

Expanding Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth to Intercollegiate Athletics

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Strengths-based perspectives are becoming increasingly common in higher education for historically minoritized groups of students. However, one student group has yet to be centered in these discussions: college athletes. This article proposes expanding strengths-based perspectives of athletes of color from low socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds based on Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model. CCW consists of aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital. An integrative literature review process was used to examine previous athlete development literature employing strengths-based perspectives of athletes via CCW. A synthesis of the college athlete development and experience literature demonstrated a host of ways college athletes of color from low SES backgrounds also bring with them and cultivate CCW. Expanding CCW to college athletes provides a new lens to enhance theory and praxis and understanding of the experiences of this unique student population. Practical recommendations include implementing and fostering CCW via athlete development programming based on this expansion. The conceptual implications of this research shift epistemological understanding of college athletics and athletes.

Keywords: Yosso, capital, intercollegiate athletics, strengths-based perspectives

Scholars continue to question intercollegiate athletics' role within post-secondary institutions, particularly concerning athletes competing at the Division I level (Gayles et al., 2018). Division I is often considered the most elite level of competition in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and is the most commercial and professionalized version of college sports (Gurney et al., 2017). Scholarship concerning business-related issues and the commercial nature of Division I is prolific (Miller, 2021). Research examining athletes' development and educational experiences, however, is increasing but still relatively sparse in comparison (Foster et al., 2021). This is particularly true with respect to the development of cultural capital in these spaces (Hextrum, 2019). Understanding how athletes, particularly those who are racially and economically minoritized, acquire cultural capital can be accomplished by expanding Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model to athletics contexts.

CCW maintains that students from minoritized groups, particularly regarding race and class, have forms of capital that, while distinct from those of their white middle-class peers, enable them to succeed. Still, despite the demographic overlaps between students at the heart of Yosso's (2005) original framework and athletes competing in Division I sports (Beamon, 2014; Coakley 2021; Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015; Huffman & Cooper, 2014; NCAA Demographics Database, n.d.; Nocera & Strauss, 2016), few scholars have studied the capital development of college athletes (Cooper, 2017; Gayles et al., 2018).

Alternatively, this article *expands* CCW to intercollegiate athletics, specifically to athletes from racially and economically minoritized backgrounds. The expansion of Yosso's (2005) CCW serves two important purposes for higher education and intercollegiate athletics. First, it provides scholars with a deeper understanding of how capital exists in athletics and intersects with other higher education spaces. Second, it further values college athletes' experiences by highlighting sports as a meaningful avenue toward cultivating cultural wealth.

Using CCW, the above purposes are accomplished through an integrative literature review (Torraco, 2016; Snyder, 2019) of higher education and sport literature to answer the following research question: In what ways do Division I college athletes of color from low SES backgrounds bring and cultivate their own forms of unique sport-related capital through CCW? The next two sections offer background on capital and critical race theory (CRT), both of which are the foundation of Yosso's (2005) CCW. This is followed by a brief description of CCW.

Capital

Capital involves symbolic and material resources exchanged for higher status (Bourdieu, 2011; Hextrum, 2019). Traditionally, capital takes three forms: economic, social, and cultural. Economic capital embodies financial and material resources, while social capital is the resources and networks one obtains by belonging to a particular group or groups (Bourdieu, 1986; Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2017). Cultural capital pertains to the symbolic goods, abilities, values, and unique ways of knowing for different groups (Bourdieu, 1986; Hextrum, 2019). Economic, social, and cultural capital work together and, in various situations, influence one another. For example, affluent individuals are seen as having higher economic capital they can exchange for cultural capital. Resources and access then increase their social capital, which may in turn provide further economic capital (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2017). This conversion ability is the foundation of inequality reproduction (Bourdieu, 1986) and is particularly important in higher education (Hextrum, 2019).

In higher education research, capital is used to frame students of color and those from low SES from deficit perspectives. Such outlooks privilege the experiences of white, middle- or upper-class students, while simultaneously viewing students not meeting these standards as entering college from positions of “cultural poverty,” putting them at a disadvantage (Yosso, 2005, p. 69). Thus, these perspectives emphasize students’ deficits while simultaneously ignoring the positive components, such as self-efficacy and resilience, they bring to college and to their communities (O’Shea, 2016).

Deficit perspectives ensure educational systems maintain existing power structures, rather than working to dismantle them. Alternatively, an anti-deficit or strengths-based perspective emphasizes how successful students from underrepresented backgrounds overcome structural barriers (Harper, 2010). Additionally, framing minoritized students as “lacking,” perpetuates higher education’s issues with inequality while dismissing the unique ways of knowing and forms of capital these students bring with them and cultivate in college. One of the most prominent frameworks scholars can use to dismantle this inequality is Critical Race Theory.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) stems from the movement of scholar-activists transforming the nexus between race, racism, and power (Crenshaw, 2002). CRT began in legal studies in the 1970s as scholars took exception with the perpetuation of racialized status and social structures, along with the slow progress of Civil Rights legislation (Crenshaw, 2002). CRT quickly expanded into other disciplines, including education and sport, where scholars increasingly take more critical perspectives of the history, structure, and landscape of post-secondary education and intercollegiate athletics. Yosso (2005) defined CRT in education as “a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses” (p. 74). Through its five tenets, CRT has a challenging and liberating effect.

The first tenet of CRT is the intercentricity of race and racism. Given its foundation in American society, this is also evident in college athletics, particularly when it comes to the hiring, or lack thereof, of coaches of color in football and men’s basketball. For example, in football and men’s basketball 63% and 77% of athletes, respectively, are athletes of color, while 85% and 79% of coaches, respectively, are white (NCAA Demographic Database, n.d.). Indeed, in 2020 there were 10 football head coaching openings in college football’s most elite subdivision (i.e., Division I Football Bowl Subdivision). A white man filled each vacancy (Wetzel, 2020).

The second tenet of CRT involves challenges to dominant ideology. This tenet refutes ideas like meritocracy and colorblindness to expose “deficit-informed research that silences, ignores, and distorts epistemologies of People of Color” (Yosso, 2005, p. 73). Further, this tenet is at the heart of this article. This scholarship supports new epistemologies of athletes of color from low SES through its promotion of strengths-based understanding of college athletes. Commitment to social justice is the third tenet and seeks a transformation of race and class oppression (Yosso, 2005). This tenet featured prominently during the 2020-2021 sport season following the murder of George Floyd, a Black man in Minneapolis who was killed by a police officer during his arrest. As a result, college athletes mobilized to raise awareness of police brutality against Black men and women (Benson, 2020; Kluch, 2020).

The fourth tenet draws on the lived experiences of Communities of Color, noting the importance of experiential knowledge and counter narratives in challenging dominant ideologies. Offering counter-stories shows the daily struggles of athletes of color with their encounters with

racism and microaggressions. For example, a white athlete might contend that the university is diverse and welcoming, but their Black teammate might offer a story about encountering negative stereotypes from faculty simply because of the color of their skin (Cooper et al., 2017).

Finally, CRT encompasses a transdisciplinary lens, bringing in various studies, contexts, and histories involving race and racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Yosso, 2005). In studying athletics through the lens of CCW, scholars and practitioners can consider how various components such as K-12 education, athlete backgrounds, NCAA policies, media representation, legal studies, and higher education systems intersect to support or challenge power systems in athletics. Taken together, CRT's tenets counter white, middle-class norms that various minoritized groups have historically been measured against and mobilize pedagogy and research centered around Communities of Color (Yosso, 2005).

Community Cultural Wealth

The Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model appreciates and centers Communities of Color. Cultural wealth is the “array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro forms of oppression” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). Communities of Color nurture this wealth through unique forms of capital that include aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant (Yosso, 2005). Aspirational capital involves one's ability to maintain hopes and goals for the future. Linguistic capital refers to the social and intellectual skills gained through communication in more than one language or style. Cultural knowledge fostered by family members to instill a sense of community or broader understanding of kin is familial capital. Social capital includes one's community and system of connections or resources, while navigational capital refers to one's ability to move through social institutions. Finally, resistant capital involves “knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).

However, not all researchers see this strengths-based perspective of capital as warranted. For example, Portes (1998) and Rios-Aguilar and Kiyama (2017) have argued that the same mechanisms that make capital beneficial and transferable can also result in negative consequences. One must note this critique to “avoid the trap of presenting community networks, social control, and collective sanctions as unmixed blessings” (Portes, 1998, p. 15). Rios-Aguilar and Kiyama (2017) also noted that challenging deficit lenses through capital approaches can be problematic because it indicates that all students have capital, when that might not be true. With this in mind, it is important to have a critical perspective when examining the college athlete development and experience literature to consider ways that capital development for athletes may not be fully realized. Still, CCW is a unique model that has been consistently applied to various higher education student populations; however, it has rarely been expanded to sports as a means to understand and appreciate the experiences of college athletes.

Method

To address how racially and economically minoritized athletes cultivate CCW, I conducted an integrative literature review. Torraco (2016) noted that this approach “critiques and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated” (p. 404). Integrative literature reviews focus on either mature or emerging topics in a field of study. While mature topics are well understood and widely covered in the literature, emerging topics are newer and have less foundational scholarship. This study falls into the latter.

Emerging topics, like CCW's expansion into college sports, benefit from integrative literature reviews as this method provides a more holistic synthesis of the literature (Torraco, 2016). Additionally, integrative reviews of emerging topics are more likely to result in a new conceptualization of a topic as is done in this article. Because I seek to uncover and apply CCW to a novel area, this is an appropriate methodological approach (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2016). Additionally, previous literature concerning intercollegiate athletics and capital have employed this method (Comeaux, 2020; Osanloo et al., 2018).

Data Collection and Synthesis

The purpose of integrative literature reviews is not to cover all articles published on a particular topic, but rather reconceptualize the topic at hand (Torraco, 2016). Integrative literature reviews take one of three forms. One is methodological, meaning literature with similar methods are reviewed, while another is historical, placing literature in chronological order according to when topics emerged in the scholarship (Torraco, 2016). The third form, which is employed in this research, is a conceptual review where literature addressing a single topic is reviewed.

Using GoogleScholar I retrieved Yosso's (2005) original article: *Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth*. Next, within the research that cited Yosso's (2005) piece, I used keywords to search for articles and other scholarship related to college athletics within the previous 10 years to keep the scholarship referenced timely and relevant. Literature included in this analysis met the following criteria: (1) added to the literature on the experiences of athletes of color and/or those from low SES; and (2) expanded scholarly and/or practitioner understanding of athlete capital and development in college sports in original ways (Osanloo et al., 2018; Snyder, 2019). I collected and examined the top 25 articles that fit the criteria. I included these in the reference section and designated them with asterisk before the first author's last name.

I deductively coded and themed the findings and implications from each publication using the six forms of capital in Yosso's (2005) CCW model: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital (Miles et al., 2020; Osanloo et al., 2018; Torraco, 2016). I also used inductive analysis to code and theme research that did not explicitly discuss capital, but indirectly referenced one or more forms of capital in the findings. Synthesizing the deductive and inductive findings allowed for an integration of "existing ideas with new ideas to create a new formulation of the topic" at hand (Torraco, 2016, p. 420): CCW.

Expansion of CCW to Intercollegiate Athletics

This study addresses a gap in higher education and intercollegiate sport scholarship in framing racially and economically minoritized athletes from a strengths-based lens (Comeaux, 2020; Gayles et al., 2018). Expanding CCW to athletics provides scholars and practitioners a strengths-based understanding of athletes' unique experiences in forming cultural wealth. In this way, a CCW lens demonstrates respect for and finds value in athletes' skills and knowledge, while also engendering further understanding of this unique student population. As most leaders surrounding revenue-generating sports are not people of color, and likely have not experienced similar circumstances (Coakley, 2021; Cooper & Hoffman, 2014; Harper, 2018), they can employ CCW to better understand and support athletes of color from low SES backgrounds. The following sections discuss how previous literature supports the expansion of CCW to intercollegiate athletics.

Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital is the ability to preserve hopes and dreams for the future. At the heart of this form of capital is resiliency and the ability to imagine possibilities beyond current circumstances (Yosso, 2005). Athletes often cultivate this capital at a young age as they have goals to attend and represent a certain institution and team (Villegas, 2015). Similarly, aspirational capital may be particularly important for athletes who want to play professionally, which is a common aspiration for athletes in football and men's basketball (Cooper, 2016). Playing professionally should not be the only goal athletes develop during college, particularly because few athletes move onto the professional level of competition (Bimper, 2020; Cooper, 2016; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; NCAA Recruiting Facts, 2014). However, maintaining challenging but appropriate goals can foster a unique combination of commitment and resiliency amongst athletes, which can be translated into other areas of their lives (Holloway, 2020; Martinez, 2018; Richardson et al., 1990).

While athletes may not always have a clear academic or athletic path, it is likely that aspirational capital keeps them focused on their goals (Ofoegbu et al., 2021). Such focus is necessary, particularly when academic and athletic obstacles emerge. Academic struggles may include stereotypes, challenging coursework, or poor advising (Rubin & Moses, 2017). Athletic hurdles can include identity development, injury, or issues with playing time (Coakley, 2021; Lu et al., 2018). Regardless of difficulties, athletes employ this capital and their resiliency in their endeavors for excellence.

Cooper and colleagues (2017) applied CCW to examine the experiences of Division I Black female athletes. While this research focused on the experiences of Black female athletes, it is likely that these findings also extend to other athletes of color and those from low SES backgrounds. For instance, using focus groups, Cooper et al. (2017) found that athletes in this sample often used aspirational, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital during their college careers to achieve success in athletics and academics. Athletes in the sample noted aspirational capital was a driving force for them to achieve a goal that no one in their families had attained: graduating from college. This also highlights the intersection of distinct forms of capital. Athletes used their physical capital (a subtype of navigational capital) to bolster their aspirational capital. Additionally, aspirational capital kept this group persistent in their quest for success. Similarly, research by Ofoegbu and colleagues (2021) found that Black athletes used aspirations not only to guide them in their academic choices while in college, but also in their transition out of sport and into their professional careers.

Linguistic Capital

Within an athletic context, linguistic capital involves the unique language and style of speaking that individual teams create to communicate. Athletes display this kind of capital as they run, execute, and communicate through plays and schemes in their sport. Yosso (2005) argued that linguistic capital includes “the ability to communicate via visual art, music or poetry” (p. 79). Athletics is much like the visual arts (i.e., music, theater, and dance): Through physical practice, competition, and film study, athletes hone and perfect their language as it relates to their craft and, potentially, their identity (Brand, 2006; Cooper & Jackson, 2019).

Additionally, athletes cultivate sport- and team-specific verbiage and nicknames that further foster feelings of family and community in their units (Coakley, 2021). This mirrors the communication of students of color from low SES described by Yosso's (2005) linguistic capital: “Just as students may utilize different vocal registers to whisper, whistle or sing, they

must often develop and draw on various language registers, or styles, to communicate with different audiences” (p. 79). Despite the importance of language and discourse in athletic contexts (Coakley, 2021), previous research examining athletes’ capital through Yosso’s (2005) CCW model has typically excluded linguistic capital (Gayles et al., 2018). However, this is an important capital in sport spaces.

Familial Capital

As with Yosso’s (2005) familial capital for students of color from low SES, familial capital for athletes is defined as the values, traditions, and knowledge fostered within a person’s familial unit. This capital can be fostered by people who are direct relatives or from those who are “like family” such as close friends (Yosso, 2005). Literature notes that family is particularly important for college athletes of color (Martin et al., 2010). Ofoegbu and colleagues (2021) discovered that family was one of the biggest sources of support for athletes of color not only before but also during college and post-graduation. This aligns with previous scholarship noting the significance of the familial unit in emphasizing the importance of education and the role of family in an athlete’s formation of aspirational capital (Carter-Francique et al., 2015; Cooper et al., 2017; Ortega & Grafnetterova, 2021; Villegas, 2015).

For example, guardians may discuss not only sport-related aspirations with athletes, but also educational and career goals (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021; Ofoegbu et al., 2021). Thus, while athletes’ families are traditionally stereotyped as only reinforcing the importance of athletic performance (Coakley, 2021; Smith et al., 2014), research shows that familial capital spans across athletic, social, and academic arenas. In fact, Cooper et al. (2017) go as far as to argue that familial capital propagates athletes’ aspirational capital to “excel academically *because* of their race, sex, athletic status, and family background *as opposed to in spite of* these identities” (p. 140). Thus, to navigate through institutions that systematically privilege whiteness and diminish their unique ways of knowing, familial capital is critical as athletes resist these systems and counter deficit-lenses (Cooper et al., 2017). The importance of familial capital in the lives of athletes cannot be overstated (Martin et al., 2010).

The significance of athletes’ teammates also emerged in the literature as a sub-topic of familial capital distinct for college athletes (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021). A team unit often mimics that of a family unit. Teammates work together to create a sense of team legacy and culture. Teams often establish traditions passed down from senior athletes to those joining the team. Such traditions may include growing post-season beards and not shaving until the end of the season, or creating a mentor-mentee program matching first-year athletes with older teammates. In fostering team legacies and winning cultures, some teams commit to one another by having a “dry” (i.e., no alcohol) season so they can perform well and give their teammates their best. Finally, in building familial-related capital in the team setting, athletes often lean on one another during challenging times socially, academically, and athletically (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021).

Additionally, athletes often socialize, eat, study, and live together (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021). Some scholars contend that spending too much time with one’s team or other athletes can further ostracize athletes from the academic community and result in feelings of isolation (Anderson & Dixon, 2019; Rubin & Moses, 2017). Athlete isolation and/or lack of inclusion should be taken seriously by institutions as relationships inside and outside of athletics facilitate athletes’ social capital and networks. However, few scholars have framed the time athletes spend together as a way to build team capital which then enhances CCW. Indeed, a consistent theme for Black athletes interviewed about their sport experiences was that teammates

were their family (Cooper & Jackson, 2019), fostering support for familial capital in athletic spaces. It is likely that similar findings about team capital would emerge in studies concerning other athletes as well. This time spent learning with and about one another can create a culture of acceptance and care, much like familial capital from Yosso's (2005) model.

Social Capital

Social capital encompasses community resources and contacts athletes create as they seek emotional support and guidance through college. These may include athletics department resources, along with coach, counselor, and teammate support. Research indicates that Division I athletes have more frequent interactions with diverse others compared to their non-athlete counterparts (Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2007). Having more diverse interactions not only fosters acceptance and community, but also ensures a larger network, which aids in growing athletes' social capital.

Importantly, social capital also includes relationships athletes build outside of athletics, particularly with faculty, staff, administrators, and non-athletes peers (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021; Martinez, 2018; Ortega & Grafnetterova, 2021). Cooper et al. (2017) noted that Black female athletes engaged their social capital to connect with support systems outside of athletics (e.g., talking with teaching assistants and professors) and inside athletics (e.g., communicating with academic-athletic counselors).

Additionally, Carter-Francique and colleagues (2013) interviewed Black Division I athletes to understand how social support influenced their perceptions of academic success. The athletes in this sample placed importance on the interplay between the support provided by family (i.e., familial capital) and the support provided by on-campus mentors (i.e., social capital provided by faculty, academic advisors, etc.). These actors influenced athlete perceptions of academic success by providing guidance, encouraging them to take responsibility, introducing them to new social networks, and offering "unconditional support" (Carter-Francique et al., 2013, p. 239). Because athletes of color tend to be negatively stereotyped regarding their academic motivations (Comeaux, 2011a, 2011b; Gayles et al., 2018), the idea that athletes actively engaged with social capital to demonstrate their commitment to education is significant and something practitioners should foster further.

Navigational Capital

Navigational capital involves the ability to move through institutions. Yosso (2005) claimed that this was particularly important as most institutions were not established with people of color in mind. Similarly, higher education was not structured with athletes in mind (Bimper, 2016; Curette, 2015; Hawkins, 2017). However, athletes can gain admission and maneuver through institutions using their physical capital, defined simply as athletic talent (Jayakumar & Page, 2021). This athletic talent can be exchanged for admission into colleges and universities, and thus, is a subtype of navigational capital used by athletes. Still, physical capital remains stratified, largely favoring affluent white athletes and their families (Hextrum, 2019). Sports have become central features in white, upper-class communities where families can afford access to private lessons and coaches, join elite athletic clubs, and travel for tournaments and showcases (Coakley, 2021; Hextrum, 2019). In other words, these families spend economic and social capital to reap the benefits of cultural and, ultimately, navigational capital. While athletes outside of white and affluent communities can build navigational capital, it is often fostered in different ways (Coakley, 2021). For example, students of color from low SES backgrounds are often

socialized to perceive their physical talent as a navigational tool that can provide them a “way out” of their current circumstances. On the other hand, white athletes from more affluent backgrounds are socialized to view their athletic talent as an extracurricular activity that can bolster their current social capital and future economic capital (Cooper, 2015; Hextrum, 2019; Jayakumar & Page, 2021). Thus, athletes from different racial and economic backgrounds may have their physical capital fostered in different ways, which may be based in the concept of interest convergence.

Interest convergence is a potential factor influencing physical/navigational capital exchange and development. When athletes, particularly athletes of color in football and men’s basketball, exchange physical talent for admission to institutions, scholars argue that they are primarily admitted to enhance the college’s athletics program and national brand (Donnor, 2005; Hextrum, 2019). During their time in college, athletes, in general, are encouraged to focus on their physical capital by improving athletic performance. This focus on physical capital largely benefits white men in positions of power. For example, athletes of color performing well can lead to financial benefits for their head coaches through contract extensions and/or performance bonuses. Thus, coaches’ economic capital, and due to conversion capabilities, other forms of capital, increase (Hextrum, 2019).

Still, economically and racially minoritized athletes can benefit by cultivating and using their navigational capital during college, bolstering support for CCW in athletics. Athletes can exchange physical capabilities to enter institutions where they might otherwise be excluded. Martinez (2018) interviewed athletes from low SES backgrounds and all expressed that the ability to continue to compete led to their higher education enrollment. Thus, while physical capital may disproportionately favor white athletes from affluent backgrounds (Jayakumar & Page, 2021), minoritized athletes should not be discouraged from using their physical talent to get where they aspire to go. On the contrary, access to higher education maintains their aspirational capital as they work to achieve their athletic and academic goals among others (Holloway, 2020; Jayakumar & Page, 2021; Martinez, 2018).

Similarly, athletes simultaneously representing a small fraction of the student body but a potentially large portion of minoritized students on campus (Harper, 2018), this group can use navigational capital to move through their respective institutions, many of which are classified as PWIs (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). Similar to the conditions students of color encounter, athletes also experience stressful environments that can jeopardize success. For example, athletes encounter racism, intellectual stereotypes, major clustering, and feelings of exploitation (Beamon, 2014; Cooper et al., 2017; Curette, 2015). In fact, Van Rheenen (2011) noted Black athletes are five times more likely to report feelings of exploitation than white athletes.

Thus, navigational capital offers athletes ways to maneuver through such obstacles and maintain their aspirations, making this form of capital particularly significant for minoritized athletes. In examining capital usage of Black athletes, Ofoegbu and colleagues (2021) noted that navigational capital was the most salient form of capital that athletes in their sample engaged in and was the most tied to other forms of capital. For example, athletes demonstrated resiliency to push through challenges they encountered to achieve their goals, tying navigational capital to aspirational capital. Additionally, navigational capital intersects with familial and social capital as athletes use available resources to maneuver through their college careers. Studies have noted that navigational capital included seeking advice from family members who had attended college or were in a career they desired to enter, talking to teammates and/or coaches about available resources, and getting feedback from faculty on assignments (Holloway, 2020; Ofoegbu et al., 2021; Ortega & Grafnetterova, 2021).

Resistant Capital

Resistant capital is fostered through counter behaviors that protest inequality (Yosso, 2005). Just as literature notes that students from lower SES are resilient (O’Shea, 2016), so too are athletes (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015; Villegas, 2015). Examples of resistant capital can be seen as athletes raise their voices about discrepancies in compensation and educational opportunities (Edelman, 2014; Harrison et al., 2017; Hawkins, 2017; NCAA Student Athletes and NIL Rights, 2021). Resistant capital has arguably increased in recent years as athletes have used their voices and platforms to challenge hegemonic structures that favor white men in positions of power (Bimper, 2020; Kluch, 2020; Smith et al., 2014). For example, after the murder of George Floyd, athletes, particularly athletes of color, employed resistant capital. Resistant capital can be seen in the ways in which athletes not only participated in broader protests for racial and social justice, but also organized their own (Benson, 2020). For example, football players from Clemson University organized their own protest that gathered more than 3,000 followers in and outside of athletics. The leaders of the protest called for shows of solidarity with the Black community, challenges to police brutality, and reforms to end racism (Benson, 2020). Athletes of color took to social media, sharing their own stories about macro and microaggressions, while others knelt for the national anthem.

Because athletes employed resistant capital to elevate their voices, academic and athletic community leaders were forced to listen. One of the most controversial examples took place at the University of Texas at Austin (UT) when a multiracial group of UT athletes posted a letter to social media requesting changes to make the campus more inclusive. In this letter, the athletes advocated that the school abolish the alma mater, “The Eyes of Texas,” which is rooted in racist connotations about the Black community (McGee, 2021). In reaction, alumni and donors threatened to pull financial support if the song was banned. Despite this, football players took to media outlets to discuss an even darker part of the story: boosters threatening that they would not be able to find jobs in the state of Texas if they did not participate in the Eyes of Texas tradition (McGee, 2021). While the alma mater remains at UT, athletes acted as “resistors” (Yosso, 2005, p. 81) by employing their resistant capital to challenge inequities. Additionally, they used their social capital by banding together to network in the state of Texas to bring awareness to their concerns. Athletes will likely continue to use their resistant capital in novel ways to empower themselves to challenge the notion that they should just stick to sports.

Discussion

There are a host of practical and conceptual recommendations for expanding CCW to intercollegiate athletics. First, this section provides the practical recommendations of CCW in college athletics, giving particular attention to actionable ways leaders can foster athletes’ CCW. Next, conceptual implications of creating and further studying CCW are discussed.

Practical Recommendations

While it is critical to acknowledge the strengths athletes bring to the college environment, it is equally important to acknowledge systematic and structural barriers in higher education and how institutional leaders in academics and athletics can work within and against those barriers to promote athletes’ capital acquisition and deployment and, therefore, CCW. Thus, this section offers practical ways CCW can be fostered to further develop minoritized athletes.

Aspirational Capital Recommendations. As athletes formulate their goals, administrators and coaches should discuss such aspirations with athletes and create realistic and appropriate plans from their first year through their final year of college. This might be particularly important for revenue-generating athletes as the literature indicates that players in these sports can over-identify as athletes, experience identity foreclosure, and often believe they will move on to play professionally (Cooper, 2016; Lu et al., 2018). However, only two percent of college athletes move on to play professionally (NCAA Recruiting Facts, 2014); thus, administrators and coaches should have honest conversations with athletes about their goals.

In building a commitment to realistic aspirational goals for athletes, coaches should meet with their athletes frequently to discuss and re-evaluate their goals. In the first semester, athletes could make a list of goals and discuss them with coaches and administrators. After completing their first season, these goals could be revisited and re-evaluated to see how athletes performed, what goals were achieved, what goals missed the mark, and how to re-evaluate the goals that were missed. This pattern of re-evaluation allows athletes to stay on track while providing them autonomy in directing their futures.

For those struggling to maintain realistic aspirational goals, or for athletes whose plans drastically change, coaches and administrators should work to foster athletes' resiliency. Previous research has noted the importance of resiliency in aspirational capital and across other capitals (Cooper et al., 2017; Ofoegbu et al., 2021). Because they have competed in sports for years, encountered obstacles, and made it to college, most athletes are arguably naturally resilient. To further cultivate resiliency, athletes need encouragement from coaches, teammates, and others in athletics and outside of sport to continue toward their goals.

Linguistic Capital Recommendations. Language is key to fostering relationships and forming communities (Yosso, 2005), especially in sports (Coakley, 2021). Thus, administrators and coaches should note how linguistic capital can build an inclusive team community and help newcomers, like transfers and first-year athletes, learn this unifying language, while feeling comfortable to bring their own flare to conversations (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021). An important caveat to this notion is that the language must be inclusive and accepting to ensure all members of the program feel welcomed and valued in displaying their forms of linguistic capital. For example, college athletes often use non-inclusive terminology (e.g., non-athletic regular people or NARPS) that distinguishes their student group from other student groups on campus. While athletes are arguably unique from other college students, this language may further isolate them from other peers on campus, actually hindering their social capital. Thus, administrators and coaches should encourage athletes to move away from such potentially divisive language.

Similarly, athletes will model the language used by those in positions of power around them. Thus, to foster linguistic capital and inclusion for athletes, administrators and coaches must be aware of how their language can be construed as exclusive. Many administrators and coaches refer to athletes as "kids," which some see as a benign term (Haurwitz, 2018). However, more critical scholars note that using the term "kids" to describe athletes can be construed as a degrading term that furthers athletics leaders' positions of power over athletes. These "kids" are actually young adults who have the ability to make their own important life decisions and learn from the consequences of those decisions. By calling them kids, leaders place athletes into a position of having to be supported or taken care of by other adults (Haurwitz, 2018). Indeed, most faculty do not refer to their students as "kids." Such language should be avoided as it may deter linguistic and resistant capital and actually have a negative influence on athletes' personal development.

Familial Capital Recommendations. Given the salience of familial capital in athlete success in academics and athletics, it behooves coaches, athletic departments, and institutions to ensure athletes maintain appropriate ties with their family members (Carter-Francique et al., 2015; Cooper et al., 2017; Feterl, 2019). This may include providing athletes time during the holidays to travel home to be with family or ensuring support for athletes to have family members at their sporting events. Cooper and colleagues (2017) noted that familial capital was significant in athletes' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as they sought to achieve their academic and athletic goals. Similar research with Black football and men's basketball athletes highlighted how they reflected on the significance of high expectations and support from family (Martin et al., 2010).

Additionally, familial capital becomes increasingly important in athletes' final years of college and during their transition out of sport (Ofoegbu et al., 2021). Thus, ensuring familial capital is well established and maintained also sets athletes up for success post-college.

Facilitating athletes' teams as a familial unit is also critical, and many institutions already offer programming to enhance team chemistry. Administrators and coaches often host team retreats or team-building activities during the off-season, either in high school to college bridge programs or at the start of a season. These activities usually include various exercises aimed at building relationships, defining team roles, and working collaboratively to achieve a goal. Thus, retreats and team activities can help establish a culture of inclusion while channeling energy toward shared goals. These actions contribute to establishing the idea that the team is a family (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021). Still, Anderson and Dixon (2019) noted that athletes will often need time to "escape from sport" and be with others outside of their team or athletics (p. 364). Thus, coaches and administrators working to build capital must consider the appropriate balance between fostering the concept of the team as a family and giving athletes the space to build social and navigational capital in other spheres of their lives.

Another avenue for athletics leaders to consider in furthering family capital is establishing support groups for athletes. Support groups are most common for athletes suffering through an injury (Galli & Vealey, 2008). While not specific to a single team, such support groups can create a new sort of "team" for these athletes to rely on, learn from, and grow with. Leaders should consider including—or continue to include—groups for athletes of color, athletes and allies of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer (LGBTQ) community, or athletes with similar social or career interests. By widening athletes' networks and fostering new forms of familial capital, athletics departments can assist athletes in cultivating greater social capital.

Social Capital Recommendations. To introduce athletes to their unique social capital and continue to build on it, institutions can have seminars or other programming focused on helping athletes understand social capital and how to enhance it. This programming should focus on fostering relationships between athletes, coaches, and administrators on various teams. Similarly, programming could involve collaboration with other campus units to host programs that build athletes' cross-campus communities. Such programming might focus on athletes' various identities, career planning, social interests, and more (Navarro, 2014). By collaborating and networking across campus, athletics leaders provide athletes a direct example of how to build social capital. Through social capital and the resulting networks, athletes can showcase other unique forms of capital and their benefits. Such opportunities may result in greater appreciation for CCW in athletics and acceptance of diverse talents and meaning making on campus.

Finally, research notes that the more integrated and connected athletes are to faculty, non-athletes, and areas outside of sport, the more likely they are to holistically develop and

matriculate, indicating the importance of fostering social capital beyond the athletic environment (Anderson & Dixon, 2019; Martinez, 2018; Ortega & Grafnetterova, 2021). Based on the quality of these relationships and networks, increased social capital can result in access, actions, opportunities, and benefits in athletes' futures such as internships, interviews, or job offers (Bourdieu, 2011; Hextrum, 2019). Hextrum (2019) noted that athletes from affluent backgrounds, along with their parents, are able to leverage their social capital and the intercollegiate athletic system to their advantage to achieve social reproduction. Athletes of color from low SES backgrounds should be taught to use their unique social capital, experiences, and transferrable skills to enhance their own aspirational capital and achieve their athletic, academic, and career goals. In this way, social capital and aspirational capital become pivotal in assisting athletes to build upon their navigational capital.

Navigational Capital Recommendations. Institutions can implement programs designed to introduce new athletes to college rigors and expectations and the ways athletics and academics intersect. Summer bridge programs are beneficial for athletes coming from lower SES backgrounds or athletes of color: As soon as these athletes come to campus, programming can introduce them to athletes with similar backgrounds and experiences, while also introducing athletes to others from different backgrounds (Huml et al., 2019). This supports previous literature noting that summer bridge programs that create communities for athletes function in ways similar to living-learning communities for non-athlete students due to frequent interactions with peers and opportunities for deeper learning experiences (Weight & Huml, 2016). Athletes in navigational programming should be introduced to their institution, athletics departments, and academic leaders who will be pivotal during their collegiate careers. Athletes should be educated on academic, athletic, social, and mental health resources, which could be critical in navigating any potential obstacles that arise. In this way, athletes are prepared to engage with their various capitals.

Similarly, institutions and athletics departments should maintain and foster athletes' navigational capital as it relates to their physical talents. This can be done by providing nutritionists and ensuring athletes have appropriate strength and conditioning, athletic trainers, and physical therapists on staff. With these resources athletes can stay physically healthy, preserving a component to their navigational capital. Additionally, mental health resources should be readily available in to strengthen athletes' mind-body connection and encourage self-reflection (Ryan et al., 2018). Such support structures can enhance athletes' navigational capital by fostering athletes' emotional resiliency and getting them ready to encounter and overcome potential adversity in and outside of sports (Richardson et al., 1990). Thus, aspirational capital can also be fostered through these resources. When coupled with education on health, nutrition, and training, these resources can strengthen and maintain athletes' physical literacy, or the ability and desire to stay physically active for life (Coakley, 2021).

Despite a focus on athletes' physical prowess, it is critical leaders do not overly focus on developing athletes' physical talents while forsaking their other forms of capital and/or athlete development in other areas. Importantly, physical talent cultivation can be tainted by the "win-at-all-costs" culture of Division I sports or a potentially abusive coach (Coakley, 2021; Hawkins, 2017). This must-win culture may encourage (or force) athletes to continue to compete in practices or games, despite being seriously injured. Competing while injured may lead to short- and long-term negative effects on an athlete's physical talent, such as being unable to compete for weeks or suffering a career-ending injury. These situations are particularly tenuous for athletes with goals of competing professionally, as time off the court or field limits their exposure to professional league scouts, which may decrease their chances of being drafted.

Additionally, some athletes may fear losing their scholarship, and therefore part of their navigational capital that allows them the opportunity to receive an education.

Thus, while fostering physical capital, coaches and other athletic leaders cannot exploit athletes for their talents. Because this is a possibility, particularly for athletes of color in football and men's basketball (Curette, 2015; Hawkins, 2017; Polite & Santiago, 2017; Van Rheenen, 2011), athletes must exercise agency over their navigational capital and their bodies. As athletes push back against potential physical exploitation, they are also engaging their resistant capital. Thus, athletes demonstrate they are more than just their physical talent (Ofoegbu et al., 2021).

Resistant Capital Recommendations. Finally, college athletes possess strength in numbers that is unique to their population due to their hyper-visibility and social status (Bimper, 2020; Hawkins, 2017; Polite & Santiago, 2017). As athletes gain power by bolstering their CCW they are able to further resist inequities they experience, and thus, potentially elicit important changes in intercollegiate sport. Athletes should be encouraged by sport leaders to engage with their resistant capital and apply it to social issues they are passionate about. This can be accomplished through discussing and displaying their passions on current platforms such as social media, or it may involve athletes creating new platforms (e.g., websites, social reform groups) to get their messages out and promote resistance. Many college athletes have even founded advocacy groups rooted in resistance (Cooper, 2016). For example, after the white supremacist riots at the University of Virginia in 2017, university football athletes and coaches came together to form the Groundskeepers, an advocacy group educating the campus on racism, performing outreach in the local community, and working with local police to build stronger relationships (Adelson, 2020). The Groundskeepers continued their work after the murder of George Floyd, and have since remained active in promoting resistance to racial and social injustices. This is one example of coaches and athletes working together to build resistant capital. Overall, resistant capital empowers athletes to use their voice, and is a critical component to CCW.

Conceptual Implications

Expanding CCW to intercollegiate athletics produces multiple conceptual implications for the fields of intercollegiate athletics and higher education. First, Gayles and colleagues (2018) contended that CCW was a viable theoretical reform lens for reimagining the relationship between athletics and higher education. Particularly, employing CCW and respecting the forms of associated capital can challenge neoliberal capitalism and rampant racism present in higher education and intercollegiate sports. Gayles et al. (2018) argued that understanding “what student-athletes bring to college and how their backgrounds impact their experiences is essential to implementing cultural transformation and reform that will place priority on the quality of the student-athlete experience” (p. 17). Through this integrative literature review, the claims by Gayles et al. (2018) are further supported by other scholarship explicitly and implicitly promoting CCW in intercollegiate athletics.

Second, expanding CCW furthers scholarly knowledge of how to employ and foster capital in athletics spaces. Traditionally, understanding athletes' experiences has been lacking in higher education scholarship (Foster et al., 2021). However, CCW fills this void in the literature and furthers understanding about how athlete Communities of Color use and develop their unique capital for academic and/or athletic achievement (Cooper et al., 2017). Furthermore, research on specific kinds of capital like familial capital, is under-examined in the athlete development and experience literature. This model may help scholars understand and explain the

significance of family members and their role in athlete capital development in more depth (Coakley, 2021).

Third, using CCW may prompt meaningful change in athletics and education spaces. Springer and Dixon (2021) contended that expanding how scholars and practitioners use college student development theories can help the field examine more educational and developmental outcomes through sport participation. Similarly, expanding higher education theories, such as Yosso's (2005) model to athletics, may shift how the academy understands and organizes sport in higher education. Using CCW's strengths-based perspective may allow for the reclassification of athletics from something merely extracurricular to something more academic and education-focused, mirroring disciplines such as theater and dance (Brand, 2006). Thus, athletes' unique forms of capital and ways of learning could be valued and appreciated in more academic contexts.

Finally, strengths-based lenses are being promoted across higher education for traditionally minoritized groups such as trans and first-generation students (Abes et al., 2019; Harry et al., 2022; O'Shea, 2016). Unfortunately, such perspectives of athletes are lacking in the higher education scholarship (Harrison et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2014). This article builds on this growing strengths-based literature in higher education and includes a traditionally minoritized group: college athletes.

Limitations and Future Research

There are a few limitations and areas for future research concerning CCW. CRT is anti-essentialist; thus, the work that CRT undergirds, such as Yosso's (2005) model, highlights individuals' identity development and meaning making. As college athletes are not a homogenous group, a limitation of this model is that it might not apply to all minoritized athletes. Because CCW focused predominantly on students of color and those from less affluent backgrounds, this study also focused on athletes of color from low SES backgrounds. This may limit the generalizability of this conceptual framework to athletes who do not fall into these categories. However, given that Division I athletes, as a group, do experience some similarities during their college careers (e.g., time demands, pressure to perform, mental health concerns, coach demands, academic requirements), future research may look into how to further expand CCW to other groups of athletes more specifically. Future studies should also empirically explore the presence and cultivation of CCW in minoritized athletes in their navigation of their collegiate careers.

Indeed, by expanding CCW, intercollegiate athletics can be further appreciated as a community worth studying and athletes can be valued as individuals in higher education spaces, giving scholars a more holistic grasp on how capital works in intercollegiate athletics and intersects with higher education.

Conclusion

This article legitimizes the necessity of cultural wealth in respecting athletes through a strengths-based lens. It is time for scholars and practitioners to discard the historic deficit perspective prescribed to racially and economically minoritized athletes and start valuing this unique student population for their abilities and ways of meaning making that they bring with and develop in college (Bimper, 2016). When viewed through strengths-based lenses, athletes may achieve a greater sense of belonging, grow their academic, athletic, and social identities, and contribute even more to their various communities, both inside and outside the academy.

Through CCW and its six forms of capital, college athletes can develop holistically and authentically, which should be the ultimate purpose of higher education.

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