenon of a former collegiate student-athlete transitioning into a nonathletic career after completing his bachelor's degree. The case study of one provided in-depth and nuanced interview data to help answer my research question. The case study of one design was effective in collecting data to answer my research question. The multiple in-depth interviews used over the course of three weekends, alongside member checking via sharing transcripts with the participant, provided adequate reflective space for the

participant to consider his responses, and think deeper upon his past scholastic and athletic experiences related to his current career. I would change no aspects of my research design.

Filling the Research Gap

This study aimed to explore the nuanced experiences of a former elite athlete who participated within a revenue-generating sport of collegiate football. I successfully completed this study to fill a research gap of first-person narrative accounts on this subject matter. I also helped broaden the research base by studying the intersection of college access, collegiate student-athletics, and career development.

Recommendations for Changes to Policy and Practice

The research participant revealed numerous areas from which I can base policy recommendations to improve practice relative to undergraduate collegiate student-athletes and their future career development. My recommendations for improvements to policy and practice stem from actions coaches and college administrators can take to support student-athlete dual career development activities and academic success.

Student-athlete health. Nathaniel experienced numerous concussions and subconcussive head injuries during his four years of college football participation. These injuries present current health challenges for him, such as sensitivity to light, occasional migraines, and forgetfulness. These health issues may negatively impact Nathaniel's future career development. College athletic departments must help minimize football-related head injury issues. Research continues evolving regarding the long-term consequences of repeated concussions and subconcussive blows sustained during football participation at the professional, collegiate, and youth levels (Finder, 2105; Lakhan & Kirchgessner, 2012). I encourage NCAA universities

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offering football to remain vigilant in assessing and applying emerging information on player safety, especially regarding equipment and best practices for avoiding, assessing, and handling these injuries.

        Required dual career development activities. Additionally, I recommend college athletes engage in multiple and progressive annual career development activities. Nathaniel benefited from his multiple dual career development activities conducted during his undergraduate tenure. Similar to Nathaniel, I suggest college players are assisted in securing off season or summer employment in careers of interest to fulfill my recommendation that coaches require student-athletes to conduct dual career development activities during the offseason of their sport. Nathaniel reported assistance, but did not report any coaching requirements to conduct career development activities during his collegiate football career. I triangulated this information by accessing the State University Student-Athlete Handbook during one of the years he attended. I found career resources available to student-athletes but no mention of required workshops or advising sessions. Perhaps some college football coaches require this; however how many, and to what degree of follow up and accountability for the student-athlete by coaches or the university, is unclear.

        Contrarily, Nathaniel described taking initiative and asking his college coaches to connect him with opportunities to explore his firefighter aspirations during undergraduate years. It is significant to note that Nathaniel described taking the initiative, but he decried many teammates not being self-motivated in this regard. As noted above, as an honor roll student-athlete, football captain, and African American male college completer, Nathaniel displayed atypical levels of motivation and good judgment. Thus, these recommendations aim to serve all

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student-athletes regardless of them displaying similarly atypically high levels of motivation. I suggest coaches require student-athletes to meet with an advisor each year during their undergraduate tenure to work on a career development planning, goal setting, reflective dialogue, and career preparatory self-assessments.

Once the student-athlete, with advisor assistance, has created short-term and long-term goals, the college career counselor can work to hold him or her accountable by checking in periodically throughout each school year to encourage progress, offer support such as references to internship or job shadow opportunities or connections to career conversations, and problem solving solutions if and when roadblocks appear. The result of this second recommendation would be a heightened, unmistakable prioritization of dual career development activities whereby student-athletes would be held accountable for academics, athletics, and actively shaping their future careers. This shift may have a positive impact on college graduation rates by helping students more highly value their current studies in the context of their future careers.

Nathaniel experienced academic clustering when selecting his college major of history. He described having only three options, toward which he expressed ambivalence. My third recommendation is for coaches, athletic departments, and universities to reduce academic clustering and encourage student-athlete academic freedom. Academic freedom in conjunction with required dual career development and its accountability would help students pursue authentic academic majors with relevance to their careers. Nathaniel experienced ambivalence during college regarding his history course of study. However, he pursued career development activities during collegiate summers. He eventually linked his course of study to professional possibilities, which he pursued during his offseason free time. Reduced academic clustering will

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provide intellectual freedom for student-athletes to explore the most appropriate preprofessional courses of study. Had Nathaniel chosen a different career path than education, his undergraduate degree would represent a wasted opportunity.

Nathaniel also described his football season schedule, including meetings, practices, strength training, and game competitions regularly far exceeding 20 hours per week. He described the challenges this presented to his academic success, and the success of his football teammates. Lastly, I would recommend strict enforcement of the NCAA 20-hour rule, which prohibits teams from engaging in more than 20 hours of team activity in one week. This recommendation appears most controversial, given the intense competition among competitor schools. Each athletic program uses its training and preparation to create a competitive edge against its opponents. Programs skirt the regulation by using team captains to supervise "optional" strength and conditioning or film study sessions (Allen, 2014; Leonard, 1986). Without coaches present, team activities are considered voluntary, and do not count toward the 20 hours. With disciplined adherence to this rule, student-athletes could use additional time toward academic and career development activities.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research also produced ideas for new research related to the subject of elite athlete career development postcollege. I recommend developing two lines of further study. First, to begin engagement with athletic alumni, I suggest universities sponsor large surveys from their athletic departments to capture data from former players. Universities should, if they are not doing so already, survey their former players to understand their career paths since college, and their current plans to grow in the future. I recommend studies take place two years and five

years after college completion to query what former student-athletes are doing in their careers, what their current career goals are, what assistance they need, and their perceptions/reflections on how undergraduate experiences prepared them for career development success. Additionally, to build on similar research to this study, I suggest additional in-depth case studies. Universities could use initial surveys to recruit participants for in depth studies. A combination of surveys with large numbers of participants, and purposefully selected in-depth, longitudinal where possible, case studies could help universities and student-athletes gain insights to improve career development during the undergraduate experience.

Implications for the Field of Education

Maximizing college access, college completion, and career development preparation during college is an important matter for all students, not only student-athletes. Bachelor's degree completion has become an important prerequisite for careers with mid to high earnings potential (McKillip et al., 2012). Heavy pressure for objective results is currently being placed on colleges and universities throughout the United States. Due to challenges mentioned in Chapter 2, including uneven rates of college completion and the rising cost of higher education, colleges and universities are also challenged to show their long-term economic value for student career success. Examples of this pressure include the attempt by the U.S. Federal Government to create a national ranking system for approximately 7,000 institutions of postsecondary education (Shear, 2015). Decried resoundingly by postsecondary leaders, the U.S. president's administration settled for an informational website which includes graduation rates and median earnings estimates for bachelor's degree holders 10 years after graduation.

Revenue-generating college sports football and men's basketball also possess controversial issues at this time. One recent development regarding economic exploitation involves a settlement whereby former players will be compensated for the NCAA allowing a video game maker to use their image and likenesses without previously paying them (Stripling, 2015). Nathaniel remarked that he would receive approximately $3,500 from this legal settlement.

In a recent national cover story, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported claims of academic fraud within America's most successful college athletic programs (Wolverton, 2015). At UCLA, winner of the most national collegiate athletic team championships, an athletic academic counselor to the men's basketball team recently resigned after a frustrating employment tenure at the university. Will Collier described coaches and administrators interfering with his efforts to support academic achievement and integrity for student-athletes. He claimed UCLA staff prioritized their student-athletes' athletic rather than academic achievement. Collier asserted he was pressured to make a grade change to keep a star basketball player eligible, and was not supported when trying to hold players to academic requirements such as attending class and tutoring sessions. The university disputed many of Collier's claims; however, some of the incidents are corroborated by public records and journalistic research accounts.

The issues raised by Collier align with Adler and Alder's (1991) seminal work on challenges facing revenue-generating sports. Its salience continues, as told through Nathaniel's narrative, where he discussed his own challenges and challenges his teammates experienced. These issues remain widespread. Most recently, the NCAA concluded an investigation covering

approximately 18 years of academic fraud committed by the University of North Carolina in order to keep star athletes, including football and men's basketball players, academically eligible for competitions. Sanctions for these transgressions have not been enumerated, and will not be until completion of the 2016 men's basketball championship tournament. However, some researchers are skeptical regarding how severe sanctions will be.

Via a content analysis reviewing academic fraud sanctions over the past 25 years, Ridpath, Gurney, and Snyder (2015) noted a pattern of the NCAA minimizing punishments for highly successful programs such as the North Carolina Tar Heels. This research recognizes that these issues surrounding revenue-generating college sports are taking national prominence in mainstream dialogue due also to increasing revenues and subsequent media coverage of both college football and men's basketball. At the time of completing this research, the men's basketball Division I national championship tournament is in full swing. Revenue for the 2016 tournament cannot be calculated at this time; however, estimates include $900 million in revenue, over $9 billion in dollars wagered, and 11 million viewers (Parker, 2016).

Concussions and their long-term negative health impacts represent another pressurized contemporary dialogue significant to this research. The actor Will Smith recently starred in the 2015 film *Concussion*, which dramatizes the true events leading up to the discovery of head trauma-related disease Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). This disease has been linked to more than 100 former professional and college football players, yet until March 2016, it went unacknowledged by the National Football League (Fainaru, 2016). In fact, the NFL is now under investigation by members of the U.S. Congress potentially withholding evidence linking football to this degenerative brain disease (Fainaru, 2016).

Nathaniel's career development experiences reveal important insights into the field of education for professionals including, and beyond, those working directly with student-athletes. College students benefit from engaging in career planning and career development activities long before they graduate and begin pursuing their career dreams. Colleges should actively support undergraduate career development by requiring that students engage in meaningful preparatory dialogue and activities before graduation. This case study describing Nathaniel Williams's career development experiences points toward the importance of goal setting, mentorship, and community in transitioning out of college into one's career. As educators, we must foster these elements, in the context of career development, to best prepare our students for success after graduation.

The dialogical aspects of Savickas's Career Construction Theory proved significant for Nathaniel as he used dialogue throughout his career development to enhance it (Savickas & Solberg, 2009). Educators must provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful career development activities, and to engage in dialogue about said activities. For example, Nathaniel's career development experiences were enhanced by his summers during college spent working with youth at an educational and sports camp. He also benefited from various attempts to achieve his ambition to become a firefighter. In the former case, he continued this career path, while in the latter case he realized he did not want to further pursue that ambition at the time. Integrating career development activities and projects into the required core curriculum is my chief recommendation for all institutions of higher learning, such as assisting students in connecting with relevant mentors and internship opportunities.

This study implies the positive role collegiate student-athletics can play in the long-term development of a participant. Nathaniel received numerous benefits from his participation in college football—although, as educators, we must be wary of the risks involved. Nathaniel succeeded in attaining his bachelor's degree, playing professional football, and transitioning into his career after elite sports. In these endeavors, many similar student-athletes fail. Nathaniel's experiences imply educators should provide assistance to students who are struggling to make meaningful connections between current school endeavors and future plans. Coaches and educators can provide resources and attention to students who struggle to narrate their desired career plans. To this point, Nathaniel's competitive spirit and practical mindset, alongside the value he ascribed to not letting down his family or school communities, helped him apply an effective work ethic to football, academics, and currently his educator/coaching career. Coaches and educators must strategize ways to help students cultivate a winning mindset, similar to Nathaniel's, motivated by both short-term and long-term achievements.

Another implication for the field is to help students plan careers for the dynamic 21st-century economy Savickas and Solberg (2009) refer to within Career Construction Theory. Savickas asserted adaptability is important for successful career construction. Coaches and educators must help students cultivate these skills and emphasize their long-term benefits during school, well before students graduate and begin traveling their career pathways. It is significant to note Nathaniel's current position, his most successful to date, amounts to his fourth position within less than six years of retirement from elite football competitions. His ability to adapt to new environments, and successfully achieve higher positions, should be a model for educators to help current college students plan for their futures.

Ultimately as educators, we must understand the limits of our work and always try to push against those boundaries. The limits of our work depend upon the receptivity of our students. The power of our position as coach or educator provides us an important opportunity to help influence the receptivity of our students. Coaches can develop team policies to increasingly encourage positive student behaviors. Educators can create curricula and use the face time we have with students to emphasize important aspects of the career development process.

Another implication of the study is that the key challenges Adler and Adler (1991) outlined over 20 years ago regarding collegiate student-athletics participation remain consistent with those Nathaniel witnessed or experienced. Nathaniel experienced academic clustering and role engulfment via participating in college football. However, through the force of will, and his intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors, he applied productive habits and used the guidance of mentors to achieve college graduation, and a successful transition into a postfootball career. Unfortunately, he had witnessed numerous teammates falling short of football success, bachelor's degree attainment, and successful career development after college.

The implication for educators is to continue assessing the relevant career development outcomes achieved by student-athletes within revenue-generating sports while attending college. Educators must specifically address the lower graduation rates, and lower overall grade point averages, achieved by student-athletes in order to ensure participation in revenue-generating sports does not condemn students to long-term career underachievement. Participation in athletics provided Nathaniel typical primary and secondary benefits as outlined in the literature (Hanna, 2012), such as enjoyment, glory, peer camaraderie, mentorship from adults, and

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fulfillment, as well as goal setting, time management, and an appreciation for diversity, respectively. Football alone cannot be blamed for the challenges many student-athletes face during college. However, the structures in place must be adjusted to support greater postcollege achievement for the large numbers of revenue-generating student-athletes falling short.

Lastly, the research results do not indicate a convincing element of exploitation, yet challenges remain. Nathaniel felt ambivalent about experiencing potential exploitation, yet he placed accountability on himself, more than blaming his coaches or blaming "the system" for unfavorable aspects of his collegiate athletics participation. The academic clustering and role engulfment aspects of college football participation presented challenges to career development, yet the overall structure of college football and possible exploitation did not hinder Nathaniel's career growth after college. Contrarily, his career path was enhanced by his football success at State University. Participating within a revenue-generating sport requires an above-average sustained effort and focus, athletically and academically, which the majority of student-athletes struggle to maintain in order to reach graduation. Conditions must change, or outcomes such as Nathaniel's will remain the exception and not the most likely expectation for these young men. While Nathaniel felt valued as a student and an athlete attending State University, the social justice concerns remain that too many young men of color fail within current conditions.

Nathaniel did not believe college athletes should be paid salaries. However, he did advocate for increased room and board stipends in light of the growing revenues generated by media contracts and sponsorship deals surrounding college football. A dreadfully low number that must improve is that fewer than half of the African American males competing within football graduate within six years of beginning their bachelor's degree at State University. This

total is approximately half of the overall annual student body graduation rate of 90% for State University. While on one side of the social justice scale, additional students of color are provided the opportunity to attend State University via playing a sport. Sadly, social justice concerns are not being served with these current results where less than half of revenue-generating student-athletes of color graduate.

Conclusion

Nathaniel presented an interesting and complex account of the convergence of career experiences, academics, and athletics. He was deeply influenced by his tumultuous early life, and later the stability his older brother and high school community presented to him just prior to college. Nathaniel used critical transferrable skills such as his work ethic and communication to fulfill his early goals of collegiate athletics participation. He also continued using these skills, among others, plus the social capital afforded him via State University completion and football participation, to achieve career positions leading toward his current status today. Savickas's Career Construction Theory proved an apropos theoretical framework in which to examine Nathaniel's experiences. Nathaniel's role models and early experiences influenced his enacted choice of the educator/coach career path. His favorite mottos represent advice regarding the work ethic and determination he has used to make career gains. It appears collegiate athletics participation, due in part to his strong transferrable skills, helped him further refine these soft skills, and gain valuable social capital that then helped him reach his current career heights.

Nathaniel's case is significant for touching on such important social justice issues as equitable college access and completion, and academic and financial exploitation by revenue-generating football student-athletes. His case outlines the high degree of difficulty it takes to be

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successful, both academically and while transitioning into a career upon college graduation.

Through examination of Nathaniel's football experiences, his case also highlighted the serious

health risks college football players are exposed to via repeated head injuries, which could lead

to the degenerative brain disease CTE. Although Nathaniel's narrative belies his current success,

according to the Savickas framework, this disease could negatively impact his ability to reach his

long-term career goals of becoming a high school head football coach and athletic director.

Lastly, Nathaniel's adaptability represents an important feature of modern career

development. He described intentionally and successfully switching jobs several times before

arriving at his current position coaching football, substitute teaching, and fundraising for a

prominent Catholic school, the one he considers his most meaningful yet. Millennial employees

are considered flexible in switching jobs en route to their ultimate career goals. This flexibility

is important for 21st century career development in the global economy (Aruna & Anitha, 2015).

Similar to suggestions made by Park et al. (2013), I recommend athletes take full advantage of

support systems to proactively engage in career planning, developing transferable skills, and,

where necessary, therapeutic support in the emotional and psychological challenges with forming

a new identity after elite athletics participation ceases.

Appendix A

Participant Individual Interview Questions

  I conducted interviews over the course of three sessions. Interviews were semistructured with preplanned questions. I created space for additional questions based on where the participant's responses led the conversations. Interview questions were developed from themes outlined above in the literature review. I also developed interview questions from the theoretical framework of Savickas's Career Construction Theory that helped uncover the process the participant took to form his new career path upon retiring from elite athletics. Within this framework, I explored the participant's past experiences of being a Division I revenue-generating collegiate student-athlete, and posed questions on topics outlined in Chapter II regarding perceptions of exploitation, power imbalances between himself and coaches, academic clustering, and role engulfment. Additionally, I explored the participant's sense of his ability to conduct dual career development while participating as a Division I revenue-generating student-athlete. i also asked the participant questions related to developing transferable or "soft" skills, alongside the relationship of his undergraduate major (history) to his educator/coach career path and objectives. Additionally, I asked open-ended questions to assess the participant's perspective on his career path, his satisfaction with it, and to what degree and how he perceives his collegiate student-athletic participation to have affected and influenced his career transition from college to his current career. To initiate dialogue, I began Interview I with demographic questions related to the participant's precollege preparation, exploring the theme of college access relative to his underrepresented minority status.

Participant Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW I:

- **THEMES**
  - **Individual Demographics**
    - **Question Lists**
    - Describe yourself demographically:
      - Ethnically
      - Socioeconomically
      - Your age
  - **Family History**
    - Describe your family background;
      - Parents, siblings?
      - Where were you born?
      - What was growing up like for you?
  - **College Access**
    - What were your early school experiences like?
    - Are you a first-generation college graduate in your family? (Olson, 2013; Rondini. 2010)
    - How prepared were you, academically, to enter State University? (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013)
    - How, if at all, did playing high school sports help you access college? (Harper et al., 2013)
    - How much did your athletics participation contribute to:
      - You being admitted into college? (Harper et al., 2013)
      - You attending State University? (Lombardi et al., 2012)
    - Who influenced you to pursue college?
    - Were there other plans you considered aside from college?
    - When (what year, how old) did you enter college; when (what year, how old) did you complete it?
    - What were your thoughts about college prior to entering it?
    - How did your thoughts about college evolve once you began the experience?
    - What were your impressions of your status as an African American male on a campus with so few African American males? (Harper et al., 2013), 2000; Van Rheenen, 2013)

- Describe any significant experiences related to your unique status as an African American male.

Open Narrative: What other thoughts would you like to add here?

INTERVIEW II:

- **THEMES:**
  - **Collegiate Student-Athletics Participation**
    - **Questions Lists**
- Why were you drawn to play high school sports?
- Why were you drawn to play college sports:
  - Basking in reflective glory?
  - Love of the game?
  - College access?
  - Go pro?
  - Possible current/future support from alumni/boosters?
- Perceptions/Reflections on teammates; successful or not successful (e.g., Jobias?)
- Leave room for participant narrative, space for open responses…
    - Describe your experience as a student-athlete football player for State University:
      - What were the requirements?
      - How much time did you put in each day, each week?
        - 20-hour rule apply, or is it fantasy?
        - How much time spent on football versus non football activities (Academics, Social, Career, etc.)
      - What were your favorite memories?
      - Describe the perks?
      - What were the challenges?
      - How did you handle the requirements, perks, and challenges?
      - How did you interact with teammates; non-athletes, professors, coaches, administrators, tutors, etc.?
      - How did you handle the pressure to perform?
      - Did you receive a full athletic scholarship each year of your undergraduate tenure, until you graduated?
      - How successful were you during your college playing days?
        - What were your roles on the team?
        - Did you achieve all your athletic goals?

- o **Perception of others; describe some of your teammates.**
  - ▪ Were they experiencing benefits and challenges similar to yours regarding the confluence of collegiate athletics participation and academics?
- o **Exploitation (Van Rheehan, 2013)**
  - ▪ Describe your conception of playing a revenue-generating sport in exchange for a scholarship; fair exchange or not?
  - ▪ Did you feel exploited from an economic perspective during your playing days?
  - ▪ Conversely, Univ. of Missouri recent protests, witness power of men's football revenue-generating influence; what are your thoughts on that?
- o **Role Engulfment (Adler & Adler, 1991)**
  - ▪ What were your expectations regarding the balance of your athletic, academic, and social roles prior to college matriculation?
  - ▪ What were your experiences regarding the balance of your athletic, academic, and social roles after college matriculation?
    - ● Were you able to achieve your academic goals; did you experience academic success?
    - ● What do you think about the comparison of the State University graduation rates for all students (90%), African American males (66%), and African American male revenue-generating student-athletes (46%)?
    - ● Did you witness academic improprieties?
    - ● What are your thoughts on a recent front page, *Chronicle of Higher Education* story describing resignation/legal actions involving a former athletic department academic advisor (Wolverton, 2015); similarities/contrasts to your experiences?
- o **Academic Clustering (Adler & Adler, 1991)**
  - ▪ What was your academic major (minor) in college?
  - ▪ What role, if any, did your coaches play in your academics; specifically, helping you select this major, pick/schedule your courses, etc.?
  - ▪ Did you perceive fellow teammates being gently or forcefully pushed into specific academic majors/courses/friendly professors, etc.?
- o **Dual Career Development (Alfermann et al., 2004; Lally, 2007)**
  - ▪ What activities did you engage in during college to prepare you for a career after college?
  - ▪ How did playing football impact your ability to engage in academic, social, or career development activities during college?

Open Narrative: What other thoughts would you like to add here?

INTERVIEW III:

- o **Interview One and Interview Two Reflections, clarifications**
- o **Further exploration;**
  - ▪ **injury ramifications on current life;**
    - ● **Concussions—CTE, any lingering issues?**
  - ▪ **Pro career goals; teammate expectations at Div I school**

- ● **THEMES**
  - o **Transferable Skills Development**
    - ▪ **Questions lists;**
    - ▪ What soft skills do you possess?
      - ● Reference the following list to help him choose: (Robles, 2012)
        - o Communication – oral, speaking capability, written, presenting, listening
        - o Courtesy – manners, etiquette, business etiquette, gracious, says please and thank you, respectful
        - o Flexibility – adaptability, willing to change, lifelong learner, accepts new things, adjusts, is teachable
        - o Integrity – honest, ethical, high morals, has personal values, does what's right
        - o Interpersonal Skills – nice, personable, sense of humor, friendly, nurturing, empathetic, has self-control, patient, sociability, warmth, social skills
        - o Positive Attitude – optimistic, enthusiastic, encouraging, happy, confident
        - o Professionalism – businesslike, well-dressed, good appearance, poised
        - o Responsibility – accountable, reliable, gets the job done, resourceful, self-disciplined, wants to do well, conscientious, has common sense
        - o Teamwork – cooperative, gets along with others, agreeable, supportive, helpful, collaborative
        - o Work Ethic – hard working, willing to work, loyal, initiative, self-motivated, on time, good attendance
          - ▪ Which are your strengths?
          - ▪ How did you attain these soft skills?

- o Did your collegiate student-athlete experience playing football for State University impact your development of these soft skills?
  - How do you plan to continue to develop these soft skills/transferable skills going forward in your career?
- o **Undergraduate Bachelor's Degree Relevance to Career Path and Career Goals. (Adler & Adler, 1991)**
  - ▪ How relevant is your undergraduate degree to your career path and goals?
    - History, forced…no desire to teach, but dual career development took place along teacher prep pathway?
    - Regret over Kinesiology, but not too late? Desire to try in that career path? Leverage playing experiences, and social capital to gain traction?
    - Fully moved on from firefighter career dream?
- o **Ongoing Career Construction/Career Narrative (Savickas 2002; 2005; Savickas et al., 2009; Savickas & Hartung, 2013)**
  - ▪ Please describe your work experiences since graduating from college.
    - Professional football experiences
    - Professional experiences after retirement from elite athletics
  - ▪ What adjustments have you made from the time you completed your athletic career to now, regarding your career goals and the jobs you secured along the way to your current position?
  - ▪ (optional) Career style interview; recall three early recollections, give each a title:
  - ▪ What part of your life story is important to your current career:
    - Path/Situation:
    - Challenges/Triumphs:
  - ▪ Whom did you admire (role models) during college? (self-concept)
    - Tell me about her or him.
  - ▪ Whom do you admire (role models) now?
    - Tell me about her or him.
  - ▪ What media (magazines, websites, music, or shows) did you watch regularly during college? (environment/interests)
    - What did you like about them?
  - ▪ What (magazines, websites, music, or shows) do you watch regularly now?
    - What do you like about them?

- What was your favorite book or movie during college? (script to envision desired life design outcome)
  - Tell me the story.
- What is your favorite book or movie now?
  - Tell me the story.
- Tell me your favorite motto or saying during college? (advice to self)
- Tell me your favorite motto or saying now? [Out-work, out-play?]
- Career goal during college vs. career goal now? How has this evolved?
- Where do you see yourself taking your career path in the future?
  - What are your dreams; how will you get there?
- Have your student-athlete experiences impacted your career development and career path?
  - If so, how?
- What is the ultimate life you'd life to design for yourself in the future?
- What occupation interests you most? [Kinesiology?]
- Are you responding to any social expectations for your career choices and ideal life design?
- How do you answer the question "What am I going to make of my life? in light of: (adaptability)
  - shifting economic conditions (Savickas et al., 2009)
  - changes in personal/family health,
  - employment opportunities, and
  - intimate relationships?
- Was motivation to participate in athletics different than motivation to develop your non-sport career?
  - Describe similarities and/or differences, please.

Open Narrative: What other thoughts would you like to add here?
- What motivations, role models, skills, past experiences, goals have been most helpful for you in achieving non-sport career success to this point?
- Do you consider yourself successful in your non-sport career?
- Concurrent and subsequent social capital (career-related) benefits of collegiate student-athletics participation, please describe?
- Additional participant questions [member checking reflections]

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