

UNDERSTANDING BLACK MALE ATHLETE
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (BMSR):
A CASE STUDY OF AN NBA FRANCHISE

A Dissertation

by

KWAME JESSE ASAMOAH AGYEMANG

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2011

Major Subject: Kinesiology

Understanding Black Male Athlete Social Responsibility (BMA SR): A Case Study of an
NBA Franchise

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee, John N. Singer
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ABSTRACT

Understanding Black Male Athlete Social Responsibility (BMASR):

A Case Study of an NBA Franchise. (May 2011)

Kwame Jesse Asamoah Agyemang, B.A; M.Ed., The University of Oklahoma

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. John N. Singer

While there is voluminous research on the Black male athlete, the literature does not touch on the notion of social responsibility. Thus, the purpose of this study was to garner perceptions of Black male athlete social responsibility (BMASR) from an NBA franchise, with the ultimate goal of moving toward a framework for better understanding this concept. A qualitative case study design was employed, utilizing in person interviews, telephone interviews, as well as observations and document analysis. To garner initial themes, open coding was employed after which axial coding was used to configure more defined themes.

Five central themes emanated from the analysis. The most significant theme was related to how participants defined Black male athlete social responsibility in comparison to how Archie Carroll defined corporate social responsibility (CSR). Second, the participants asserted that issues of race and racism continue to play an integral part today's society. For instance, participants gave examples of how racism permeates in the sport industry. Third, given many Black male athletes are in the public eye (e.g., media), participants felt Black male athletes should be role models. The role of

the NBA served as the fourth theme, as participants suggested the National Basketball Association (NBA) move toward improving current efforts in assisting with social responsibility. For instance, the NBA has programs in place that position athletes to give back to their community, but the participants felt that these efforts should be extended. Lastly, the theme of Black male athletes as businesses emerged, as participants mentioned the athletes' salaries as one reason why these individuals are businesses in their own right.

The implications communicated the need for the NBA and other stakeholders to pay more attention to issues of race and racism as it relates to the Black athletes. Also, the NBA should revisit current initiatives related to athlete social responsibility in view of past irresponsible acts of some athletes. Moreover, the implications of this study also pointed to Black male athletes employing good managers to assist the management of their careers. Limitations and future research directions are also discussed.

DEDICATION

To my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To my family, past, present, and future.

&

To Ghana and the rest of Africa, Nyame nhyira mo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God. The guidance He provided certainly aided me throughout this whole process. I would also like to acknowledge all my family, especially my mother and father. They have always been there to offer words of encouragement. Me completing this dissertation and earning my Ph.D. is as much my accomplishment as it is theirs. The sacrifices they made will never be forgotten. To my siblings, Raymond, Jessica, and Genesha, thank you for providing balance in my life. I know we will all go on to do great things.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Early in the formation of the United States, blacks became the designated drivers of the Scapegoat Express. We were the “indecent others.” The nation needed a permanent workforce and a permanent pariah. African Americans, by virtue of some seventeenth-century decree, got the job. No amount of education, no amount of wealth, could remove the stigma of race. The paradox and dilemma of virulent racism is that our exclusion became the basis of our unity. The next two hundred years of our existence were defined by reacting to racism.

-William C. Rhoden, \$40 Million Slaves (p. 15)

Do you remember the days when the majority of athletes competing in American football and basketball were predominantly White, and Black faces and bodies were nowhere to be found? This reality was only decades ago, and given the current landscape of American sports, some may find this hard to believe. The following dialogue between Mike Brown (then an assistant basketball coach at Seton Hall) and player Tchaka Shipp demonstrates this very ideal (Rhoden, 2006, p. 4).

Brown: Do you know about the Negro Leagues?

As Shipp looked bewildered, Brown ensued to ask the following:

Brown: You do know there was a time that blacks couldn't play major league baseball, don't you?

Shipp: Coach, get the [explicative] outta here!

This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Sport Management*.

Another example of this notion that Blacks have always been permitted to compete was demonstrated when a young girl in New York asked William Rhoden, “Who was the first white player to integrate the NBA?” (Rhoden, 2006, p. 5). Such sentiments on the part of many may be held because the current era illustrates a drastic change in what used to be leagues dominated by White athletes. Currently, however, Black male athletes competing in college basketball and football represent approximately 61% and 47%, respectively (NCAA, 2010). In the professional ranks, Black male athletes comprise 77% of the National Basketball Association (NBA) (Lapchick, Kaiser, Russell, & Welch, 2010) and 67% in the National Football League (NFL) (Lapchick, Kamke, & McMechan, 2009).

The Black male athlete has indeed become a commodity in big-time, revenue generating sports such as basketball and football. When you consider his high visibility and dominance on the basketball court and football field, one could reasonably argue the Black male athlete is the most valuable asset the NBA, NFL and its member organizations possess; and his predominance in these sport organizations has led to a number of opportunities for endorsements deals, movie and television appearances, and other business and financial opportunities for Black male athletes. A historical glance at how this came to be will now be discussed.

Black male athletes' voyage

While some may be inclined to equate Black people with the participation in sport, this has not always been the case. In fact, Gerald Early, from the film, *Journey of the African American Athlete*, stated early generations of Blacks saw two problems with

sport in America: a) it was a waste of time because it did not move the Black race forward, and b) if they were competing, it was for the benefit of their White slave owners (Farrell, Hutchinson, Reid, & Rhoden, 1996). For instance, Rhoden (2006) referenced how Tom Molineaux, a slave on the Virginian plantation, won his freedom from his slave master by beating other slaves in boxing matches. The fact that slave owners utilized boxing matches between their slaves to gamble and place bets for their financial gain is certainly a testament to White privilege at the time. As this illustrates, the livelihood of many slaves at the time depended on if they could conquer another man who was in the same position.

One of the first prominent Black male athletes was Isaac Murphy, winning the Kentucky Derby three times. It is worth mentioning that 15 of the first 28 Kentucky Derby winners were Black (Drape, 2006). Concerning Murphy, at the peak of his career, he was earning \$10,000 a year; this was almost ten times as much as the average White of the time, which caused discontent and led to Whites forming the Jockey Club and denying Blacks jockey licenses (Farrell, Hutchinson, Reid, & Rhoden, 1996).

During the 20th century, race continued to play a major role in the sport context (Edwards, 1973; Evans, 2001). For instance, considered the fastest bicycle rider in the world, Major Taylor, a Black male, was eventually banned by the League of American Wheel Men (Farrell, Hutchinson, Reid, & Rhoden, 1996). Much of this discrimination centered upon White discouragement of Blacks and Whites competing with one another. Rhoden (2006) also noted after Jack Johnson defeated Jim Jeffries, America's "Great White Hope," to become world heavyweight boxing champion, Whites eagerly searched

for a contender to defeat Johnson for his title. They also seared for legal ways to put Johnson away in prison. Furthermore, although Fritz Pollard managed some success in early football leagues, Blacks were later banned because of the color of their skin.

The NFL also struggled with issues of race and racism during the early parts of the 20th century. Hall of Fame inductee and former owner and president of the Washington Redskins George Marshall was quoted as saying, “We'll start signing Negroes when the Harlem Globetrotters start signing whites” (Newgent, 2009). Due to this embedded mentality, the NFL did not permit its first Black player until 1946, with Marshall’s Redskins being the last to integrate in 1962 (profootballhof.com). This is while it was not until 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball (MLB). Despite these realities, the documentary also detailed some notable events of the time. For example, Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, while Joe Louis defeated Max Schmeling in a heavyweight boxing match in 1938. Furthermore, Charles Sifford became the first Black admitted onto the PGA tour in 1959. Another well-known occurrence of this time took place during the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. This event showcased John Carlos’ and Tommie Smith’s protest on the victory stand staged by Harry Edwards (Edwards, 1970).

In 2008, HBO recently aired a documentary entitled, *Breaking the Huddle*, where they chronicled the integration of football programs in the Southeastern Conference (SEC), Southwest Conference (SWC), and Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). The documentary concluded with the 1970 contest between the University of Southern California (USC) and Alabama, in which USC’s Sam Cunningham rushed for over 200

yards in their win against Alabama. The significance of this event was that USC had already integrated at the time while Alabama and other southern schools had not. It was after this performance by Cunningham that SEC schools and other schools in the South began to recruit Black male athletes. There are also events worth mentioning that took place after this monumental occasion which are of importance (Carroll, 2004; Chalk, 1975; Smith, 2004; Wiggins, 1997; Wigginton, 2006):

- 1970-Curt Flood challenges MLBs reserve clause
- 1975-Arthur Ashe becomes first Black to win Wimbledon
- 1975-Frank Robinson becomes first Black MLB manager

It is also worth noting here the significance of OJ Simpson. “*Journey of the African American Athlete*” noted that Simpson was the first Black male athlete to sign major endorsement deals with corporations (e.g., Hertz) and star in mainstream movies and television shows (Farrell, Hutchinson, Reid, & Rhoden, 1996). Hence, Simpson laid the groundwork for Michael Jordan and other Black male athletes to acquire endorsement deals and other financial opportunities outside of their respective sports.

Black male athlete of today

While current Black male athletes maintain tremendous business and financial opportunities their predecessors did not encompass, they still face realities their White counterparts do not encounter. For instance, Singer (2005a) found Black male athletes feel they are strategically pigeonholed into certain positions on the field because of their race. Such sentiments by these Black male athletes contribute to the stacking and organizational segregation literature (see Johnson & Johnson, 1995; McPherson, 1975;

Sack, Singh, & Thiel, 2005; Sailes, 1993; Smith & Seff, 1989). The participants also felt they were treated differently compared to their White counterparts. Agyemang, Singer, and DeLorme (2010) found current Black male athletes sense race is still a major issue in American sports, and will be for the years to come. Nevertheless, given the above discussion, it would be difficult to equate the experiences of yesteryear's Black male athletes to the experiences of today's Black male athletes.

The reasoning behind this proclamation is that Black male athletes of the current era have mediated their way into mainstream society (Powell, 2008), generally accepted by those who formerly vehemently opposed their amalgamation into sport merely because of the color of their skin. No longer is the United States in an era in which Black athletes are confined to athletic participation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or professional leagues such as the Negro Leagues (baseball). The days in which there were unwritten rules for professional teams to sign and permit only a certain number of Black athletes to compete no longer exist. As mentioned earlier, Black male athletes either make up an overwhelming majority basketball and football in American society (Lapchick et al., 2010; Lapchick et al., 2009).

Powell (2008, p. 25) commented the contemporary Black male athlete has “a comfortable standard of living, a fair degree of fame, a healthy amount of respect from the public”, stemming from multi-million dollar professional contracts with teams and sponsors, not to mention the athletic scholarships at the college level. To further demonstrate this point, *Sports Illustrated* annually configures the Fortune 50, which includes the 50 highest earning American athletes. The figures are composed of “salary,

winnings, endorsements and appearance fees” (Freedman, 2010, p. 1). The average earning was \$26.2 million, up 11% from 2009 (Freedman, 2010). Tiger Woods was the top earner, totaling over \$90.5 million. Even more, of these 50 athletes, 32 are Black, and of this 32, 26 compete in basketball or football.

Endorsement money makes up a great proportion of these figures for many athletes and has become a mainstay for Black male athletes. Alluding to this notion, Rhoden (2006, p. 1) asserted the following:

Black faces and black bodies are used to sell everything from clothing to deodorant and soft drinks. Their gestures, colorful language, and overall style are used by Madison Avenue to project the feel and fashion of inner-city American to an eager global marketplace—they’re the stealth of ambassadors of hip-hop culture and capitalism, bridges between the “street” and the mainstream.

For instance, LeBron James earned almost \$16 million per season playing for the Cleveland Cavaliers; however, his endorsements equaled \$30 million (Freedman, 2010), amassing over \$40 million in one season.

Black male athlete as a business

An attempt to define what a business entails may bring forth a number of thoughts. One may be inclined to define a business as an entity that encompasses goods and services. Thompson and Strickland (2003), however, stated that a business cannot be solely defined based upon having goods and services but manifests when there is a demand for the goods and services and satisfies needs and wants of stakeholders. In exchange for the goods and services provided, monetary benefit is provided. In this

instance, a Black male athlete is considered a business in the event that they have goods and services that are in demand from stakeholders (e.g. team, sponsor, media, local communities, families, fans, etc.). Goods and services can be regarded as Black male athletes' athletic prowess, their image for endorsements, and all other aspects that stakeholders desire from them. As an example, consider how professional Black male athletes are drafted by the sport organization they compete for, while some are even in demand by sponsors, movies, and other arenas.

To add further credence to our equating the Black male athlete to a business, one can refer to lyrics by hip hop artist Jay Z. Just like Black male athletes, Jay Z also has abilities that are sought after from stakeholders. In the *Diamonds from Sierra Leone Remix*, he stated the following: "I'm not a businessman, I'm a business, man" (West & Carter, 2005). In doing so, Jay Z is not only referencing his role as a hip hop artist but also his Roc-a-fella music label, upper-level decision making role at Def Jam Records, and the number of endorsements he has received. This same rationale applies to the Black male athlete.

The Black male athlete as a business became ever more evident with the LeBron James hoopla taking place during the NBA 2010 free agency period. The occasion had fans on edge concerning where James would sign for the 2010-2011 season and beyond. James masterfully commanded the attention of millions. To illustrate, the ESPN broadcast of "The Decision" was the highest rated program the night it aired (Kimball, 2010). James also sold sponsorships with the profits being donated to the Boys and Girls

Club of America (Withers, 2010), adding credence to our equating Black male professional athletes to businesses.

Illustrated by the paragraphs above, it is apparent Black male athletes have more than arrived in big-time professional sport, a commodity desired by not only sport organizations but teams, fans, and media, among others. However, being a commodity of such stakeholders brings forth added responsibility their predecessors did not encompass. In fact, a number of contemporary scholars and journalists have argued Black male athletes of this era have failed at being responsible (e.g. Powell, 2008; Rhoden, 2006; Roach, 2002). Powell (2008), for instance, called for more responsibility among Black male athletes. Moreover, Rhoden (2006) asserted “black athletes have abdicated their responsibility to the community with treasonous vigor” (p. 8). In an interview with *Color Lines* magazine, Harry Edwards added the following about the current Black male athlete.

Today’s black athlete is very different. If you asked them about the history of the black athlete, many couldn’t tell you much. They don’t find that history relevant to their world. Some even get angry when you ask them about it. One up-and-coming NBA star was asked about Oscar Robertson and he said, ‘Don’t know, don’t care, and don’t take me there.’ They don’t care about whose shoulders they stand on. They have no idea about who set the table at which they are feasting. And the worse part about it is not that they are ignorant of this history, but they are militantly ignorant. The sad part about it is that when people forget how

things came about, they are almost certainly doomed to see them go (cited in Leonard, 1998, p. 3).

If anything, the sentiments held by these recognized Black authors indicate a sense of discontent with current Black male athletes and their roles in society. If these Black male athletes are to be seen as businesses in their own right, it begets the question as to what other roles they are to play in society. For some time now, numerous management scholars have spoken to the notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the roles corporations should play in many arenas (see Carroll, 1979, 1999; Drucker, 1984; Fitzpatrick, 2000; Klein & Dawar, 2004). Alluding to sport organizations, Babiak and Wolfe (2006) contended social responsibility must not be ignored, and furthermore, initiatives involving socially responsible acts must be carried out. Consequently, the same holds true for the Black male athlete.

Statement of problem

Social responsibility has garnered attention in the management literature for quite some time as it pertains to corporations (see Brown & Dacin, 1997; Fitzpatrick, 2000; Klein & Dawar, 2004; Lockett, Moon & Visser, 2006; Windsor, 2006). For instance, Fitzpatrick (2000) surveyed 150 CEOs in the Dallas/Fort Worth area in order to elicit their perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The results indicated CEOs believe CSR to be vastly important for the reputation of a corporation. The field of sport management, however, has just begun to investigate such issues (Bradish & Cronin, 2009). Although new to the sport management literature, CSR initiatives are thought to

also apply to sport organizations. For instance, Walker and Kent (2009) found fans value teams who engage in CSR.

While the noteworthy excerpts from the previously mentioned Black scholars certainly contribute to the literature and is sure to commence conversation, there is a dire need for academic research in this area. Furthermore, although significant, and most certainly foundational, the previously mentioned CSR papers related to sport examine CSR from a multitude of perspectives, yet have ignored, arguably, the driving force behind the success big-time sport (i.e., Black male athletes). Walker and Kent (2009) briefly touched on athletes, but only as a distinguishing factor between sport organizations and other corporations. DeSensi and Rosenberg (2003) also in brief mentioned the social responsibility of athletes in their text, *Ethics and Morality in Sport Management*, but do not offer scholarly research in this text.

In light of this, Bradish and Cronin (2009) suggested there are a number of opportunities for sport management researchers pertaining to CSR. They further commented that “CSR should be regarded as one of the most important components of contemporary sport management theory and practice” (p. 696). Given the call for more work in this area as it pertains to sport, combined with the sentiments of Black scholars concerning the lack of social responsibility among Black male athletes, it is pertinent to investigate perceptions of Black male athlete social responsibility.

Purpose of the study

While there is voluminous research on the Black male athlete, the research does not touch on the notion of social responsibility. Black male athletes have undoubtedly

come a long way since the times of slavery and Jim Crow. And it is for this reason that Rhoden (2006) stated Black male athletes “exercise phenomenal influence on styles and tastes, but their reach could potentially extend so much wider, and deeper” (p. 8). Thus, the purpose of this study was to garner perceptions of Black male athlete social responsibility (BMSR) from an NBA franchise, with the ultimate goal of moving toward a framework for better understanding this concept.

Significance of study

In this dissertation, I solicited the perspectives on BMSR from Black male athletes and relevant stakeholders employed by the NBA franchise. While scholars have made their pronouncements regarding the Black male athlete, and his failure to uphold socially responsible deeds, the voices of the Black male athletes are noticeably absent from the dialogue. Once ignored on the playing field, their voices are now absent from this conversation. Given the thoughts of the authors referenced above, it would be only fair to give Black males athletes a space to respond to such criticism. Thus, from an individual level, I allow Black male athletes to critically reflect on the state of Black male athletes in the current era. More importantly, this process permitted them to examine their role and that of other Black male athletes as it pertains to social responsibility. Garnering the thoughts of the athlete is certainly necessary; however, given the many stakeholders associated with current Black male athletes, it is also essential to obtain their thoughts and perceptions regarding social responsibility as well. Consequently, a critical part of this study is the dialogue with the relevant stakeholders employed by the NBA franchise.

Lastly, the inclusion of Black male athletes into the discussion is important given the mere demographics of big-time sports, such as basketball and football. Black male athletes contribute mightily to the success of these sports at all levels of competition. If not for the inclusion of these individuals in sport competition, it is anyone's guess as to how successful these sports would be today. In sum, this particular investigation offers a distinct way of looking at CSR; more specifically, the social responsibility of Black male athletes in the current era.

Why the Black male athlete?

Surely there will be those who ask why I have decided to focus on Black male athlete social responsibility (BMASR), and not that of simply athlete social responsibility (ASR), based on the notion that all races and ethnicities are subjected to socially responsible acts. However, over the years, sport management scholars such as Chalip (1997) and Frisby (2005) have insisted that scholars within the field revisit their methods and assumptions, while also reexamining the origination of their knowledge. In reference to this reexamination process, Singer (2005b) posited it is especially important "when studying and conducting research with individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have historically been marginalized (e.g. Blacks or African Americans) in Western civilization" (p. 464.) For this reason, I chose to situate my focus on Black male athletes based on their past and present experiences of marginalization in society and sport. For example, it was the Black male athlete who was once disallowed to partake in sport competition. Even after being allowed to participate, it was the Black male athlete who was shunned from playing the position of quarterback in American football due to

preconceived notions of their inability to play the position with success (Hawkins, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

Even further, assuming Black male athletes carry out BMASR activities that involve Black communities, these initiatives would better serve a population that since the formation of the United States of America (USA) has suffered from “underachievement, lack of inclusion, and backward progression” (Jenkins, 2006). For instance, Blacks in the USA have higher rates of incarceration, poverty, and unemployment (Arizona State University, 2004), circumstances which few other races have had to endure while in the USA. Lastly, utilizing Black male athletes as the focal point is based upon past and present transgressions of these individuals and non-BMASR activity (e.g. Michael Vick, Dante Stallworth, Derrick Coleman, and Antoine Walker). I contend that by engaging in BMASR, this may assist in disengaging Black male athletes from associated stereotypes stemming from transgressions or other non-BMASR like behavior. This is not to say that I wish to create a pathological view of Black male athletes as individuals who do not engage in socially responsible activities, because clearly, many Black male athletes have engaged in what stakeholder groups would consider socially responsible behavior. Through their foundation work and other accolades, examples of such athletes are Joe Dumars, Grant Hill, Bart Scott, Warrick Dunn, and others.

Epistemological framework

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) defined epistemology as the relationship between the inquirer and the known. Describing this relationship, however, Scheurich and Young

(1997), noted how scholars have “argued that our epistemologies—not our use of them, but the epistemologies themselves—are racially biased ways of knowing” (p. 4), beckoning the existence of epistemological racism. To confront this issue in sport management, Singer (2005b) asserted sport management scholars should begin to familiarize themselves with race-based epistemologies. Most notably, he suggested the use of critical race theory (CRT) to confront Eurocentric ways of knowing. Given the preeminence of race in American sports, critical race theory (CRT) is an appropriate lens to further understand the perceptions elicited from this study. CRT focuses on the influence and pervasiveness of race and racism in American society and utilizes the narratives of people of color to detail this ideal. For this reason, CRT is employed to better explain and understand how race plays a part in being socially responsible.

Critical race theory (CRT): While some scholars who study sport have employed CRT in their works (see Hylton, 2005, 2009; Long, Robinson, & Spracklen, 2005; Spracklen, Hylton, & Long, 2006), there has been little use of this race-based epistemology among sport management scholars (See Singer, 2009 and Singer, Harrison, & Bukstein, 2010 for exceptions). Due to the lack of CRT in sport management studies, Singer (2005b) encouraged sport management scholars to embrace certain race-based epistemologies, particularly CRT, when conducting research in the field.

Generally speaking, CRT is a framework that emerged during the Civil Rights Era (Tate, 1997), confronting the positivist and liberal legal dialogue of the time (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Law professors, Derrick Bell (a Black male) and Alan Freeman (a White male) are credited with the establishment of this framework (Delgado, 1995),

arising from their discontent with the slow process of race relations in the USA at the time. These individuals and other pioneers were also distressed by the way the legal system operated, stating the system thwarted, rather than upholding racial justice (Taylor, 1998). It was from this experience that this framework surfaced, challenging the notion of Whites being the normative standard. While there are five tenets of CRT, three of them are relevant for this study.

One of the founding tenets of CRT is racism is normal in American society. Furthermore, theorists held that these racist overtones have been reproduced and transmitted inter-generationally so that the power structures between Black people and White people are maintained (Brown, 2003). Most certainly, the realm of sport is a component of society, and therefore, is not excluded. In any case, it is due to years of stratification and negative stereotypes associated with the Black race (e.g. enhanced physical ability coupled with diminished intellect) that have permeated the minds of citizens of this nation, both Black and White. This was witnessed in sport in many areas such as the barring of Black participation in sport to the stigma concerning Black quarterbacks.

A second tenet of CRT relevant to this to this study centers upon Whiteness being the optimal status in American society (Harris, 1993). In other words, the cultural “bar” to which all other races will be evaluated rest upon how they match up to White standards and White culture (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010; Devos & Banaji, 2005; Harris, 1993). For instance, Devos and Banaji’s (2005), in their study “American = White?”, desired to determine if individuals equated being American to being White. To

accomplish this task, they performed six studies to conclude to what degree certain ethnic groups (e.g. Asian, African, and White) are linked to being an American. “The conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of the six studies presented here is unambiguous. To be American is to be White” (p. 463). Their findings reinforce the suggestion that Whiteness is an enviable means in American society and something that Black citizens are, more or less, estranged from attaining merely due to the color of their skin. Because CRT establishes racism as a normative structure of American societies and institutions which impact the daily lives of non-White citizens (Hylton, 2009), it provides depth in understanding the notion of an optimal status placed before Black male athletes.

Lastly, CRT places emphasis on the experiential knowledge and perspectives of people of color. Yosso (2005) proclaimed that experiential knowledge coming from suppressed groups is “legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing and teaching about racial subordination” (p. 74). The employment of CRT permits people of color to reflect on their condition and go beyond the status quo-driven reality and displace “the dysconscious racism or uncritical and distorted ways of thinking about race that have led to tacit acceptance of the dominant White norms and privileges” (Singer, 2005b, p. 370).

Research questions

The discussion above has paved the way for the creation of the following research questions:

1. How has race impacted the Black male athlete as a business entity?

2. How do Black male athletes view social responsibility?
3. How do those who have an invested interest in the Black male athlete perceive of Black male athlete social responsibility?
 - What is the nature of Black male athletes' relationship with his relevant stakeholders?

Overview of chapters

The existing piece of work consists of five chapters. Chapter II consists of applicable literature pertaining to Black male athletes' social responsibility. Chapter III introduces how the study is conducted. Chapter IV presents the results emanating from the data collection and analysis stage. Lastly, Chapter V comprises of a discussion of the results. This chapter also includes conclusions from the study, implications, and future research directions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

-Luke 12:48 (NIV)

Section overview

The purpose of this study is to garner perceptions of Black male athlete social responsibility (BMA SR) from an NBA franchise, with the ultimate goal of moving toward a framework for better understanding this concept. In order to do so, this chapter offers a review of the literature pertinent to the goal of this investigation. A discussion of race and racism in America, followed by a discussion of race and racism in American sport with a keen emphasis on the Black male athlete will commence the review of the literature. I will then proceed to discuss corporate social responsibility (CSR). Because scholars have stated CSR is one of many *strategies* available to businesses, a brief summary of strategic management will be given at the outset. This will set the tone for the CSR literature to be introduced. At this time, I will give a brief history of CSR, define and conceptualize CSR, and summarize and synthesize important work concerning CSR in general. This will be followed by a discussion of CSR in sport, including a review of some noteworthy studies. This review will not be exhaustive, but it will cover important work related to CSR in sport organizations. It is also worth noting the scant literature in this area provides further credence and justification for the current

study. Lastly, because the CSR concept in sport is in its infancy stages, this review will draw from works arising in the past few years in the sport management literature.

Race & racism in America

Given that the centerpiece of this study focuses on Black male athletes, the chapter commences by discussing race and racism in the American context. There is voluminous research concerning race in the American context (see Douglass, 1855; Du Bois, 1903, 1915; Washington, 1904; Woodson, 1922, 1933). Whether it was documenting their time as slaves on the plantation or merely giving a history of Blacks in America, these influential works provided insight into the Black experience since the beginning times of the USA. These works, along with others, have laid the foundation for future race studies and works concerning race and sport which will be discussed below.

While it is imperative to acknowledge the works of these authors, it is equally as important to understand and define both race and racism. Eitzen and Sage (2003) defined race as a “social category regarded as distinct because the members supposedly share some genetically transmitted traits” (p. 285). This is in addition to Thomas and Dyal’s (1999) definition of race as “categorising people based on their physical appearance” (p. 117). One could also argue that race highly depends on the assigned meanings people in a given society give to a particular race. This is referred to as social construction, defined as “aspects of the social world that are created by people as they interact with one another under the social, political, and economic conditions that exist in their society” (Coakley, 2007, p. 13). Racism, which is a result of the social construction of race in

American society (see Haney Lopez, 1996), expresses “itself in the practices, institutions, and structures that a sense of deep difference justifies or validates...it either directly sustains or proposes to establish a racial order, a permanent group hierarchy that is believed to reflect the laws of nature or the decrees of God” (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 6).

Going back in history, one can trace the origination of issues concerning race in the United States of America back to the 17th century (Feagin, 2006; Franklin & Moses, 2000). It was then that the first Africans were brought to the eastern shores of the United States, and subsequently used as slave labor for well-off, land owning Whites (Morris, 1993; Stamp, 1956; Wilson, 1996). In fact, the use of the slave system regime lasted for over 200 years, as it was not until the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation during the 1860s that Blacks were legally no longer obligated to perform slave duties for their White overseers (Bennett, 1999). However, even the repeal of the slave regime was not enough to level the playing field. While Blacks were no longer in legal bondage, Jim Crow laws certainly made it appear as if Blacks were still bound by their former White owners. As such, Sage (2000) noted that Blacks in America are the only people to have been subjected to slavery for a prolonged period of time and been forced to deal with laws passed and supported by the Supreme Court to maintain their relegated status in society. From this, Sage summarized the Black American experience as “a unique and insidious heritage of injustice” (p. 2).

It is because of these realities that Black Americans have struggled to overcome and level the playing field in the American context. Because Whites saw Blacks as inferior, the corollary is that they saw themselves as being superior. While such thoughts

and sentiments of superiority of the White race were prevalent during the early formation of the USA, Dennis (1995) asserted this idea was given scientific legitimacy by the publication of Charles Darwin's (1859) *The Origin of Species*. Due to the printing of this text, numerous scholars endeavored to verify the notion of White superiority by applying the same rationale Darwin used with animal species (e.g. Hernstein & Murray, 1994; Spencer, 1874; Sumner, 1963). While Darwin's text did not promote racism, the authors utilizing his rationale attempted to illustrate that biological and cognitive difference between Blacks and White existed. It should also be noted, however, that there were also attempts to disprove the writings of the aforementioned scholars (e.g. Dennis, 1995; Stanfield, 1995; Willie, 1995). Still, despite the valiant efforts on the part of these authors, to this day, racism still occurs in the American context.

Maintaining racist hegemony

As stated above, the USA is yet to relieve itself of racist activities. Consequently, the question becomes, even with the ascendance of the nation's first Black president (i.e. Barack Obama), how has racial bigotry managed to survive? Much of what we witness here results from Whiteness (i.e. privilege, White optimal status) and the unwillingness of power-holding Whites to allow for progress among people of color (see Ladson-Billings, 1996; McIntosh, 1990, 1997). Alluded to in Chapter I, this relates to an optimal status which others must strive for if they are to be successful in American society (Devos & Banaji, 2005). The effects emanating from this notion of Whiteness are illustrated in numerous arenas of American life. For instance, disparities between Black and White regarding poverty and health continue (Thomas & Quinn, 2008).

Furthermore, this is also seen in educational attainment (O’Gorman, 2010) and unemployment rates (Strully, 2009). What is more, Black males are highly overrepresented in the prison system, while infant mortality rates among Blacks are also higher than Whites (Bowser, 2007; Oliver & Shapiro, 1995; Shapiro, 2004).

Contributing to the notion of Whiteness, Feagin (2006) referred to inter-generational transition as a means of keeping power among those who have historically possessed it. This is, those in power (i.e. usually White, able-bodied, Protestant males) transmit the same beliefs and ideals they were taught to their children. More specifically, “Racist teachings by parents and other important adults imbed negative ideas and emotions in children” (p. 169). Feagin suggested such occurrences can be traced back to the days when Blacks were employed as slaves. As an illustration, Whites who were in possession of slaves were not asked to pay any labor costs. For this reason, the wealth they were able to generate from their slaves through their field work would then be passed on to their offspring. Thus, those not possessing this “luxury” (i.e. slaves) were maintained at the depths of society. Even lower class Whites who did not possess slaves were able to benefit from such occurrences because power-holding Whites determined not only who worked in which industries, but also what tasks they would be asked to carry out (Feagin, 2006).

From the above discussion, one could contend race continues to play an integral part in American society. As a microcosm of society, sport is undoubtedly not protected against issues of race and racism that society has experienced. As a result, the chapter

will now move to discuss race and racism in the American sport context, highlighting the Black male athlete.

Race and racism in American sport

There is also ample research concerning race and racism in American sport (see Coakley, 2007; Edwards, 1970, 1973; Lomax, 2008; Sammons, 1994; Smith, 2007). For instance, Harry Edwards (1970, 1973), a pioneer scholar concerning race and sport, more specifically Black male athletes, set the stage for a greater forum of discussion with his seminal piece, *Sociology of Sport*. Along with Olson (1968), these two individuals shed light on the Black athlete experience in American sport from the outset up until these texts were written. With this foundation, other scholars were better equipped to discuss these matters. Sammons (1994), for instance, added to the dialogue by calling for Black scholars to take more of a vested interest in sport scholarship as a way to understand the Black experience in America. Even though this call took place some years ago, it certainly adds further reasoning to carry out this study. In the current era, scholars have taken the advice of Sammons and continued to develop scholarship pertaining to Black male athletes. In particular, Earl Smith's (2007) research, which focuses on the scope and consequences of the black male athlete's deepening relationship with the institution of sport in American society (particularly professional and major college sport), is an especially important piece of work related to the issue of race and racism in American sport.

From this work of the above-mentioned scholars, I argue that sport is one of the few venues in which Black athletes, especially Black men, have been able to do

extremely well. It is here that Black males athletes, via their overrepresentation in sports such as basketball and football (Lapchick et al., 2010; Lapchick et al., 2009), maintain a stronghold and vitally contribute to the success of their respective teams. As Chapter I demonstrated, however, Black male athletes have not always been well represented, nor for that matter, played the part they do now. This is not to say race and racism no longer exists in sport, however. Thus, the paragraphs below will go further in-depth of how race and racism continue to play a part in American sport in the current era. This will focus mainly on the sports of basketball and football and will include a review of the works of authors who have researched and written on the Black male athlete. I would like to point out that while the current study will pertain to professional Black male athletes, a majority of the studies I will review pertain to Black male college athletes. Much of the literature concerning Black male athletes concerns those who play intercollegiate sport, more specifically, basketball and football. A possible reason for this occurrence may be because these are the revenue generating sports for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Furthermore, access to Black male professional athletes may be limited due to their celebrity status and time commitments. Nevertheless, such an issue provides further credence for the study at hand given the fact that there is scant empirical literature concerning Black male professional athletes.

Despite Black male athletes' allowance into mainstream sport, there still exist a host of problems associated with race and racism. For instance, since their inception into sport, numerous scholars have presented research stating Black male athletes are pigeonholed into peripheral positions (i.e. wide receiver and running back), while the

central positions (i.e. quarterback) are reserved for their White counterparts (e.g. Johnson & Johnson, 1995; McPherson, 1975; Smith & Seff, 1989). Lewis (1995) examined football media guides of former Southwest Conference teams for the years 1978 and 1989 in order to determine the nature of stacking. He reviewed each team's depth chart, investigating what position the athletes played ($N=596$). The results illustrated that Black male athletes were overwhelmingly represented in positions such as running back and wide receiver. He also found the trend continued throughout the time period between 1978 and 1989. From this, Lewis (1995) concluded that "participation in Southwest Conference football is highly institutionalized and racial differences by position represent institutional outcomes" (p. 445).

Similarly, Hawkins (2002) later examined the stacking hypothesis at a Southeastern Conference (SEC) football program over a 33 year time period (1966-1999). Due to the earlier presumptions of the stacking hypothesis, Hawkins endeavored to investigate if this phenomenon still took place. Because previous authors had examined conferences as a whole, Hawkins examined one institution within the conference. To achieve this task, Hawkins surveyed the media guides of this particular team. He noted that these guides provided biographical information such as the athlete's race and position they played. The findings initially indicated that Black participation increased. Furthermore, while Black male athletes were not initially well-represented in positions such as quarterback, offensive and defensive linemen, and punters and kickers, the trend seemed to have changed during the late 1970s. He noted it was not until 1976 that a Black competed at quarterback and 1977 that a Black played an offensive guard.

From this, Hawkins concluded the results signify the game of football is changing, and that advocates of the stacking hypothesis should redevelop their hypothesis due to the changing nature of the game.

Black male athletes also face a number of stereotypes, as illustrated by Sailes (1993, 2009). In his study, he examined notions of intelligence, academic preparation, style of play, competitiveness, physical superiority, athletic ability, and mental temperament among Black athletes. The results indicated that Whites believed Black athletes were generally not prepared to attend college, received poor grades compared to Whites, and were temperamental. Sailes concluded that further education is needed in order to do away with such stereotypes, not only in sports but society.

In order to investigate perceptions of Black quarterbacks, Bigler and Jeffries (2008) examined how NFL experts assessed 146 Black male college quarterbacks. Their longitudinal study utilized 9 years of NFL draft coverage from *sportsillustrated.com* and 13 years from *The Sporting News*. They stated the reason for choosing these media outlets was due to their reputation and rather large readership. Their method included measuring each player's rating concerning their arm strength, athleticism, accuracy, intelligence/decision making, and leadership. These were coded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (positive) to -1 (overall negative). This was based on .5 increments. The results showed that Blacks rated higher in athletic prowess and arm strength, or as the authors put it, "brute strength" (p. 138). Bigler and Jeffries concluded that the results illustrated stereotypes of Black quarterbacks still pervade the minds of those who assess them.

In an attempt to gather the thoughts and perceptions of Black male athletes concerning race and racism, there have been notable contributions (e.g. Benson, 2000; Cunningham, 2004; Cunningham & Singer, 2010; Singer, 2005a; 2009). Singer (2005a) employed CRT as an epistemological framework in order to understand Black male college athletes' perceptions of race and racism and the possible effect this may have on their educational endeavors and overall growth. Singer employed semi-structured single interviews as well as single focus group to elicit this information. There were four participants in the study, each of whom participated in a big-time college sport program at a predominantly White Institution of Higher Education (PWIHE). From the interviews and focus group, the participants felt the following was true: a) they were not permitted to ascend to decision making roles in college and professional sport, and b) they were treated in a different manner compared to that of their White counterparts. Giving credence to the recently mentioned stacking literature, one of the participants also stated it was tradition for the school to have a White quarterback as opposed to a Black one.

Likewise, Lawrence (2005) elicited perceptions of race and racism among Black male athletes. Four Black males participated in the study. After completing initial interviews, the athletes were asked to complete a follow up interview. Several themes emerged from the analysis showcasing racism. The first theme was "being hurt." For instance, one of the athletes stated they were referred to as the "N" word. The second theme was "outrage and shock." For this theme, one of the athletes explained their outrage after being spat on by a White cheerleader. The next theme was "team togetherness." In light of their experiences with racism, many of the participants felt a

sense of camaraderie with other Black athletes. Another theme that emerged was “differences.” Similar to the participants in Singer’s (2005a) study, many of the participants felt they were constantly being made aware of the differences between them and their White counterparts.

Similar to the above studies, Agyemang et al., (2010) examined perceptions of race. How this study differed, however, is that it also examined perceptions of Black male athlete activism. The sample consisted of six Black male athletes who competed in big-time college sport at a PWIHE. Utilizing CRT to understand race and Black male athlete activism, the study had four themes, two of which are applicable to the current study. The first theme was that race and racism was still a factor in the current era and will always be a factor. For instance, one of the participants felt he had to work harder than a White male when competing for the same position. Interestingly, one of the themes was responsibility. The participants “felt because of the position Black male athletes hold in society, they should articulate their concerns of current social injustices” (p. 10). Another athlete pronounced a similar thought, stating that young people look up to these athletes. Consequently, they should be invested in their communities and be connected with something that resonated with them personally.

To conclude this section on race and racism in American sport, I would like to point out a study by Hawkins (1999, 2001). In light of the occurrences discussed above, Hawkins likens current Black male athletes to oscillating migrant laborers. To add credibility to his claim, Hawkins offered a number of comparisons between the two groups. For one, he stated both groups rotate between their community and place of

work. For instance, the athlete will travel from the place they grew up to the college campus. Hawkins further went on to state that both groups have dissimilar social and cultural settings, are economically taken advantage of, and “bear the cost for the reproduction of labor” (Hawkins, 1999, p. 1). Consequently, Hawkins concluded that such circumstances may be a contributing factor to the low graduation rates of Black male athletes and should be investigated by academic reform officials.

In summary, although the current landscape of sport does not bear the over racist practices of yesteryear, notions of race and racism continue to play an integral component in the lives of Black male athletes. More than two decades ago, Sailes (1985) commented that Black male athletes have been exploited at both the college and professional levels, mainly due to the win at all cost mentality that has arisen. The same could be argued in the current era as commercialization has taken sports such as basketball and football to even greater heights. Sailes further went on to say that Black male athletes also exploit themselves in many instances, suggesting they have a responsibility to take upon more accountability. So, while it may hold true that Black male athletes are exploited, they certainly encompass a role in society that can be utilized for good (e.g. Agyemang et al., 2010). The question then becomes, what is their social responsibility to society and various stakeholders? The remaining portions of this literature review will present literature related to this discussion of social responsibility.

Strategic management

A number of CSR scholars have asserted corporations engage in CSR initiatives because it offers one of many *strategies* to properly manage a corporation (e.g.

Brietbarth & Harris, 2008; Husted & Salazar, 2006; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; Ogden & Watson, 1999). Thus, before moving forward with the discussion on CSR, it is necessary to acknowledge the strategic management literature as an introduction to the CSR framework.

Strategic management has gained the attention of many scholars over the years (e.g. Meyer, 1991; Nag, Hambrick, & Chen, 2007; Smart & Wolfe, 2000; Thompson & Strickland, 2003). In addition, although considered a relatively new concept, coined in 1979 (Schendel & Hofer, 1979), strategic management has offered managers a conceptual basis for which to base their strategies for managing their business. However, scholars have had difficulty agreeing on a definition of this concept. In an effort to define strategic management, Nag et al. (2007) asked a number of strategic management scholars to review 447 abstracts found in prominent management journals. These scholars were asked to rate if the manuscripts were strategic management or not. From this, Nag et al. (2007) came up with the following definition of strategic management:

The field of strategic management deals with (a) the major intended and emergent initiatives (b) taken by general managers on behalf of owners, (c) involving utilization of resources (d) to enhance the performance of firms (f) in their external environment (p. 942).

Thompson and Strickland (2003) have also provided the literature with a noteworthy definition. They define strategic management as the following:

The managerial process of forming a strategic vision, setting objectives, crafting a strategy, implementing and executing the strategy, and then over time initiating

whatever corrective adjustments in the vision, objectives, strategy, and execution are deemed appropriate (p. 6).

Based on this definition, Thompson and Strickland (2003) conjured the following five tasks:

- a) Developing a strategic vision for where the business is headed;
- b) Setting objectives;
- c) Crafting a strategy to achieve the desired outcomes;
- d) Implementing and executing the strategy efficiently and effectively;
- e) Evaluating the performance.

Given this background and basic understanding of strategic management, it is possible to see how engaging in CSR initiatives can certainly be considered a strategic management principle, thus the reasoning for discussing this ideal. Thus, the following paragraphs will discuss CSR, beginning with a brief history.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR): A brief history

Before defining CSR, it is imperative to understand how this framework has come about. Godfrey (2009) stated CSR principles date back to 19th century philanthropic donations by large corporations, “such as steel companies, railroads, communications, and financial houses” (p. 701). Such donations were made in order to build the United States’ sprawling Western frontier of the time. As the 19th century came to a close, the 20th century continued to see the application of CSR principles; however, this was no longer deemed as philanthropy: it was at this time it would be referred to as social responsibility (Godfrey, 2009). This early part of CSR discussion

was marked by debate as to whether it was a corporation's social responsibility to engage in CSR initiatives. The Berle-Dodd debate, as it is referred to, very much typifies this point in time (Berle, 1931; Dodd, 1932). While Berle argued corporations solely had a responsibility to its shareholders, and that deviations outside of that would be disadvantageous, Dodd (1932) contended that corporations had a moral and civic duty to perform CSR acts.

Despite the aforementioned debate regarding CSR, scholarly research and writing concerning CSR came to the forefront in the business literature beginning in the 1950s. During the 1950s, Carroll (1999) alluded to Howard Bowen's (1953), *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* as a seminal piece of the time. This text is based on the premise that businesses have the ability to affect the lives of citizens. Bowen (1953) presented first modern definition of CSR: It refers to the obligation of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society (p. 6). Along with the 1960s, this era laid the groundwork for the modern era of defining the CSR construct.

Carroll (1999) professed the 1970s was marked by a proliferation of definitions. For instance, Howard Johnson's (1971) *Business in Contemporary Society: Framework and Issues* presented a number of definitions and views of CSR. One of his views was that businesses should implement social programs to maximize the profit of the corporation. He then ensued to analyze and critique them. Other notable authors of the time were Preston and Post (1975) and Sethi (1975).

With a better understanding of what CSR was, the 1980s and 1990s were characterized by fewer efforts to define CSR and included an increased number of works and alternative ways to look at CSR (Carroll, 1999; Godfrey, 2009; Sharfman, 1996). One of these ways was to evaluate corporate social performance, which Wood (1991) defined as “a business organization’s configuration of principles of social responsibility, processes of social responsiveness, and policies, programs, and observable outcomes as they relate to the firm’s societal relationships” (p. 693). For instance, Tuzzolina and Armandi (1981) proposed a need-hierarchy framework based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, while Wood (1991) put forward a corporate social performance (CSP) model to challenge scholars to rethink the way they look at CSR.

In the current era, as CSR gains increased attention, scholars are in search of other avenues to research CSR. For instance, Gardberg and Fombrun (2006) attempted to illustrate how CSR can act as insurance for a corporation’s brand and image. Furthermore, Mackey, Mackey, and Barney (2007) endeavored to show that CSR activities resonate with investors. In an attempt to move beyond justifying CSR, Margolis and Walsh (2003) called for more research illustrating the impact of CSR. Given this basic understanding of the origination of CSR, the following section attempts to define CSR.

Defining CSR

Over the years, there have certainly been countless scholars who have endeavored to define CSR (e.g. Bowen, 1953; Davis, 1960; Drucker, 1984; Johnson, 1971; Windsor, 2006). For instance, Davis (1960) defined CSR as “businessmen’s

decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm's direct economic or technical interest" (p. 70). Drucker (1984) later defined social responsibility as "'social responsibility' of business is to tame the dragon, that is to turn a social problem into economic opportunity and economic benefit, into productive capacity, into human competence, into well-paid jobs, and into wealth" (p. 62). For the purposes of this study, however, I will rely upon Carroll's (1979, 1999) CSR framework because it includes not only economic responsibilities but ethical, legal, and discretionary as well. He defined it as the following: "The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (Carroll, 1979, p. 500). Demonstrated by the definition, Carroll has given us four components, each of which he suggested a corporation must incorporate into its practices. Below, each of these components is discussed.

Economic responsibilities: In describing the economic component, Carroll (1979, 1999) stated businesses have "a responsibility to produce goods and services that society wants and to sell them at a profit. All other business roles are predicated on this fundamental assumption (p. 500). Lastly, he also mentioned that all other business roles are predicated on this ideal. This is to say, it is imperative that the business provide their goods and services in order to see a return (i.e. profit).

Legal responsibilities: Carroll (1979, 1999) also noted that businesses are expected to be observers of the law, stating that while society expects a business to fulfill its economic mission, it is also anticipated it obey the legal rules of the society in which they live. This is a vital element of CSR considering the numerous legal

encounters businesses have had with the law over the years (e.g. Enron, British Petroleum, and Merrill Lynch). If the legal component is not abided by, it is possible it will become tougher to realize one's potential economically.

Ethical responsibilities: Along with the last component (discretionary), Carroll (1979, 1999) noted ethical responsibilities are important because they go beyond legal responsibilities. Carroll further pointed out that the list of ethical responsibilities is constantly growing, and consequently, is quite difficult to define what ethical responsibility actually entails. Furthermore, a given task carried out by a business may be considered legal, but not necessarily ethical in the eyes of some. For this reason, ethical responsibility becomes even more obscure to pinpoint. They appear to pertain to issues of morality and what individuals deem to be right to right and wrong.

Discretionary responsibilities: Finally, Carroll (1979, 1999) identified discretionary responsibilities as roles left to the judgment and choice of the business. Society has no specific message as to what this requires; however, it is still expected that businesses assume these responsibilities. In a broad sense, a good example of this would be philanthropic efforts by corporations in the 19th century to create the western frontier of the USA. Acts such as this continue in this era. As stated above, this component is imperative because it goes beyond the legal responsibility of a business.

Stakeholder perspective

Although not mentioned directly in his characterization of CSR, stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) is a foundational piece of CSR theorizing and research (Godfrey, 2009). Freeman (2005) defined a stakeholder as “any group or individual that

can affect or is affected by the achievement of a corporation's purpose" (p. 420). From this, one can assume that the aforementioned facets of CSR must be carried out as it relates these groups (i.e. stakeholders). For the purposes of this study, besides the Black male athlete himself (he is the business or corporation), examples of stakeholders could be but not limited to, the sport organization that employs the athlete (i.e. the NBA or one of its franchises), teammates, fans, sponsors, the media, the community which they consider home, and the community where their team is based. He further concluded there needs to be an explicit strategy for dealing with these stakeholders, and if this does not occur, the business will have a difficult time implementing their strategy (Freeman, 1984; 2005).

Freeman (2005) mentioned the initial task of a business should be to internalize the effects their actions could have not only on them, but their current stakeholders and potential stakeholders. Next, a business should identify who their current stakeholders are and prioritize them, while also recognizing the potential stakeholders that exist. In doing so, they "have to understand stakeholder behaviors, values, and backgrounds/contexts including the societal context" (Freeman, 2005, p. 424). Having identified their stakeholders, the business can then take into account each of their stakeholders' concerns (Freeman, 2005; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997), and act accordingly based on those concerns.

What also should be noted here is the difference between primary stakeholder (e.g., the NBA franchise and Black male athlete) and secondary stakeholder (e.g., media) groups. In other words, primary stakeholder groups cannot exist without each other

whereas secondary stakeholders, while not directly dependent on the survival of primary stakeholders, can positively or negatively have an effect on primary stakeholders. For instance, the media can both make a name for a primary stakeholders as well as lead to their demise. Thus, primary stakeholders should consider the potential effect secondary stakeholders could potentially have on them.

Given that I have defined CSR, the following section will highlight some empirical studies in order to better understand the CSR construct. Walker and Kent (2009) asserted besides conceptual and definitional works, the CSR literature reveals two other categories. Because the focus of this study is sport, I will not go too in-depth with these studies. I will give a summary of one study from each of the categories. However, a more exhaustive review of CSR in the sport context will be given thereafter.

CSR research

Walker and Kent (2009) identified motive-oriented research as a category of CSR research (for further readings see Bucholtz, Amason, & Rutherford, 1999; Quazi, 2003; Thomas & Simerly, 1994). For instance, investigating the views of CSR among CEOs, Fitzpatrick (2000) surveyed 150 CEOs in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, and found their motive to engage in CSR was to build a positive reputation. Furthermore, in ranking what constituted CSR, the CEOs rated behaving ethically as the number one priority. This was ensued by being profitable as second, followed by obeying laws, and finally philanthropy. Lastly, the results indicated that the CEOs perceived CSR as actually being a good corporate citizen instead of merely being thought of as one. From this, Fitzpatrick concluded "...it seems clear that CEOs view corporate social

responsibility more from a philosophical than a philanthropic perspective. In other words, social responsibility is perceived more as a ‘way of operating than as a ‘program of doing’ for operating communities” (p. 300).

The second category of empirical studies identified by Walker and Kent (2009) deals with the outcomes of CSR related activity (for further readings see Margolis & Walsh, 2001; McGuire, Sundgren, & Schneeweis, 1998; Roman, Hayibor, & Agle, 1999). An influential work in this area is provided by Stanwick and Stanwick (1998). Through their study, they endeavored to examine the relationship between a corporation’s social performance and three variables. These were the size of the corporation, fiscal performance of the corporation, and lastly, the environmental performance of the corporation. To do so, they sampled 111 corporations having to meet the following criteria: listed in the Fortune Corporate Reputation Index, named in the top 500 companies of pollution emissions in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory Report, and available information concerning the profitability in the top 500 companies list. They found that the size of a corporation does matter as it relates to their social performance. Furthermore, they also found that corporate social performance is influenced by their profitability and the amount of pollution they emit. While there are certain differences distinguishing sport organizations from typical organizations (discussed below), scholars have argued sport organizations also necessitate the need of CSR activities. The following section will discuss the notion of CSR in sport.

CSR in sport

Over the years, sport organizations have given increased attention to CSR initiatives. In fact, scholars have mentioned this occurrence has recently taken place approximately over the last 15 years (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Kott, 2005). There are a number of examples that illustrate sport organizations' heightened attention to CSR. For instance, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) has engaged in a "Say No to Racism" campaign to fight against discrimination in soccer (Jindela, 2010). Such was demonstrated in the 2010 World Cup pre-match festivities, as both teams held up a banner with the embroidered slogan. Furthermore, shoemaker Adidas launched a CSR campaign to encourage education among South African children concerning school education and HIV/AIDS education (fifa.com). In the American context, the Philadelphia Eagles of the NFL instituted a "Go Green" environmental campaign (Walker & Kent, 2009). Speaking on behalf of the NFL, former commissioner, Paul Tagliabue, stated the following : "...the NFL is becoming progressively more invested in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in an effort to establish itself as a socially conscious organization..." (as cited in Babiak & Wolfe, 2006, p. 214). Walker and Kent (2009) maintained that this expanded employment of CSR in sport has occurred for a two reasons: a) the ubiquitous nature of sport has paved the way for sport organizations to be deemed influential members of the global community, and b) because of transgressions on the part of large corporations, sport organizations now face a public consumer who is aware of the social aspect of business.

As a result of undertakings by the aforementioned sport organizations, sport management scholars have also begun to give this construct elevated attention (e.g. Babiak & Wolfe; 2006, 2009; Brietbarth & Harriss, 2008; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Walker, Kent, & Rudd, 2007). Playing a crucial part in this attention is how scholars have attempted to illumine on the differences between CSR in sport and CSR in general. For instance, Walker and Kent (2009) alluded to how sport organizations have the benefit of having athletes for their CSR activities. Like sponsors, sport organizations can utilize their athletes for CSR purposes. In addition, they referred to the connection teams have with their community, and the level of commitment shown by fans to sport organizations.

In a similar fashion, Babiak and Wolfe (2009) gave reasons as to why CSR in sport is unique. They, too, also made note of the association between teams and the community. As an example, they asked the following: “Can we imagine the type of passion one sees at a World Cup soccer game, or a Yankees-Red Sox playoff game, exhibited by devotees of Harley Davidson or any traditional product” (p. 722). Moreover, they asserted many sport leagues are perceived to encompass monopoly power, while also receiving special protections from the government. This is while they receive public funds to build stadiums. Lastly, they mentioned the existing landscape of sport, due to media, Internet, and other factors, is readily open for everybody to have quick access to.

Bradish and Cronin (2009) stated the CSR literature concerning sport is typified by three areas of research. The first area is cause-related sport marketing (CRSM), which

they claimed has received the most attention related to CSR among sport management scholars. CSRM is when a sport organization teams up with a charitable organization in order to engage in CSR activity. A second area of work includes scholars investigating CSR as it relates to a sport event (e.g. Super Bowl). Third, scholars have also researched CSR related to environmental sustainability. Although not included in the three, Bradish and Cronin noted corporate citizenship as it pertains to sport management pedagogy as another body of literature. The following section will summarize the works of authors who have conducted research in these areas.

Cause-related CSR: Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell, and Clark (2003) investigated the use of cause-related sport marketing. The purpose of their study was to investigate the attitudes, beliefs, and purchase intentions of consumers who attended the FedEx St. Jude Classic professional golf tournament. They created a 5-point Likert scale and surveyed 442 attendees in order to capture these factors. Their results revealed that the attendees found sport organizations' association with cause-related activities was beneficial. More specifically, the participants' attitudes and beliefs affected their purchase intentions. For this reason, the authors contended sport organizations should create and promote cause-related CSR activities.

Citing the increased efforts among sport organizations to incorporate CSR activities, Roy and Graeff (2003) examined consumers' attitudes toward professional athletes and sport organizations as cause marketers. They telephone surveyed 516 willing participants to gauge their attitudes. The results showed that consumers had high expectations of both the professional athletes and sport marketers. For instance, 87% of

the participants felt that professional athletes should support community charities or causes, while 90% felt that sport organizations should do the same. From this, they concluded that sport organizations should utilize cause-related sport marketing to gain a competitive advantage over competitors, while also using it as a way to foster relationships with stakeholders.

CSR and sport events: Babiak and Wolfe (2006) investigated CSR as it relates to mega-events. In this case, they examined CSR as it related to Super Bowl XL that took place in Detroit. They collected data from secondary sources (i.e. media clippings and webpage analysis). Some of the sources “included the *Detroit News*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Crain's Detroit Business*, and other community based media outlets (such as National Public Radio)” (p. 217). This resulted in the examination of more than 90 articles. They also reviewed four WebPages: The Detroit Lions (www.detroitlions.com), SBXL (www.sbxl.org/community), the Super Bowl (www.superbowl.com/features/community), and the NFL (www.jointheteam.com).

Their results illustrated CSR activities that took place during Super Bowl XL. Babiak and Wolfe (2006) focused on Carroll's ethical and discretionary portions of the framework. For instance, ethical CSR activities included “Super Makeover,” which included renovating the city of Detroit and “Project Green” to plant trees to lessen the effect of carbon emissions. One of the discretionary CSR activities included “Super Reading Program,” which encouraged Detroit school children to read and make use of the public library. Given this, these authors, like the authors above, stated sport

organizations should engage in CSR. In this case, they asserted these activities could lessen the criticism associated with the event (i.e. mega-events).

From a different perspective, Danylchuk and MacIntosh (2009) examined food and non-alcoholic beverages at sporting events and their link to obesity. To do so, they stated their purpose was to investigate “the opinion of consumers toward the usage of food (healthy and non-healthy choice) and beverage (non-alcoholic) products as sponsors of sporting events” (p. 71-72). They further asked whether use of fast food and alcoholic beverages at these events was socially responsible. Phase one included a survey of 253 participants; phase two was qualitative in nature, involving two focus groups. The results indicated the participants had more favorable attitudes towards food and non-alcoholic beverage sponsorships than the alcoholic beverage sponsorships.

Environmental sustainability: Ioakimidis (2007) touched on sport organizations’ responsibility to the environment, alluding to a number of reasons as to why sport organizations should consider the environment. Firstly, sport organizations should engage in environmentally friendly activities because they safeguard the environment, maintain the environment, while guaranteeing lasting financial health in the sport industry. Secondly, Ioakimidis stated that due to the distinct relationship fans have with sport organizations, sport organizations stand the chance of becoming a forerunner for environmentally related CSR initiatives. Lastly, Ioakimidis asserted these initiatives will monetarily benefit the sport organization. Among other reasons, Ioakimidis also stated that implementing environmentally related CSR initiatives will enhance the reputation of the respective sport organization and the sport industry as a whole.

Sport pedagogy: Mallen, Bradish, and MacLean (2008) examined CSR from a pedagogical standpoint. Through their study, they intended to gauge the perceptions of CSR among students and faculty in order to see if sport management programs are preparing their students to be corporate citizens in the workforce. Concerning the students, the results indicated they felt the sport industry was good but not great at incorporating CSR. Furthermore, faculty stated CSR principles were, in fact, in the curriculum but not emphasized in the classroom. Consequently, the authors argued for more emphasis on these practices to be taught in the classroom. Based upon the above overview of CSR, I will now move to define Black male athlete social responsibility.

Defining BMASR

Babiak and Wolfe (2006) argued social responsibility must not be ignored by sport organizations, and furthermore, initiatives involving socially responsible acts must be implemented. Because I equate Black male athletes to businesses, encompassing responsibilities to stakeholders, I also argue Black male athletes must also engage in socially responsible acts. Based on the above discussion, borrowing Carroll's (1979; 1999) model, I provide a preliminary definition of BMASR. In short, BMASR can be defined as *the social responsibility of Black male athletes encompassing economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary obligations that society has of them at a given point in time*. These components are elaborated on below. However, I would like to note that this is an introductory definition and that I will allow the participants to define BMASR as they see it. This definition will appear in Chapter IV.

Economic responsibilities: In describing the economic component, Carroll (1979) stated businesses have “a responsibility to produce goods and services that society wants and to sell them at a profit. All other business roles are predicated on this fundamental assumption (p. 500). In this case, Black male athletes produce/showcase their sought after products or services (i.e. their athletic prowess) for a sport organization, and in return, receive a profit (i.e. their contract). Carroll (1979) mentioned that all other business roles are predicated on this ideal. Thus, if these athletes are successful at producing their products and services, while selling them for a profit, other business opportunities will present themselves (e.g. endorsement contracts).

Legal responsibilities: Carroll (1979) noted that businesses are expected to be observers of the law, stating that while society expects a business to fulfill their economic mission, they should also obey the legal rules of the society in which they live. This is a vital element of BMASR considering the numerous legal encounters Black male athletes have had over the years. Michael Vick, Adam ‘Pacman’ Jones, and Dante Stallworth are just a few who have received negative press due to their legal troubles. If the legal component is not abided by, it will likely become tougher for the athlete to realize his economic potential.

Ethical responsibilities: Along with the last component (discretionary), Carroll (1979; 1999) identified these two as expectations beyond legal requirements. Concerning ethical responsibilities, Carroll (1979; 1999) pointed out that the list of ethical responsibilities is constantly growing, and consequently, is quite difficult to define what ethical responsibility actually entails. Even more, a given task carried out by a business

may be considered legal, but not necessarily ethical in the eyes of some. For this reason, ethical responsibility becomes even more obscure to pinpoint. So while that extra shove at the end of a play may not be illegal and seen as gamespersonship, it is probably not looked upon favorably. This may also concern issues of morality such as how a particular athlete lives out his personal life (e.g., Tiger Woods' extramarital affairs). In light of the realities in which Black male athletes have seen their images damaged by their actions, and the media thereafter (Agyemang, in press; Harrison, 2000; Hutchinson, 1996), it is crucial Black male athletes especially pay attention to both legal and ethical responsibilities. Research has shown that negative publicity can have a negative effect on business (e.g. Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, & Unnava, 2000; Monga & John, 2008; Pullig, Netemeyer, & Biswas, 2006; Weinberger, Allen, & Dillon, 1981).

Discretionary responsibilities: Finally, Carroll (1979; 1999) identified discretionary responsibilities as roles left to the judgment and choice of the business. Society has no specific message as to what this requires; however, it is still expected that businesses assume these responsibilities. In a broad sense, a good example of this would be philanthropic efforts such as donations. A number of athletes, Black male athletes included, indulge in philanthropic efforts which can be regarded as discretionary responsibilities. These efforts go above and beyond what is legally expected of them. For instance, these individuals may have a foundation for a certain social cause or host a football camp for youth. An example of this is when New York Jets' Santonio Holmes and David Clowney traveled to Ghana to promote American football among the youth. During their visit, they visited children and donated 250 lbs of food (Ameyaw, 2010).

Summary

Throughout this chapter, I have presented literature relevant to the current study. The chapter began with a discussion of race and racism in the American context, and furthermore, the American sport context. Via this discussion, it is illustrated how race has played a significant role in the USA, beginning with the arrival of the first African slaves. Because sport is a microcosm of society, I then reviewed pertinent literature illustrating how race has played a factor in sport, most notably concerning the Black male athlete. Given the current study gauges the perceptions of social responsibility, the review of the literature turned to a discussion of CSR in general, and CSR in sport. Through this portion of the review, I define the CSR construct, offer a review of seminal studies relevant to CSR, and present an initial definition of BMASR to be utilized during the study. The next chapter outlines how I carried out the study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

There are a number of methodologies and designs available to researchers when conducting research. Even within the two main research traditions (i.e., qualitative and quantitative), there exist ample designs distinguishable from others for researchers to utilize. This chapter begins with an introduction to qualitative research. I further detail how this study was designed and carried out.

What is qualitative research?

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) asserted the word qualitative “implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency” (p. 10). Pertaining to the qualitative methodology, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) added the following:

Qualitative research is situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to self (p. 3).

Corbin and Strauss (2008) added that this refers to a “process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (p. 1). Unique to qualitative research is the socially constructed nature of reality. In this sense, the researcher encompasses an intimate relationship with the

researched and attempts to interpret phenomena based upon their participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The researcher is able to attain understanding through many empirical resources that in turn describe and give meaning to their participants' lives. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) gave the following examples: "case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and production; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts" (p. 3). Moreover, there exist multiple techniques for researchers to make use of such as ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, interviewing, participant research, and many others (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Also worth pointing out is that qualitative research is typically rooted in the non-positivist paradigms and desires in-depth understanding via interviews, focus groups, and/or observations; the goal is not to generalize but rather that the results could be transferable to another setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Selecting the research problem

Critical to the selection of any research problem is establishing barriers for the project (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In view of this, one of first orders of business throughout this research process was deciding a topic to investigate. Corbin and Strauss (2008) declared this is one of the most complicated facets of conducting research. They further stated that "the topic is something that the researcher will have to live with for some time, so it has to be something of interest" (p. 21). With this in mind, I asked myself the following questions going into the research process: a) how would I identify a problem that I would like to research, and b) how would I go about narrowing this

subject matter into something manageable? In Chapter I, I identified my research questions. To reiterate, they are the following:

- a) How has race impacted Black male athletes as a business entity?
- b) How do Black male athletes view social responsibility?
- c) How do those who have an invested interest in the Black male athlete perceive of Black male athlete social responsibility?
 - What is the nature of Black male athlete's relationship with their relevant stakeholders?

Research design

Berg (2001) defined design as the map for how the researcher carries out the investigation. Due to the purpose of the study, a case study design offers a great tool for carrying out the purpose and answering the above research questions. The case study approach involves “systematically gathering enough information to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions” (Berg, 2001, p. 225). According to Stake (2005), case studies are “emphasized by some of us because it draws attention to the question of what specially can be learned about the single case” (p. 443). Due to the absence of any sustained efforts by researchers to explore Black male athlete social responsibility, this approach is a great starting point and prelude to future studies in this area.

It also worth pointing out that Stake (2005) mentioned three types of case studies, all of which could be applicable to this investigation. Firstly, an intrinsic case is taken on when a researcher desires a better understanding of a specific case. Stake

further maintained this case is not undertaken because it signifies a distinct trait or problem; however, this case is studied because the case itself is appealing. The intrinsic case study does not desire to make generalizations or build theory, but rather to understand the “case within its own world” (p. 450). An example of this could be a case study of a particular athlete who has overcome circumstances to succeed at the highest level of their sport.

Another case study Stake (2005) revealed was an instrumental case study. These case studies are performed to “provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else” (p. 445). In other words, this case will assist and advance the understanding of another case. An example of this would be a study which aimed to examine issues of racism in the college context. Such a study could lead to a better understanding of race in the larger scope of society. Lastly, a collective case study is when numerous cases are studied in order to come to a better understanding collectively. Even though it is possible that the case studies are similar to one another, the studies are selected with the hope of coming to an improved understanding of the larger context. For the purpose of this study, an instrumental case study will be undertaken in an attempt to move toward a better understanding of the BMASR concept.

Background of the study

Corbin and Strauss (2008) identified four sources of problems in qualitative research, three of which are applicable to this study. The first source involves problems proposed by one’s advisor. Although this particular topic was not assigned to me by my

advisor, he certainly played an integral role in the idea formulation phase. Reading previous works of my advisor played a role when it came to the conceptualizing of the Black male athlete. Conversations alone concerning the Black male athlete also stimulated my mind as it pertains to this area. When it came to the beginning stages of the research itself, this individual was helpful during the outlining stage, pointing me in the right direction as to what factors I should pay the most attention to.

A second source of a problem which Corbin and Strauss (2008) mentioned was technical and nontechnical literature. A simple task such as reading will stimulate curiosity in the researcher's mind, the authors alleged. The authors stated these can lead researchers to investigate subject matters which have been untapped and in need of further development. This holds true concerning this investigation as I mentioned above in the design. In this case, literature concerning the Black male athlete and social responsibility served to stimulate interest in this topic.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) also pointed out personal and professional experience as sources of inquiry. They stated this "leads to the judgment that some feature of the profession or its practice is less than effective, efficient, humane, or equitable" (p. 23). Good research pertaining to these experiences will bring about possible change to the situation, the authors contended. For instance, my work with Black athletes as a master's student in the academic support division of the athletic department greatly influenced this research topic. These sources serve as the two most contributing factors in conceptualizing this investigation.

Gaining access

Gaining access to conduct research with elite populations can be time consuming and complex. Elite populations can be characterized as segments of society that are generally not easily accessible through normal means (e.g. celebrities). Conducting research with such populations may require a researcher to “go through hoops” to gather the information they need. For instance, the gatekeepers of these organizations value their time, as well as the time of their employees, and will more than likely require some type of convincing in order for a researcher to begin their investigation (Altinay & Wang, 2009, Okumus, Altinay, & Roper, 2007). Patton (2002) commented that for individuals interested in conducting research with elite populations, there will certainly be considerable time and effort spent on gaining the desired access. Furthermore, Lee (1993) asserted researchers have to “put up with constant and dedicated hard work, loneliness, powerlessness and confusion, and quite possibly, some suffering at the hands of those being studied” (p. 120). It could be argued the same holds true for professional sport organizations. Singer (2005a) alluded to this notion as it related to research done with student-athletes in big-time colleges sport programs. Given this, one can imagine the potential difficulties when speaking of professional sport. For instance, front office personnel and other sport organization employees encompass job duties not offered elsewhere. The athletes competing for these organizations have obligations related to their athletic participation as well as duties to attend to outside of sport.

Initial access was gained through an individual who is currently employed by the NBA franchise as the content manager. Having attended the same undergraduate

institution with this individual, an existing relationship was already established, thus making the initial access less problematic. It was at this time that the content manager put me in contact with the franchise's Director of Communications via email. The content manager was also instrumental in identifying possible participants for the study. A preliminary email was sent to the Director of Communications to introduce myself as well as to present a research prospectus, inquiring about the likelihood of interviewing front office personnel and athletes. After a week of no response, initiative was taken to call this individual. Information was attained by accessing the franchise's webpage. Upon getting a hold of the Director of Communication via telephone, I was given the okay to travel to the city in which the team competes to conduct my interviews. I was informed that while time with non-athletes would not be limited, due to practice and other obligations, the amount of interview time with athletes would be held to a maximum of 20 minutes. This was completely understandable, and I was simply pleased to have had this opportunity to gain access to this population.

There were a few setbacks associated with the experience, mainly due to false promises and other shortcomings of the Director of Communications. For instance, I was instructed to come to the team's facility in order to conduct interviews after practice. However, on two occasions, I did so only to come away with no interviews. One explanation given was that the athletes would lack the attention span to answer my questions. In sum, data collection that was scheduled to take place over a two-week time period ended up taking three weeks. What I found most frustrating is that I was originally informed that carrying out this study would not be an issue and not interfere

with the day-to-day activities of the organization. Despite these difficulties, I was able to attain interviews with athletes and other participants mentioned above. However, if not for diligence and repeated attempts to get into contact with the Director of Communications, the eight interviews I did conduct would not have taken place.

Sampling of participants

Lincoln and Guba (1985) alluded to the importance of clarifying where and from whom data will be collected. This, they maintained, refers to the art of sampling. A key factor in this stage is having a focus which is thoroughly defined so that the researcher has a sense as to where to find a suitable sample. Lincoln and Guba (1985) additionally made note of two types of sites that will produce data for the inquiry: the existing literature and experts in the field. The literature is characterized as conventional wisdom, and as a result, the researcher must not be trapped into thinking in this same way. In view of the limited literature in this area, this was not the case for this particular examination. However, the experts (i.e. the interviewees in this case) were very useful.

Patton (2002) identified a number of sampling techniques for the qualitative researcher. Even more, Patton detailed the uses of purposeful sampling. A purposeful sampling technique was utilized in order to select the participants for this study (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) also referred to criterion sampling as a type of purposeful sampling that incorporates the evaluation and study of all cases that meet a predetermined set standard. Based upon the criterion sampling guidelines set out by Patton, other than the Black male athletes who play for the NBA franchise, participants who took part in the study were stakeholders employed by the franchise. This included coaches, and other

staff employed by the franchise. It is also worth noting that a snowball sampling technique was also employed. Groenewald (2004) asserted this “is a method of expanding the sample by asking one informant or participant to recommend others for interviewing” (p. 46). During the interview process, I asked participants if they could refer me to individuals who they felt could contribute to the study.

The final sample consisted of eight individuals employed by the NBA franchise (see Appendix D). Three of the participants were Black male athletes. The other five participants held the following roles within the franchise: content manager, advanced scout, assistant coach, sales executive, and reporter for the local ESPN radio station. These individuals also referred to themselves as Black. Singer (2005a) pointed out that a goal of case studies is to “understand those cases that are likely to be information-rich because they may reveal major system weaknesses that become targets for opportunity for program or system improvement” (p. 372). This is to say that the data-rich information coming from this study assisted in better understanding BMASR and moving toward a framework for doing so. Lastly, while a greater sample was desired, the intricacies of gaining access to this elite population stymied this process. This will be elaborated upon in Chapter V (i.e., limitations). The participants were asked to choose pseudonyms for themselves (see Appendix D).

Research setting

The primary setting of the research took place in the city where the franchise operates. Because I was given clearance and access to do research at the team’s arena, many of the interviews took place there. For instance, the first interview occurred with

the content manager and took place in the media room of the team's arena. Another interview with a coach took place courtside of the team's playing floor. I was also given a media press pass to attend the team's final preseason game. It was at this time that I was able to interview the ESPN affiliate media member. Furthermore, the interviews with the three players also transpired at this preseason game. After the game, I proceeded to the players' locker room and interviewed the players. This environment permitted the gathering of rich information. Lastly, the two telephone interviews were conducted at the residence where I stayed during my visit to this city.

Worth mentioning is that this research setting and sampling strategy was one of convenience in the sense that the participants were available and accessible through my past experiences and relationship with the content manager. In any case, this sampling strategy is especially useful in those situations where researchers desire to obtain preliminary information about a research question in an effective and efficient manner (Berg, 2001).

Data collection

Within the qualitative methodology, there exist a number of data gathering techniques available to researchers (Berg, 2001; Stake, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that while the thought may be the inquirer serves as the only data collecting instrument, there are nonhuman sources available as well. Human sources are thought of as interviews and observations. This also includes making note of nonverbal cues taking place during the interviews and observations. In contrast, nonhuman sources comprise of documents and records. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also stated this can be unobtrusive

information left behind by the participants. This, they stated, provides insight into the daily activities of the participants. In light of this, this study utilized four data collecting techniques: (a) demographic questionnaires (b) individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews (c) individual in-depth, semi-structured telephone interviews, (d) and observations. Each of these is discussed below. It is worth noting also the in-depth interviews took place with the non-athletes.

Demographic questionnaires: Questionnaires were used to generate preliminary information about the participants. Interviews began by inquiring about this information and provided information pertaining to gender, race, ethnicity, age, profession, and any other information relevant to the participants. This information assisted me in getting to know the participant (see Appendix D).

Individual in-person interviews: The interviewing technique has very much become synonymous with qualitative inquiry, and has become a common way in which we as humans attempt to understand others (Fontana & Frey, 2005). While some may dispute the rigor of this technique, Fontana and Frey (2005) stated this technique is more difficult than presumed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) mentioned five steps concerning carrying out an interview, all of which were employed in this study. Firstly, the researcher must find individuals to interview. Secondly, the researcher prepares for the interview. In doing so, the researcher must come up with questions and set the sequence of the questions. Subsequent to this, the researcher may practice the interview with a stand-in participant.

The authors also noted that this is where the researcher determines the level of formality. For instance, will the interview be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. In this case, these interviews were semi-structured in nature. I chose to employ this particular interview method in view of the lack of flexibility that comes along with structured interviews and the uncertainty of unstructured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

Third in this sequence is to brief the participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that even though the interviewees may have already been briefed on the subject matter, it is always beneficial to do so more than once. They should also be given a chance to warm up to the interview. Doing so serves as a “breaking the ice” moment between the researcher and the participant. The incorporating of this tactic serves to relax the interviewees. For this study, I initially informed the participants that I was a doctoral student collecting data for my dissertation. I then proceeded to give them a brief overview of what the study entailed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also mentioned that following through with this process allows for a better rapport to be built between the researcher and the interviewees. I felt that by giving this brief introduction, the participants felt more inclined to answer my questions. For example, they seemed to be rather intrigued by my topic, thus opening the door for rich responses.

Fourth, Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized pacing the interview to keep it fruitful. As the interviewer, you want to keep the interview flowing without sequences when the interview seems to be lacking information that will be useful. The authors also highlighted how the interviewer should keep interjections during the interview to

minimum. By this they mean, “the interviewer rarely learns anything when he or she is talking” (p. 270). This is not to say the interviewer should not follow up on any given response the interviewee has. In fact, Kvale (1996) spoke to the essence of probing during interviews. For instance, if a participant states something which is intriguing to the interviewer, there should be a follow up question to the answer, asking the interviewee to elaborate on their statement. This method was a crucial part to this case study as the probing of participants further enhanced this project.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated the last step in this process is culminating the interview and gaining closure. A researcher will know when to do this when no new information is being gathered from the interview. At this time, the interviewer should note the key items taken from the interview and highlight these to the respondent. Lastly, the interviewer should thank the interviewee for their time. This leaves a fairly large time span for which the interview can last. Depending on the interviewee (and interviewer), this could be as short as 25 minutes or up to hours in some cases. This was my experience in previous research and certainly occurred in carrying out this investigation.

There are also certain things which researchers should not do when conducting an interview. For instance, Fontana and Frey (2005) stressed that an interviewer never suggest an answer to the participant. This includes not giving away your thoughts on the matter to the participant. Such thoughts could possibly be leading and guide the participant to give an answer which may not accurately reflect their perspective. It is also worth mentioning all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim with the

permission of the participants. Also, during the interviews, field notes were taken as a way to document my thoughts and participants' reactions to certain questions. Interviews with the athletes were shorter, lasting 10-15 minutes where as interviews with non-athletes ranged from 35 minutes to one hour (see Appendix C for interview guide).

Individual in-depth telephone interviews: In the case that in-person interviews were not possible, telephone interviews were seen as the next best means of interviewing technique. This was the case for two individuals (i.e. advanced scout and sales executive) who were unable to be present at the facility or meet off-site due to traveling schedules and other duties associated with their employment. The downside to this was that I was incapable of witnessing the participants' nonverbal cues. Despite this, these interviews were just as free-flowing and enriching. These interviews also ranged from 35 minutes to one hour.

Document analysis: Document analysis also took place. In this case, I mainly searched for information related to the individual athletes. This mainly resulted in finding information related to athlete foundations (i.e. discretionary activity). This added credence to the interviews, while also substantiating the findings that were elicited from the study (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009).

Observations: Observations were also utilized in combination with the previously mentioned techniques as well as on its own. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated observations offer "here-and now experience in depth" (p. 273). A further, in-depth explanation is stated below (Lincoln & Guba, 1985):

observation...maximizes the inquirer's ability to grasp motives, beliefs, concerns, interests, unconscious behaviors, customs, and the like;

observation...allows the inquirer to see the world as his subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon in and on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, ongoing environment (as cited in Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 193).

In addition, these observations can take place in either natural or fixed settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Natural settings are preferred because it is unknown as to what will occur.

An attempt was made to make note of the participants' mannerisms and non-verbal cues. This includes any "exchange of information through nonlinguistic signs: gestures, which are more or less conscious, and body language, more or less unconscious" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 276). Such information was taken down in my field notes. This included making note of how participants interacted during the time I was able to sit-in on practice. Observations also related to how they non-verbally responded to a question. For instance, how did he/she react when the question was asked? Was the individual turned off by the question or vice versa? This experience was fulfilling in and of itself that contributed to the results. Lastly, throughout the data collection stage, a reflexive journal was kept as a way to document my thoughts and reflect on the occurrences of the day/week.

Data analysis

The analysis process commenced after culminating the first interview (Lincoln, personal communication, October 6, 2009). At this time, I listened to the interview to gain initial thoughts. Furthermore, I then transcribed the interview verbatim and read over the transcript to gather further thoughts concerning the interview. Lincoln further went on to say this is imperative because it may give the researcher more ideas for further questions to ask the subsequent participants. This was the case for this study as questions constantly came up in subsequent interviews that were not asked in previous interviews. In this case, participants were contacted afterward to garner their thoughts on the question they were originally not asked. In sum, this process is significant because it will not be to the researcher's benefit to wait till the last interview to begin the transcription and analysis process.

Throughout the process, the recorded interviews were listened to continually, allowing me to better understand the participant, or as Maykut and Morehouse (1994) put it, "understanding the person's point of view" (p. 25). Marshall and Rossman (1995) also noted the significance of this process, contending that this analysis permits the researcher to become more familiar with the participants' responses.

In order to discern initial themes, open coding was put into action. Schwandt (2001) described coding as "a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments" (p. 26). Furthermore, Corbin and Strauss (2008) defined open coding as "Breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data" (p. 195). To do so, transcripts and field notes of

observations were read until I felt I had a good grasp on the data. I then went back and referred to my research questions and interview guide to further aid me in the process of coming up with initial themes. Once these preliminary themes were delineated, I broke themes into more defined, concrete themes or in some cases, combined themes if they were similar and could not stand alone. This process is known as axial coding and is defined by crosscutting or relating the initial themes to one another (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The themes emanating from the axial coding process serve as the themes elaborated upon in the results. Illustrated in Chapter IV, noteworthy quotations will serve as needed credence. This is known as selective coding, as described by Creswell (1998).

Trustworthiness

In the same fashion that quantitative researchers concern themselves with reliability and validity, Patton (2002) stated that these two ideals should also be a goal of all qualitative researchers. To that end, Lincoln and Guba (1985) mentioned four ideals in order to illustrate trustworthiness of a study: credibility, transferability, and dependability/confirmability. These are each discussed below.

Credibility: In order to achieve this principle, a number of measures were taken, most notably, triangulating the data, peer debriefing, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Firstly, as it pertains to triangulating the data, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated this involves using a number of methods, sources, and theories. In this study, this was realized by not only interviewing the Black male athletes but franchise stakeholders

as well. Furthermore, the process was enhanced by using document analysis and observation in combination with the semi-structured interviews.

Peer debriefing is important because it allows for accurate interpretation of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted this makes for an impartial point of view. As such, throughout the research process, I made use of individuals within the sport management discipline who are familiar with qualitative inquiry. An outsider's perspective may be able to witness something in the data that I do not see. Along with these individuals, I discussed what had emerged from the data. Such discussion provided insight as I further went through the research process.

Lastly, member checking involves allowing the participants to read over their transcripts in an attempt to make sure that their voices were captured accurately (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In implementing this, I emailed copies of the transcripts to each of the participants in hopes that they catch any incorrect statements. It also may be the case that they may want to clarify a statement they made during the initial interview. Participants were asked to give feedback concerning initial interpretations of the results and write-up. I would like to point out, however, that this was not carried out as it related to the three athletes who took part in the study and the assistant coach. Their time did not permit them to take part in this process; however, the other four participants were emailed the transcripts from their interview.

Dependability: Dependability entails the ability of other researchers to come away with similar results considering they employ the same techniques (i.e. methods and procedures). This can be accomplished by including a detailed methods and procedures

section and utilizing third-party individuals to serve as auditors for the study. The current study attempted to achieve this ideal by describing the research process, while also employing the help of individuals with expertise in qualitative research.

Confirmability: Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated confirmability is realized when the researched are the individuals who answer the questions and not the researcher. Furthermore, confirmability occurs when the appropriate methodology is exploited. There must be an adequate distance between the researcher and the researched. In sum, this concept concerns the neutrality of the researcher. For example, as the interviews took place, I did not assert my opinion on how I felt on the topic. Doing so could have possibly influenced the participants' answers. Lincoln (2009) stated keeping a reflexive journal assist in carrying out confirmability (personal communication, October 13, 2009). As a result, a reflexive journal was utilized to assist me in achieving this ideal.

Transferability: A number of qualitative researchers have compared transferability to that of generalizability in quantitative research (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). While the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize to the general population, this term refers to the level to which a study can be transferred or applied in a different context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated this can be done by providing thick, rich description of the research setting so that researchers endeavoring to carry out similar studies in different settings can emulate your efforts. Earlier in this section, I laid out the research setting and background of the study in an attempt to satisfy this notion.

Ethics: To abide by ethical considerations for the qualitative researcher, a number of measures were taken into account. For one, a proposal was sent out for Human Subjects endorsement, notifying the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of my intentions, and how I planned to carry out this investigation. Upon receiving approval from this office, the participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix A), highlighting the parameters of the study. This document informed them of their voluntary participation, illustrating they do not have to participate, and that by not participating, there is no penalty. Moreover, the document also notified them that the interviews would be audio recorded. I then proceeded to inform them that their identities would be kept confidential and that files will be stored in my office.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

-Titus 3:8-11 (NIV)

Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

-Titus 3:14 (NIV)

From the analysis, five central themes emerged. The most significant finding was how the participants *defined BMASR*. Second, in line with the CRT epistemological framework, the participants asserted issues of *race and racism* continue to play an integral part in today's society. Furthermore, the theme of *role models* emanated from the data. Serving as the third theme, participants felt Black male athletes should conduct themselves in a manner which serves as an example for youth. *The role of the NBA* serves as the fourth theme, as participants suggested the NBA move toward improving current efforts in assisting with social responsibility. Lastly, the theme of *Black male athletes as businesses* emerged. Participants perceived Black male athletes in the current

age as businesses in their own right. Below, I endeavor to further elaborate on each of these themes by presenting some of the narratives from the interviews. First, however, I provide background information on the participants in order for the reader to become more familiar with whom they are. This information was obtained through the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D) and supplemented by tie interviews.

Participant background information

LeMichael: LeMichael is a 12 year NBA veteran, drafted in the 1st round of the 1999 NBA draft. He plays both point guard and shooting guard and currently serves the role of the 6th man for the team. He was born on the west coast of the USA and was raised primarily by his mother. He also noted he was one of ten children. Growing up in such a large family, LeMichael mentioned it was tough at times. However, he mentioned how he had a Black city councilman mentor to him during his adolescent years. He commented, “[he] made sure my homework was done, took me to basketball practice, and made sure I had a decent meal every day.” It was this experience that he said influenced him to give back. For instance, he has a foundation that assists youth in poverty stricken areas, while also sponsoring three AAU basketball teams. Furthermore, for the Thanksgiving holiday, LeMichael delivered dinners to the less fortunate in the area which the team competes. He is married and has four children. He also desires to go into coaching at his college alma mater once his playing days have culminated.

Pierre: Like many NBA players in this era, Pierre was born abroad. Pierre was drafted in the 1st round of the 2008 NBA draft after spending a few years in the professional league of his native country. He plays the center position. Of recently,

however, he was traded to another NBA franchise. Pierre is currently in the process of commencing a foundation that will benefit handicap people in his native country. He considers himself a family man and said his family supports him in everything he does: “My family is always behind me. Sometimes they’re here and they tell me just do this to show people you care and I think that’s important, too. They support me and teach me to be in the right way. So I think it’s important for everyone in the league to have their families behind them.” Pierre was proud of the fact that he can speak three languages: English, his native tongue, and Creole. He is currently in the process of learning Spanish.

Dietrick: Dietrick is a 10 year NBA veteran and plays the center position. He was born on the east coast of the USA but grew up in the southeast. Like LeMichael, he comes off the bench. He was drafted in the 1st round of the 2001 NBA draft. Dietrick was raised by a single mother, and as a result, is in the process of starting a foundation for this population. He also mentioned he attended a predominantly Black high school. When speaking of his former high school, Dietrick recalled how the school did not have up to par facilities. As such, he also contributes to his former school by providing scholarships, basketball camps, and helping out with renovating the facilities. He hopes these efforts can catch his school up with others in the area.

Watson: Watson currently serves as the content manager for the team. This role encompasses reporting for the team’s website, including player and coach interviews and any news related to the team. To do so, he interacts with these individuals on a daily basis. He travels with the team for away games to better facilitate his reporting on the

team. As stated in Chapter III, we attended the same undergraduate institution. He majored in broadcast journalism. Watson is very passionate about his job and looks to move up the ranks in the years to come.

Marques: Marques serves as an advanced scout for the team and has been doing so for 15 years. His comment below describes what this entails:

I scout the opponent. I'm always ahead of our team, going to watch the upcoming opponents play. And my responsibility is to watch them live and gather any information I can to help our team develop a strategy to beat them. I'm looking for all the plays they're running. I'm looking for hand signals. I'm looking for play calls, any offensive tendencies from players, how they defend certain actions. I'm looking for everything. I'm kind of like the Intel. I'm the spy. Everybody does it. They know I'm there. Once I'm done scouting the game, I go back to my hotel room and I type up a scouting report and I email it in to the coaching staff, and then I'm off to the next city.

Marques has close ties with the Black community and attempts to help out in any way possible. For instance, from time to time, he will hold a basketball clinic in lower socioeconomic status areas. He was probably the most outspoken participant on issues of race and racism.

Coach Cecil: Coach Cecil serves as an assistant coach for the team. He summed up his role with the team with the following statement:

I'm an assistant coach. I'm a coach. I get out there and what I see is what I tell guys. If we scheme and they don't do it, then that's what I do. I played in the

NBA for 14 years so I had the opportunity as a player and now I'm learning as a coach and learning that challenge of how to be a coach and how to lead these guys. The things I have to say now with my voice and not my play and that's the difference for me as a coach. And that's my role and I enjoy it.

As he stated, Coach Cecil was formerly a player in the NBA. He played overseas, but spent the majority of his 18 years in the NBA. He played point guard during his playing days and usually came off the bench. Other than coaching, Coach Cecil enjoys spending time with his family and working with his foundation. He states the main aim of his foundation is to assist children with needs.

MM: MM serves as a top-level sales executive for the team. He did not mention how long he has been in the profession. He described his position below:

Basically what I do is I'm a ticket sales rep. I bring in revenue to the Dallas Mavericks in the form of season tickets, individual game tickets, suite rentals. You know, just various ways for individuals or corporations to come out and have a good game. My job is, my primary job is to sell season tickets.

I found it interesting that MM was probably the least likely individual to call out instances of racism. While he did say racism existed, he did not want to harp on it. MM also pointed out his involvement in the sports industry has a lot to do with his dreams of being an athlete. Since he could not compete, he still wanted to play a part, which his role allows him to do.

Mo: Mo works for the ESPN radio affiliate in the area which the study took place. He has worked in this sector for five years and recently begun working in the

advertising industry. Mo also attended college in the state which the study took place. He noted his major was broadcast journalism. Mo was very outspoken on issues of race as well as the culture of the NBA. He provided noteworthy “inside” information on what transpires behind the scenes in the media industry. Despite being among people he felt “didn’t have his back,” Mo liked his job and would have it no other way.

Below, I now present the themes emanated from the data.

Defining BMASR

The first theme that was revealed in the interviews was how the participants defined BMASR, largely based in research questions one and two. Recall from the literature review that I came into the study with a definition in mind, largely based on Carroll’s definition of CSR: “The social responsibility of a business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time” (Carroll, 1979, p. 500). From this definition, I then initially defined BMASR as *the social responsibility of Black male athletes encompassing economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary obligations that society has of them at a given point in time*. Though I came into the study with this preliminary definition, I did not wish to reveal this definition to the participants but rather allow them to inform me of how they define BMASR. Though still encompassing the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary components, the BMASR definition formulated from this study differs from the one above.

Stemming from the thoughts of the participants, BMASR is defined by the following components: *the social responsibility of a Black male athlete encompassing a)*

responsibility to self, including economic, legal, and ethical, b) responsibility to Black communities, including Black male athletes who came before them and to those who will come after them, and c) carrying out genuine discretionary activities. Obviously different from past social responsibility definitions (Bowen, 1953; Davis, 1960; Drucker, 1984; Johnson, 1971; Windsor, 2006), the statements below will further elaborate on the above definition.

One key divergence from Carroll's definition was the participants' willingness to point out that Black male athletes must maintain a responsibility to self before they can be responsible to other parties. Centered on past misdeeds of Black male athletes, Dietrick referred to his responsibility to self by stating, "My whole thing is, there's a small amount of people in my huddle and I try to stay away from people who can get me into trouble." Mo then added, "If you're an athlete, basically you can't be a jackass. You can't be a Pacman Jones. Like just be a decent human being. Do what you're supposed to do. Go about your business in an adult fashion and everything should be okay." Mo was very candid when speaking on this topic. I could tell from his facial expressions that he was turned off by Pacman Jones' actions. This statement by Mo came after discussion of how some Black male athletes keep bad company which then leads to not being responsible to self. This is why he mentioned Pacman Jones who had a host of problems involving night clubs. LeMichael commented on this:

For me, I have first-hand experience where I had a situation where some people around me were doing negative things that could have portrayed my image to be

negative. I did some damage control, continued to stay positive within the community, so it never really got broadcasted in the media.

While LeMichael had the wherewithal to employ “damage control” for his circumstance, other Black male athletes have not been so successful in years past (e.g. Allen Iverson and Michael Vick). Coach Cecil, an assistant coach for the team, provided further commentary:

And another thing is they roll with boys now. And the responsibility to me as an athlete with your boys is to let them know, look, if something goes down and yall get into it at the club, even if I don't do nothing, everything is going to fall on me. When we go out, the responsibility is to chill and relax and have a good time. If anything goes down, we need to get out of here or walk away. And a lot of times, that's where a lot of the Black male athletes get into trouble with their boys—not thinking, having attitudes, thinking I'm this person instead of thinking I'm your friend, I'm your boy, I'm going to make sure you don't get into trouble. Some guys don't know how to handle success. Hopefully guys understand that your boys can get you into trouble as we saw with Michael Vick, sadly to say. But I think that's the responsibility of the athlete to let the boys know, hey, we're going out to have a good time; we're not looking for any drama. If anything happens, walk away because at the end of the day, it's going to be on me, not you.

Marques added the following about the company Black male athletes keep:

At the same time, you've got to look at yourself in the mirror as an athlete and make a decision. Do I go left or do I go right? Some just don't get it. Some will never get it. And a lot of it, again, starts back in the way they came up, their upbringing, and of course, who they have in their circle. That's one of the biggest problems, who they have in their circle. At some point, you've got to cut June Bug and Ray Ray and them loose. Love them from a distance because they're bringing you down and they're going to cost you at some point.

Marques spoke with passion and conviction when making these comments. He continued:

And sometimes, athletes they just really don't think. Some of them just don't get it. They don't get the fact that they are really blessed to have what they have and to do what they do. You get paid to play sports. How hard is it to carry yourself in a respectable manner. I mean, sure you can have fun. Have fun at home. Who said you have to be out in the clubs, driving drunk or carrying pistols? You can have fun at home. You got enough money to do that. Bring the people to your house and you can determine who comes in and out of your home.

While the above statements broadly depict responsibility to self, the comments below touch on the economic, legal, and ethical responsibilities to self. For instance, concerning economic, Dietrick stated:

I have a responsibility as a Black male athlete to always be able to provide for my family. If I spend what I make today tomorrow, it won't be there in the future. So my responsibility is to my family to make sure I manage this money

and this blessing from God, and to continue to manage it well so we can eat tomorrow, we can eat years down the line.

Marques then verbalized how he dislikes how some Black male athletes are profligate with their money:

I have a problem with these guys buying all this jewelry, flashing it all around. It's silly to me. It's buffoonery to me. It's okay to have nice things, but what's the deal with all the flash? It makes you look ignorant. All the fancy cars, okay it's nice to have cars but don't put all these different rims and crazy looking things on these cars.

In reference to legal responsibilities, names such as Michael Vick, Dante Stallworth, and Plaxico Burress were mentioned. The crimes committed by these three individuals obviously drew the attention of the participants. Marques commented on current Black male athletes: "They just think they're untouchable and it's wrong but I think at some point you should become mature enough to understand right from wrong and I should or shouldn't do this no matter what society says about you." MM then added:

I think a lot of athletes have this mindset, I'm an athlete, I'm untouchable, but you've actually seen a couple of athletes where they've actually been sent to jail. Plaxico Burress. Michel Vick. If it can happen to a superstar like Michael Vick, it can happen to anybody.

Watson remarked that Michael Vick made it worse for himself, possibly an indication for future Black male athletes:

I think a big part of it is did you lie about it? Are you still lying about it? Because I think Michael Vick could've made his life a whole lot easier if he'd come straight out. I did this, this was wrong, and immediately started working with PETA. Like right then.

Mo then summarized legally responsibility as the following:

You aint gotta be a choir boy or anything like that. But don't do stuff to just embarrass yourself, embarrass your franchise, your immediate family, and the Black community. You know? Don't do that. Just don't do anything stupid.

From the above comments, the way in which these participants defined legal responsibilities is very similar to how Carroll (1979, 1999) conceived of legal responsibilities. Likewise, Black male athletes are to obey the law and in order for them to continue to fulfill their economic responsibility to self.

Ethical responsibilities were closely related to legal responsibilities. In differentiating the two, however, they were quick to reference Tiger Woods' recent infidelities towards his ex-wife. Participants seemed to be turned off by Woods' actions. For instance, some participants gave a sinister smile, illustrating their displeasure with Woods. In any case, the manner in which the participants defined this component was also similar to how Carroll (1979, 1999) defined it. Marques defined ethics as the following:

Ethics is about who you are as a person. It has to do with character, how you carry yourself. They say the saying goes, "Your attitude determines your altitude

in life.” You have to be able to look in the mirror at yourself and be proud of who you are and who you’ve become.

Mo further elaborated on ethical responsibility to self by asserting that, “if you’re going to play the game, you’ve got to appreciate the game, you got to do it the right way. And if you don’t do it the right way, eventually you’re going to pay for it. Just govern yourself like an adult. Like they say in church, govern yourself accordingly.” Watson then provided some noteworthy comments, referencing a few recent instances:

With the rap that a lot of modern athletes have now, if you’re an athlete and you’re married, show young men how to be a man and be actually married not out running the streets. You don’t have these sexual allegations going on. Stay off deadspin and keep your clothes on. First of all, you find that a lot with NBA stars, for some reason they want to take their clothes off and send a picture to a female. Don’t do all that. It’s not necessary. Just show someone how to come to work with a suit on, show them how to work hard at their job even if it is just basketball, and show them how to be outstanding citizens.

Through my observations, matters of ethical responsibilities also emanated. For instance, during practice, many players made use of foul language. Some may argue against this as being unethical; however, I found this interesting because the previous day they seemed so unlikely to act in such a matter. What was even more interesting is that youth, many times, attend practice. The language that was being used would hardly be language that you would want children to overhear.

Comprising an integral component of the BMASR definition was Black male athletes' responsibility to Black communities. All participants regarded this as vital and appeared to be rather fervent about this component of BMASR. Included in this was their responsibility to Black male athletes past and future. For instance, Dietrick pointed out, "Black male athletes such as Muhammad Ali and Jim Brown paved the way and laid the foundation so today's athletes can be successful and accepted the way that they are." He then added the following:

I think so many people have done so much to get us in this situation as far as from Rosa Parks, MLK, to people like you said, Jim Brown and Jackie Robinson. They sacrificed so much for us to get us to this level that I feel that when you put yourself in position to shine negatively on other BMA, it's criminal.

Coach Cecil also noted the sacrifices made by these early pioneers and stated that current Black male athletes must "continue to make it better for the athletes who are coming up today and in the future." LeMichael also provided commentary related to this notion. He noted how individuals such as Magic Johnson took the baton from those who came before him and paved the way for Michael Jordan and athletes thereafter. Speaking about the future, he asserted, "I can tell you the only best way to go forward is our future."

Furthermore, a number of the participants stated that because many Black male athletes come from lower socioeconomic status neighborhoods, they should be willing to serve Black communities. In reference to this, Marques stated, "If you talk about how bad the hood was or how bad this place was for you where you came up, why don't you

do something to help it or build it up? Yeah I think they're responsible for helping because if they don't, who will?" In view of the backgrounds many Black male athletes come from, Mo explained that these individuals must go back to these communities to lend a helping hand:

I feel like, if you're a kid and you came from one of those less than fortunate backgrounds, I feel like it's almost, it is, it's not almost, it's imperative that you reach out. When you see kids who are just like you were when you were a kid growing up, I feel like shame on you for not reaching out and giving them opportunities that you didn't have. Now you're in a position where you can create opportunities for those kids where they do have a better shot at making whatever dreams come true. Whether or not they want to go to college, become a lawyer, doctor, whatever it is. But if you're in a position to help out those kids, shame on you for not helping them out at this point, especially when it's nothing for you; it's no sweat off your back.

Furthermore, though lengthy, Marques' elaborate commentary below summarizes the sentiments of all the participants:

Anytime you can educate a young mind, you're doing something positive because so many of us are falling by the wayside; so many of us are dropping out of high school. We're quick to give up. I just think that in our communities, they need to see our faces more; they need to see that we care more and not just by flashing a couple of dollars or driving through to see what I've done, "this is what I am, you can do it too." But okay, "how can I do it?" Tell me how to get

there. Just like my position, for example, when I talk to kids, I always let them know the reality is that most of you, or all of you, are probably not going to be pro athletes but there are so many other avenues in pro sports that you can take. I mean, I didn't know this position existed when I first started. I didn't start out doing this. I walked in with merchandising. That was my way in the door. So I like to tell them that story and let them know there are other avenues and I'm not here to dash your dreams, but the reality is, everybody cannot make it. So building things in the community to educate young people and maybe put up a community center that's just not sports based, but educationally based and teaching social responsibility. How to be a man. How to treat women. How to respect each other. How to work with one another. These are things that are lacking in the home because there are parents absent. So many kids growing up pretty much raising themselves. These are things that need to be done.

Lastly, the final component of BMASR was what participants described as discretionary activity. Similar to what scholars have identified as cause-related sports marketing (e.g. Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell, & Clars, 2003), participants suggested Black male athletes be involved with certain causes in which they have a genuine interest. Also, akin to Carroll's (1979) discretionary component of CSR, participants in this study related this to activity left to the judgment of the athlete. They also felt that the activity should be genuine. For instance, Coach Cecil inquired, "are you doing it out of your heart or are you doing it because you want to help someone? Or are you doing it for the exposure to just get your name out there?" Marques added:

You shouldn't do anything for glory, for a public gratification or to be applauded and be looked upon as this pillar in society. You should do it because you enjoy doing it. You should do it because you want to do it. You should do it because you want to help somebody that looks like you.

Pierre spoke of discretionary activity he took part in that he also felt passionate about:

We do a lot of stuff. For Christmas, we're going out to give some presents to kids. It's a lot of different stuff. Sometimes we just do a little camp. We do it with all the kids or we go to the hospital to go see the kids and sick people. And I think it's important. I think the kids love it. And we love it too so that's why it's important.

LeMichael also referred to a foundation he started that hosts basketball camps and gives scholarships. I was able to locate information on this foundation through his website which mentions the foundation's aim is to assist youth pursue their dreams. Through document analysis, it was also brought to my attention that this individual received a community assist award for his role in engagement within the community. To complement this, his website also alluded to how he delivered turkeys during Thanksgiving to in-need communities. In addition, Dietrick added comments on his discretionary activities:

I'm starting my fund right now for single parent mothers. And umm, I also do some stuff back at my high school as far as scholarship things and giving basketball camps, and giving back to the program and helping them out just because I understand how hard it is to get funding at a 95% Black school.

Document analysis also provided information on Coach Cecil's also foundation. He started this when he was a player in the NBA. Furthermore, I was also able to observe discretionary activity while I attended practice and the pre-season game. Players signed autographs and took pictures with fans. They seemed to interact well with the fans and appeared as if they enjoyed doing so. I also got a warm reception from the athletes as well.

Participants were also adamant that Black male athletes speak on social issues as part of their discretionary duties. A similar opinion was offered by participants in Agyemang et al.'s (2010) study pertaining to Black male athlete activism. For example, Watson verbalized:

If you see injustices, and you see it all the time even now days you see lynchings or some type of racial issue or something like that, don't be afraid to say that's not right. Athletes don't realize that by saying that it doesn't make you look bad, it makes you look like you're concerned. And so they don't, they're too busy trying not to look bad and not to have a stance on something as opposed to just saying, we all know that's not right and if it takes me saying that's not right it will probably make the situation better than by not saying anything at all.

Seeming displeased with the amount of activism that currently takes place among Black male athletes, Marques added:

It's okay for an athlete, a BMA anyway, to state his stance on politics because it's only going to encourage people that look up to him and follow him. I mean,

if he believes in Barack, then speak up and don't be quiet about it. If you believe in Barack's stance on insurance or Medicare then say that.

In sum, though related to Carroll's definition of CSR, the participants saw BMASR as a concept rooted in self and the Black community. There was little mention of any direct responsibility to the team. The closest reference to this notion came from Watson:

They show up at the events they need to show up at, smiling faces, saying we're going to win, we're improving, we're going to win the championship, saying all the right things. And that's pretty much it. Their role is to make sure that you feel like you have a good investment, and then go out and show you that the investment's good. And that we can be clean cut guys, we can be...you're not going to hear about us when we're not playing, the only thing you're going to hear about us is when we're playing basketball. And I think you're starting to see this a lot more with the owners, they're trying to bring in those good guys. I think if you have the right number of good guys and you're competitive but you don't win it all, your fan base and the corporate sponsors love it.

Nevertheless, the lack of commentary related to the responsibility to the team is not to say the participants felt Black male athletes should not be responsible to the sport organization and other stakeholders. Thus, I argue by fulfilling the other components of BMASR mentioned above, they are illustrating a responsibility to their team and realizing their economic potential.

Race and racism

The thing about racism, the people who it doesn't directly affect, half of them don't even believe it exists. Like half of them don't see it as a problem, you know what I'm saying. So if it's never touched you or you've never had to experience it, why would you ever believe it's a problem? You know?

-Mo

The participants in this study expressed considerable concern with issues of race and racism not only within the sport industry but America as a whole, as suggested by numerous scholars (e.g. Feagin, 2006; Hawkins, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1996; McIntosh, 1997; Singer, 2005a). Their facial expressions and mannerisms alone told of their experiences with race and racism. Below, Marques candidly suggested race will always be an issue. Marques was certainly the most outspoken on this topic. As the oldest member from the group of participants, you could tell he had experienced the most as it pertains to this issue. He commented the following:

I think race has impacted us. I don't think we can escape that we are Black.

That's still going to be pointed out in some shape, form, or fashion. I think race is always going to be an issue. It's just going to be a little less subtle. Race is an issue right now. The president is Black but he's still got to deal with race issues.

We're not going to escape that. That's the world we live in.

Mo had resembling commentary, stating race "will always be an issue in America. It's a sad commentary, but it's just the way it is." Mo then went on to reference a White male he knew in the sports media industry:

I worked with a guy one time at a summer job and he went to school and I remember him specifically telling me [pause]. He wasn't necessarily racist about it but he was telling me it drives him nuts that there's a Black guy out there who's just athletically gifted and gets to go to school and he has to do all this stuff like apply for an academic scholarship or whatever. And this is coming from a guy working in the media.

In his short time working in sport media, it appeared as if Mo had already experienced a great amount as it relates to race and racism. To add further credence, Mo continued on about White males working in sport media:

And I know other guys in the media, you can see how they cover athletes. There are guys in the media, White guys, who you can tell are upset that these young Black men have money that they wish they could have. And I'm not saying it's all racial or whatever but you can just tell by the way they do certain things. If you're around them, you can see it coming out. You can only hide it for so long until it spews out. Racism will always be a factor in this country.

From Mo's comments, it seems as if the individual he is referring to ascribes to what Ladson-Billings (1996) and others have noted as Whites' unwillingness or disapproval of seeing progress among people of color.

Notions of how Whites view Blacks was also referenced in the interviews (Entman & Rojecki, 2000), possibly in view of disparities seen in society (Bowser, 2007; O'Gorman, 2010; Oliver & Shapiro, 1995; Strully, 2009; Thomas & Quinn, 2008). Marques asserted the following:

I think White people still see us as less than equal to a certain degree. They'll never admit it but just because my skin color is darker, they don't see us as equal. And that's just the way it is. They already look down on us and expect us to do wrong anyway. That's just the label we have.

Marques further touched on notions of Whiteness, more specifically on the concept of Whiteness as the optimal status:

I think we'll continue to get more money and more opportunities from sponsorships and commercial deals and so forth, but we'll still never going to be on the same level as our counterparts—our White counterparts. We can't escape it.

Though still citing race as an issue in the present-day, Watson commented on the changing landscape of sport. He had the following to say:

Now that guys look at each other they see someone who looks like them, you don't really know how it plays a role. Now when we were more of the minority in sports, you saw change, you saw movement, you saw guys working outside of themselves. Now that it's all one melting pot, everyone's playing together; it's just athletes now until you do something wrong. Then it becomes racial.

Watson's comments refer back to earlier times when Black male athletes such as Bill Russell, Jim Brown, and others were the minority in their respective sports. He also alluded to how the Black male athletes of that era worked together to witness change as it related to race relations (Edwards, 1970). In light of the struggle of these past

individuals, Watson felt as if notions of race and racism do not come into play until a Black male athlete commits a transgression. Watson elaborated on this view below:

If you [Black male athlete] did something bad, the Black community is going to feel one way about it and the White community is going to feel totally different about it; but if you're on the playing field, you're just a regular athlete at the time.

The scene described by Watson is familiar in the sport landscape as Black male athletes such as O.J. Simpson, Michael Vick, and others who have been adored by many until they commit a transgression. Some may remember how the nation was divided during the Simpson trial. Snapshots and videos of Blacks on one side and Whites on the other may come to mind. The same scene materialized after Michael Vick was accused and later indicted on dog fighting charges. While many Black fans supported Vick, many Whites showed disdain for him. For instance, during the Michael Vick saga, ESPN writer, Howard Bryant noted comments made by White fans. Below is an excerpt from his article:

Just maybe people will stop crying 'race' and understand right and wrong for a change -- when the ref fixed games the white people didn't say 'please understand where he came from or it's the culture.' It was wrong, black or white! I'm so sick that African-Americans can't separate right and wrong -- blame the white man or use their 'culture' as excuse -- like having babies and leaving (70%), not wanting to do well in school for that's 'being white,' not wanting to speak proper English, just wanting to be known for being dancers and athletes, and for calling women

'bad' names and using such foul language in their common talk. We're not animals and people know right from wrong (Bryant, 2007).

The same situation alluded to by Watson may have recently occurred during the summer of 2010 when LeBron James decided to take his talents elsewhere and play for the Miami Heat. Again, here you have a Black male athlete who is revered by many fans. Though not criminal in this instance, LeBron received ample criticism for his decision to play for the Miami Heat. In light of the criticism, LeBron spoke out and stated that some of the backlash he received was racially motivated. A number of the participants mentioned LeBron when speaking on race and racism. When asked how race has impacted the Black male athlete, Mo was quick to refer to the LeBron James situation:

It's impacted them a lot because I mean, I hate to take the easy way out, but look at the LeBron thing. The guy was great and decided he wanted to go play somewhere else. The guy busted his butt for seven years and decided, you know what, I'm going to do something else for a change. And you can't tell me that some of that backlash he got was not because he's a 25 year old gazillionaire and he's smart enough to work the system as opposed to not letting the system work him. Some of the backlash he got was ridiculous.

Another participant, MM, brought it up but was unclear about the whole situation. Even with minimal knowledge about the ordeal, he had the following to say about race:

Just as an African American, there's always some kind of issues along that line. Just the way people deal with you in general sometimes. You know what I'm

saying? I don't know how to express that. I think it plays a lot in everything we do; I honestly do.

Marques, as you may remember I noted as very outspoken on issues of race, had the following to say:

Sure racism came out in the whole LeBron thing. And I'm sure a lot of owners felt that way, but at the same time, they don't have a problem trading guys. And they don't expect players to react? But LeBron chose to go somewhere else and the owner reacted. I think his true colors came out.

The mentioning of owners was mainly directed towards Cleveland Cavaliers owner, Dan Gilbert. In a letter to Cavaliers fans, Gilbert referred to LeBron's decision as "cowardly betrayal", while also saying LeBron quit during the playoffs (ESPN, 2010). Such sentiments, on the part of Gilbert, caused Reverend Jesse Jackson to respond by saying the comments by Gilbert were racially motivated. He had the following to say:

He speaks as an owner of LeBron and not the owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers. His feelings of betrayal personify a slave master mentality. He sees LeBron as a runaway slave. This is an owner employee relationship -- between business partners -- and LeBron honored his contract (ESPN, 2010).

Though Gilbert vehemently opposed the conjectures of Reverend Jackson, Marques corroborated Jackson's statement:

Like the situation with Dan Gilbert, I think it was right for his comments to be exposed as racist comments and a racist action. It's pretty much true that most

owners look at all things that way and most athletes, especially Black male athletes, are looked upon as high paid slaves. It's not said, but that's the way it is. Similar to the assertion made by William Rhoden (Rhoden, 2006) and the participants in Singer's (2009) study, Marques equated Black male athletes to slave labor. What is interesting about his comment is that he had not heard of Rhoden's text, *40 Million Dollar Slave*. After he made this comment, we went on to converse about the text in which he informed me he had not heard of it but would be buying it in the near future.

Thus, while it is true that society has progressively moved forward over the decades, there is still progress to be made, as illustrated by the participants' comments. The comments below by Mo illustrate the work that is still necessary for society to keep pressing forward with reform as it pertains to issues of race and racism:

You know when this whole sports thing started, segregation, the Negro Leagues and all that, you can go back to Jack Johnson and how we was dealt with all the way up until now. We started off in a bad place; I'm not going to say we're in a great place, but we're in a good place to where we can live like just about anyone else now. But there's still a long way to go; still a long way to go.

MM contributed a similar opinion:

There's going to be racism no matter what you do. Whether it's intentionally, unintentionally or however you look at it. I think it does play a factor in everyday life to some point.

MM then suggested how Black male athletes should deal with issues of race and racism, while also forecasting the future.

Even if there are some racial barriers, that you have to cross over, okay, then so be it. There are other issues that people have to deal with as well. I just think we're in a much better place. These Black male athletes are coming into various leagues. They're very fortunate and I think they do understand that. I just think the sky's the limit.

Marques also commented on how Black male athletes should move on in the future:

Now there's a quote that says, "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it." And that's just the way we've got to look at it. We just got to change the way we think about it and stop dwelling on it. The White man this, the White man that; society this, society that. We just got to be more unified and say forget about that and let's do things the best way we can do them and use our money the best way we can and get away from the negativity because it's all negativity and we can't escape who we are.

Role models

Based on how Black male athletes are perceived, the third theme concerned the concept of Black male athletes as role models. This especially concerned Black youth as they are immensely shaped by Black sports heroes (Sailes, 1986). Below, Marques commenced the discussion by differentiating between Black male athletes and Black males, while also verbalizing a reality that many Black male athletes may not realize:

We are looked upon differently than the average Black male because we can run faster, we can shoot the ball better, we can go out and throw a football better than the average Black man. So we're held to a higher regard than the average Black

person. We are Black no matter how much better we are than everybody else.

But again, I do think that Black male athletes are held at a higher regard just because they are athletes and because of what they bring to the so-called powers that be as far as finances are concerned.

Because they are held at a higher regard, Coach Cecil commented on the multiple eyes watching the every step of these athletes:

You're on top of the world. And when I say on top of the world, a lot of people view you different because you're on TV, you play basketball, you're doing something that kids would love to do or not only kids, but what adults would love to do.

Marques then went on to voice his opinion on whether or not this characterization is fair:

Black male athletes are in the spotlight; they're held at a higher regard. I mean, our Black kids look up to them and treat them as if they are elite. And they are elite. But they're looked upon as if they are better than everyone else. And is it fair? No, not really. It's not fair but as a man, you've got to think about it, think about who you're affecting, what lives you're affecting, how many lives you're affecting, especially the ones who look like you, day in, day out.

As witnessed above, the participants in this study felt it was significant that Black male athletes portray themselves in a positive light, keeping in mind the influence they have on the values of Black youth. Illustrated below, Coach Cecil describes an instance which typifies the influence Black male athletes can have on society:

And it's amazing the way they look up to us. They might listen to things we say more than they listen to their parents. So I think we do have a responsibility of what we do and how we say it. You look around the world today, and I don't know who started the thing of wearing your pants below their tail, but you see kids catch on to that, especially the Black kids. I was riding down the street the other day and me and my personal assistant—I don't like to call him a personal assistant—but my business partner who is with me and he said, "look at that." And I look over there and it's a kid with his pants down almost down to basically his thigh. A lot of times these kids see that athletes and the Black male athletes wearing their pants like that. They're going to think it's right to wear their pants like that as well.

In addition, Coach Cecil also made note of other negative instances which could have a negative impact on Black youth:

It could affect a lot of things in our BMA getting arrested, especially if they let them off. I think that's a bad way of showing things to the community and to young kids. They look at us, we got money, and that means if we can break the law or do something, which means we got power, especially when you can get away with it. But I think it hurts a lot of our youth because they do see us getting arrested or they do see this on TV as a TI who just got out of jail and now he's right back going to jail. [They] could influence the youth in the Black neighborhoods and things like that so they can stay out of trouble because all

they have to do is say they drinking some Crystal [liquor] and then everyone else start picking up Crystal when they go to the clubs. It's a trend; it really is.

Mo then gave his opinion on Black male athletes as role models by stating that “it comes with the territory” and quoting Holy Scripture:

It's one of those things, “to who much is given, much is required,” you know.

And a lot of them aren't necessarily comfortable with being role models but if you're blessed to be in the position they're in, there's certain sacrifices you have to make. And you got to carry yourself a certain way, you know. Sure they're adults, and we're humans, we all make mistakes but I feel there are certain things you just shouldn't be involved in.

Here, as well, Mo referenced athletes committing transgressions (see also Wilson, Stavros, & Westberg, 2008) and how this is a way not to carry oneself. He followed this up with suggesting what Black male athletes can do to positively affect Black communities:

They can show kids that you don't have to be content with your current circumstances and that there is a way out. If you work hard and you do what you're supposed to do, and you actually go to school and get an education, there's more than just what you see down the corner and the block. There's more than that and you know, there's more in life than the newest pair of Jordans that come out. There's more to life than that. Half the time, you see kids who come from impoverished backgrounds or whatever you want to call it, half the time, the reason they never make it out is because nobody else has shown them any

other way, that you can be better if you strive to be better. Nobody has ever showed them, “hey there is something different out there.” So it’s like, if you don’t know any better, you’re not going to do any better. And if you’re one of those guys made out of that background then shame on you for not coming back and showing kids that you can do better. And I’m not just saying making commercials, you know, and marketing your shoes. You need to go back to those communities and those types of schools and set up programs to where it’s like, you know what, if you follow these steps [pause]. Like give these kids a blueprint or some kind of guideline or plan saying if I follow this certain criteria, I can better my situation and the generations coming behind me and they keep passing it forward.

The participants also felt it was especially important to be role models for Black youth given that many of them may have parent(s) absent from the home, working multiple jobs. Watson spoke of this scenario and how Black male athletes must be knowledgeable of the influence they could potentially have on Black youth:

It should be parents, but a lot of times, parents are having to work two, three jobs just to put food on the table. They might not be there. He’s [child] seeing how LeBron James holds himself so he might want to be a basketball player but at the same time those figures, entertainers, athletes, all of them, have to hold themselves accountable knowing that people are watching them, knowing that kids are watching them. So you’re not going to raise the children but you can be a role model for them without even knowing them.

As a current athlete, Pierre provided further commentary on being a role model:

A lot of people are looking at you, especially media or other guys are looking at you like you're someone. They know that you play in the NBA and when you play in the NBA, you got to show the people a good image of the NBA, even if you go into a mall. So you can't do stupid stuff. Some stuff may have happened in the past, but you got to be careful what you're doing and show the people respect for the game and respect for other people.

When speaking of role models, the participants cited Charles Barkley's Nike commercial during the 1990s when he expressed his views on role models. As Watson stated, "It goes back to something Charles Barkley said a couple of decades ago. He was like, I'm not a role model." Participants did not disagree with Barkley when he stated that parents should be role models; however, they did disagree with him concerning Barkley stating he was not a role model and implying other Black male athletes were not either. When asked whether he thought it was fair for Black male athletes to be looked upon as role models, MM expressed the following:

Personally, I do think it's fair because they're in the public eye. It's part of their job. I may not like it all of the time, but in a way, I do think it's fair more times than not just because of what they do.

He then went on to articulate his thoughts on Charles Barkley's commercial:

Well, I agree that parents should be role models, but I disagree with Charles that he's not a role model because as an adult, we're all role models whether it's negative or positive. So I would disagree with him in that sense. Again, you're in

the public eye and when you're in the public eye, people want to emulate you for whatever reason. A lot of it is what a lot of people perceive athletes to be about, money and the fame. So I think you are a role model whether you want to be or not.

The role of the NBA

Another noteworthy theme that emerged was the role of the NBA when it comes to Black male athlete social responsibility. Through this theme, participants touched on their perceptions on what the NBA currently does and what possibly may need to be done in the future regarding social responsibility. For instance, below, MM commented on how the NBA has done a good job at communicating to athletes that they must conduct themselves in a socially responsible manner:

I think that's what a lot of the leagues are trying to teach these guys that you have to carry yourself in a certain conduct. And I think we've come a long way. I think we're getting better in those areas. I don't know exactly what they do, but I have to believe that there is something in place to try and educate these athletes who come into the league and how to conduct themselves on how to behave.

Though MM was unable to give exact details on what the NBA does, it is likely he was thinking of the orientation week that incoming rookies must attend. During this orientation week, players go to sessions based in professional and life skill development, player development, personal development and education, media and community relations, legal education, and special sessions on any given topic related to their transition to the NBA (Lee, 2010). Other participants were able to go more in-depth as to

what this camp and others do. Coach Cecil, who used to play in the league, communicated that the NBA has done a good job at “bringing people in to bring awareness about drugs, relationships, and finances.” He then added the following:

The NBA has done a great job in training these guys and keeping it in their heads of what to look for, how to budget your money, or how to act, or how to do interviews. So it’s been huge because the NBA gives our guys exposure to show people this is how the players are.

Watson expanded on what Coach Cecil had to say, mentioning the NBA rookie camps:

Like when NBA rookies come in, they have the rookie transition program, and it’s not just transitioning to life on the road and playing 82 games or anything like that, they bring in serious players who were drafted top 5 in the NBA draft and then squandered all their money and were out of the league 2 years later.

They bring those players in to come and talk to the rookies and say this could be you. Just because you’re #1 pick today doesn’t mean that you’ll be in the league tomorrow or that you’ll even have the money that you thought you would have when you signed your contract. So leagues are starting to help athletes because athletes are not going to get it. They’re going to say, “aw man, dude was driving a Range Rover; I want to get one too, but I want to put my name on the side; I want to get those 25 inch rims because he had the 22’s.”

A recent example of what Watson referred to as squandering money took place with two prominent Black male athletes. Both Derrick Coleman and Antoine Walker, after playing years in the NBA, filed for bankruptcy (Kerby, 2010). Earning over \$87 million

during his playing career, Coleman was recently reported to merely having \$1 million in assets. For this reason, and many more, Watson continued on with his describing of the camp.

That's what they're seeing so they're squandering their money so now leagues are saying, "Ok we got to do something here. So they have the rookie transition but at the same time, they're going to start bringing veterans back in and going over the same stuff they're teaching the rookies because people just don't get it, athletes just don't get it at times.

Life after basketball is also something of significance to Black male athletes. It is important these individuals realize that there will be a time where they will no longer be able to perform. To that end, Watson communicated the NBA's role in preparing the athletes for life after basketball. Playing an integral part of this is athlete investing.

Watson noted the camp also touches on how athletes should invest:

They include investing. They include saving your per diem money, stuff that you wouldn't just think about. Just because the money's there, you don't spend it. When you're coming into the league, you're not thinking about that. You're thinking, "oh man, I got to get onto playing; I got to get on the court; I got to drop 20; I got Kobe coming in town tonight, I can't let him embarrass me. At the same time, we're going on the road. "Man that new Rollie looks nice. Let me get that watch," you know. You're not thinking I got to spread my money out. "How's my 401k looking? What if I break my leg?" The last couple years on that contract's not guaranteed. You're not thinking like that so they actually sit them

down and say, “hey, make sure you’re saving your money, don’t spend all your per diem. Make sure you’re not gambling, not going to the strip club; make sure you’re not going to the casinos.” They actually sit them down and teach them that stuff. At the same time they give them some type of financial resume. It’s really cool.

In combination with the participants’ comments, document analysis also supplied information about programs such as *NBA Cares* and *Basketball Without Borders*.

However, participants also expressed that not enough is being done. Marques’ comments below demonstrate this ideal:

You know, they do the rookie thing. That’s a week or two before training camp starts. Then, I think, representatives from each league, I know in the NBA, they may come in every once or twice a year and meet with these guys. Is it enough? Well, obviously not. I think there needs to be an ongoing program developed. Something that’s just not a once or twice a year thing but something that these guys are required to go through and I think they need to see people who look like them. It would be nice if former athletes were able to sit down with these guys, and I know it would take a lot, a lot of resources, a lot of travel and time and this and that, but if former athletes were allowed to spend time with these guys maybe every two months, especially rookies. And sit down with them and talk to them and let them know how to go about things, how to manage their money, how to manage people, how to be aware of certain things, and how to carry themselves.

Marques referred to Black male athletes being able to sit down with other Black male athletes who played in the NBA. This includes both successful cases and unsuccessful cases. For instance, in light of his filing for bankruptcy, participants felt Derrick Coleman could be employed by the NBA to give talks at these camps. Watson continued below:

Both the athletes who have been successful and former athletes who have been not so successful. I think they all need to be a part of this because they can really help these guys see. Even in most recent is Scottie Pippen. He had some financial issues come up. There are a lot of guys that have gone through stuff financially and lost millions. Antoine Walker is trying to speak up a little bit now. These are ways that these leagues can help the former athletes and these former athletes can help the current athletes.

Marques also felt that the NBA should implement the use of counselors for athletes to talk to. He felt Black people tend to shy away from talking to such figures because it makes one seem weak. He especially felt this was true for Black men. His voice rose considerably when touching on this notion, leading me to believe he feels passionate that this must be done:

I think a lot of us, and not just athletes, but a lot of us need to sit down with counselors. We've all got something going on in our lives, we've all come from something, and we've all been through something. And we as Black males are quick to shun going to speak with a counselor because it's not looked upon as

being strong or manly, but it's needed by a lot of us. And we can't be afraid to do it so I think it should be implemented. I mean, it's nothing wrong with it.

Watson then added the following concerning finances and how the NBA needs to have an ongoing process with athletes, while also incorporating veterans in their camps for rookies, as mentioned by Marques:

They could do a better job. I think they do a good job of teaching it to the rookies but the rookies are young they're not necessarily going to listen. You've got to go back to the veterans. Once you've been in the league 3 or 4 years, talk to those guys. Every 5 years I think you should have to go through it. Or if you've been in the league for 10 years, ok let's have a veteran seminar and say ok you might only be in the league 2-5 more years so how's your investment set-up to do things outside of that? Do you have businesses going already? Do you plan on being a broadcaster? What is your post-playing days going to be like? Are you still going to be bringing money in? And I think that's what they need to be taken into. The rookie transitions great but I think it's going to take a while for those rookies to actually listen to what you're saying, they're probably falling asleep on you. The veterans know how they spent their money, they know how poorly it was [managed] and they know how they have to make up for the first 3 or 4 years they were in the league and weren't wise with their money. Go back over it with them now. You actually saw, not a Black athlete, but New York Knick forward, Gulinari, the Italian, he actually went to the rookie seminar this year cause he missed it last year. But after going through a year, he actually

understood what they were saying where the other rookies were falling asleep.

Stuff like that, he's sitting there saying, "Yeah, you know what, I could've saved my money that first year." So I think if they had a refresher course it'd be good.

Of note here was that Watson mentioned that athletes may not be listening to what is being said at rookie camps. This could be more reason for former athletes to be incorporated into the camps and not solely base them off of talks with executives and media personnel. Below, Mo communicated the big adjustment that must be made by numerous Black male athletes and the need for other means for getting through to the athletes:

And people are like, "you give these guys money and they don't know how to act". Well of course they don't know how to act when the biggest piece of money they've ever seen in their life was a hundred dollar bill and then you know, you hand them a piece of paper that has 2, 3 commas on it, I don't care what type of background you come from, you're going to act a little bit differently. That's what it comes down to. I mean, the first time I see a paycheck with a comma in it, I might lose my mind for a couple of minutes. You know, forget all those rookie seminars and all that. Find a veteran on your team to show the guy the ropes, to get him through his first year or two when his head's spinning you know. When he's looking at pay checks that have more numbers on a piece of paper than he's ever seen in his life. Have somebody on the team, one of his peers that can get him squared away until he realizes the scope of what he's dealing with now because his life now is instantaneously changed.

Mo also verbalized the role of the sport organization the athlete plays for, while also likening the rookie camps to college classes. Though he was smirking as he gave the following comment, there is certainly truth to what he is saying. The manner in which he spoke of rookie camps illustrated little respect for what transpires during those camps.

He stated the following:

I feel as an organization you should have somebody; have a mentor there.

Somebody that plays the same position he does or somebody who might be from the same area he is, somebody that can take him under their wing and tell them, this is how you manage your money, this is how you conduct yourself, this is how you do this, that and the other. This is what needs to be happening. Forget the rookie seminars because you got all these same guys who are 19, 20, 21 years old. They're all sitting in the room together; it's like going to another college class and you got a boring professor in there. You know, eventually it's like you're going to tune the guy out, and you're going to do what you want to do to pass time until it's time to get out of there.

Marques also commented on the role of the organization and how enough is not being done to place Black male athletes in Black communities:

But I don't think enough is being done by the organization's themselves to get these guys into these less fortunate communities. And I know a lot of it has to do with time, and the league mandates they do a certain amount of appearances and this and that but I think more can be done to get these guys out into Black communities and Black schools and allow these kids to see them. I think more

should be done in that regard because I hear so many complaints from the community. People asking, “How come so-and-so doesn’t come over here? How come they don’t do camps over here? How come they don’t do clinics over here?” And my response is, I’m only one man, and I can mention it, but I can’t always say what I want to say either.

Finally, participants also touched on the enforcement of conduct policy rules as a means of facilitating social responsibility. Watson referred to a recent incident involving Gilbert Arenas in which he brought a firearm into the locker room.

I think the NBA does a better job than the other leagues. If you look at the Gilbert Arenas situation, bringing guns in the locker room, and no one got hurt, everyone had the proper documentation for their firearms, but immediately David Stern was like “ok you’re done for the rest of the season. You’re done. And if you come back the team could cut you they could go after whatever money they owe you in the contract, but you’re done for the season.” I think the NBA does that better than the NFL because if you look at the NFL’s conduct rule if you do something, you miss four games and you’re back. You lost four days of Sunday paychecks and that was it and you’re back. I’ll lead this team to the playoffs, might even win the Super Bowl, never know.

Marques called for action regarding conduct issues as well:

So now, it’s to the point where these leagues, the NFL, the NBA, baseball, whatever, they have to make a statement and say, “hey look, we’re not tolerating it anymore”. And I can’t blame these leagues. At some point you have to do more

than slap them on the wrist because all their lives, they've been slapped on the wrist. So when you hit them in the pocket, and take something away from them that they love (i.e. money or the game), that's when they start to wake up, some of them anyway.

Black male athletes as businesses

In Chapter I, I mentioned my rationale for equating the Black male athlete to a business. The participants all viewed current Black male athletes as businesses in their own right. I noted in my field notes the nonverbal responses I received upon asking this question. The glare I received shouted, "What else do you expect?" As MM stated, "I do think it's the same. Take LeBron, for example. He's his own brand." The selections below further illustrate this ideal. For instance, I made it a point to gather the participants' thoughts on Jay Z's line, "I'm not a businessman, I'm a business, man." Coach Cecil made the connection between Jay Z and Black male athletes in this era:

Yeah, I mean because you have to [see Black male athletes as businesses]. When I hear that verse, "I'm not a businessman, I'm a business, man." Jay Z could be talking about as the things he has done with Roc-a-fella or the clothing line, and things like that. Or you know, the business of going into concerts. That's a business move. He has to perform. That's his business. That's what gets him paid.

Currently an assistant coach, Coach Cecil was a former player in the NBA. He spoke on how as a player, he was a business.

I guess you can say that I'm a business when you look at it because it's so much business that you don't realize you're doing it because your time is so precious.

Especially as an athlete, you have a lot of business things going on that a regular guy may not think is business. And an athlete may not think it's business, but it is business. You are providing opportunities and dollars as you play this game.

Current athletes, such as Dietrick, were able to bolster statements made by Coach Cecil.

Dietrick elaborated upon what Coach Cecil had to say above:

Yes, definitely [I am a business]. I think you have to look at yourself that way.

You're being paid very well; you have business ventures; you have investments, stocks, bonds, whatever. Then you're in the public eye. You're part of a billion dollar industry, so you're definitely a business yourself. You represent yourself well. Staying out of trouble is good for your business. Stuff like that.

The latter part of this statement grabbed my attention. The fact that Dietrick's pointed out that they are in the public eye made me think of your ordinary, day-to-day business. Just like businesses, these athletes must be on their best behavior and represent themselves well, just as Dietrick confirmed. In the case they are not, just like businesses, their economic potential may suffer due to negative publicity (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, & Unnava, 2000; Monga & John, 2008; Pullig, Netemeyer, & Biswas, 2006; Weinberger, Allen, & Dillon, 1981).

Other athletes communicated their agreement with Dietrick and Coach Cecil on the Black male athlete as a business. Below, LeMichael noted how he also looks at himself as a business entity.

No question. Everybody at a professional level not only in professional sports, but once you graduate from college, if you do that, you become a business personality. Like myself, I am a role model, for one, so you've got to approach every day as if you are a business. For example, out there meeting and greeting the fans. The fans are the ones who pay your salary. Yeah, the owner cuts the check, but the fans are the ones who are putting forth their hard-earned dollars to come and watch you perform. If you treat it like that, that's why I say you're a business.

What was interesting about the above dialogue is that it took place while LeMichael was signing autographs after a morning practice session. Fans formed a line and waited to receive his autograph. As one of his stakeholders, he is describing one of his goods and services. These are goods and services that are also in demand, as illustrated by the long line that was formed. This demand reaffirms equating the Black male athlete to a business based on the definition given by Thompson and Strickland (2003) in which they stated a business is not a business until there is demand for goods and services.

Based on the comments above, one could argue the experiences of these Black male athletes are no different than any athlete. With this in mind, Mo, the ESPN affiliate reporter, confirmed Black male athletes as businesses and made a key distinction between them and other athletes. I found these comments rather pointed.

Of course they're a business entity. That's such a multi-level question because yes, they're business entities, and if they didn't exist, all these sport leagues, collegiate sports, all the millions, the billions of dollars they're raking in now,

they'd be raking in a fraction of that if it wasn't for the Black male athlete. I mean, it's cut and dry; it's not even a debate anymore.

Mo's comments touch on the relevance and importance of the Black male athlete in the current era of big-time sports as discussed by Rhoden (2006). Black male athletes in this era have not only been utilized as a catalyst to grow sports such as basketball and football, but have also been seen in movies, television, and acquired sponsorships.

Participants also named certain Black male athletes who embody or symbolize the rationale for equating Black male athletes to businesses. Marques gave an account on how he sees Black male athletes as businesses despite many Black male athletes not seeing themselves in that fashion. Marques added the following commentary when asked about the Black male athlete as a business entity:

Certainly, especially the elite athletes; they are a business. They're quick to say this is a business but they don't look at themselves as a business, a corporation. LeBron is a corporation. D. Wade is a corporation. Kobe is a corporation. You know, I could go down the list. I mean, Jordan is a corporation and he's got it figured out. Magic's got it figured out. And I think LeBron is fairly smart when it comes to money. Now again, I don't like the whole "Decision" thing but anyone who's intelligent enough to partner or befriends Warren Buffet is pretty smart. So he's got it figured out.

Watson also alluded to the relationship between LeBron and Warren Buffet, as well as Jay Z, and further distinguishes how Black male athletes are different:

You don't see a lot of the White athletes necessarily getting a lot of the headlines like Black athletes, the Kobe's, the LeBron's, stuff like that. So I think the Black athletes are starting to realize that while they can still be hip hop, they can also be corporate. You're starting to see LeBron kicking it with Warren Buffet, stuff like that, you know. He's best friends with Jay Z. Jay Z just made the Forbes 400, so I think they're definitely looking at it as business.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to garner perceptions of Black male athlete social responsibility (BMASR) from an NBA franchise, with the ultimate goal of moving toward a framework for better understanding this concept. The themes delineated—defining BMASR, race and racism, role models, the role of the NBA, and Black male athletes as businesses—illustrate participants’ thoughts on this timely topic. Although tentative, the findings from this study offer some preliminary insight into a subject matter that has received little attention from scholars. Below, I discuss the themes in relation to the three original research questions. In doing so, I offer some theoretical and practical implications. I then conclude with limitations and future research directions.

The initial research question of this case study asked how race had impacted the Black male athlete as a business entity. The first objective was to determine whether participants conceived of Black male athletes as businesses in their own right. Based on the earlier mentioned definition of a business, the participants’ accounts of Black male athletes as businesses reinforce the rationale of equating these individuals to businesses in their own right. Black male athletes are not only courted by sport organizations but other stakeholders as well. This demand is consistent with Thompson and Strickland’s (2003) definition of a business. Furthermore, the narratives of the participants pertaining to equating Black male athletes to businesses certainly provide a starting point for gaining a better understanding of BMASR. Athletes and non-athletes conceived of the Black male athlete in this manner, adding further credence to this rationale. Also, in line

with the goals of CRT, the participants' narratives also counter possible naysayers who may be hesitant to make this characterization.

Also rooted in the first research question, participants felt as if issues of race and racism continue to play a role in the American context, corroborating the first tenet of CRT and Cornel West's (1993) contention that race matters. While it is true that Black male athletes in this era are not subjected to the horrific treatment their predecessors experienced years ago, the comments in Chapter IV supply credibility for the three tenets of CRT mentioned in Chapter I. Thus, it is fair to say that despite the election of the nation's first Black President, racist tendencies have not, or will not, come to end in the minds of these research participants. In this regard, the sentiments of emanating from this case study challenge those made by D'Souza (1995) who wrote the text, *The End of Racism*.

The primary tenet of CRT is that racism is normal and natural in American society. In addition, CRT scholars state that racist overtones are reproduced and transmitted inter-generationally. In light of the election of President Barack Obama, and social gains by Blacks and other people of color, some may argue that issues of race and racism no longer exist. However, the narratives provided by the participants illuminate on the nation's continued struggles with issues of race and racism. A recent survey done by ESPN and Hart Research Association also illustrated this ideal, as Blacks felt prejudice and discrimination continues to permeate sport (Fainaru-Wada, 2011). Study participants in Agyemang et al. (2010), Lawrence (2005), and Singer (2005a) all had similar experiences with issues of race and racism.

Furthermore, there was also evidence to lend support to CRT's second tenet of Whiteness being the optimal status of American society. Marques' observation pertaining to how Whites conceive of Blacks provided credence of this notion. Furthermore, Mo rehashed an experience with a White male in the sport industry who negatively spoke of Black male athletes as a further testament of this. The comments emanating from this White individual possibly illustrates his discontent with Black male athletes' success. CRT scholars would theorize (e.g., Tate, 1997) this individual may have these sentiments because he fears Whiteness as the optimal status will decrease as Blacks and other people of color begin to realize achievement. If this achievement is able to take place, Blacks may not see Whiteness as the overarching goal as a means of succeeding in the American context, thus being a threat to Whiteness ideals.

The participants' take on race and racism also point to the third tenet of CRT: experiential knowledge and perspectives of people of color (Tate, 1997). Having lived the experience of Black males in the American context, the perceptions of the participants were certainly valuable in illustrating how they conceive of race. They also served as a counter-narrative to possible inclinations of issues of race and racism no longer being a matter we as Americans should concern ourselves with. The interviews allowed these individuals to not only give their perceptions on race and racism but challenged them to critically reflect on these issues. In doing so, this could potentially lead to action from these subjugated groups.

The final two research questions pertained to Black male athletes and their stakeholders viewed social responsibility. From these two research questions came a

definition of BMASR. To reiterate, this was defined as the following: *the social responsibility of a Black male athlete encompassing a) responsibility to self, including economic, legal, and ethical, b) responsibility to Black communities, including Black male athletes who came before them and to those who will come after them, and c) carrying out genuine discretionary activities.*

As witnessed by the definition, Black male athletes have a responsibility to self before they can have a responsibility to any other stakeholder. Participants spoke of this in terms of keeping good company around them and exercising “damage control” when situations arise that may require this act. This particularly pertained to legal and ethical wrongdoing. I found it interesting that there was little mention of any direct responsibility to sport organizations, sponsors, and other stakeholders with whom these athletes may encompass contracts. The closest reference to this notion came from Watson, when he commented on how athletes have a responsibility to show up with smiling faces.

Nevertheless, the lack of commentary related to the responsibility to other stakeholders (besides the Black community) is not to say the participants felt Black male athletes should not be responsible to the sport organization and other stakeholders. In this case, it could be argued by fulfilling a responsibility to self, including economic, legal, and ethical, they are illustrating a responsibility to their stakeholders. For instance, economic, legal and ethical mishaps could have a great impact on an athlete. Such was witnessed as Tiger Woods, Michael Vick, and other known athletes who lost sponsorships after committing illegal and/or unethical acts (ESPN News, 2009; Naqi,

2007). The fact that these individuals could potentially lose sponsorships because of their transgressions (Wilson, Stavros, & Westberg, 2008) reveals that by exemplifying a responsibility to self, the athlete is also demonstrating a responsibility to stakeholders.

It is also worth pointing out how the participants viewed certain aspects of social responsibility. Firstly, there was divergence in how the participants saw economic responsibility in relation to Carroll's CSR framework. While Carroll (1979, 1999) mentioned economic responsibility more in terms of producing goods and services and to sell that at a profit, participants defined economic more in terms of not being wasteful with money so that they are able to provide for their families. However, the participants' views on legal and ethical responsibilities were very similar to how Carroll defined them.

The second component of the BMASR definition pertained to Black male athletes responsibility to Black communities. Participants felt that Black male athletes owe a responsibility to Black male athletes who paved the way for them as well as to Black male athletes who will come after them. I found these comments especially interesting in view of past negative judgments (see Chapter II) concerning current Black male athletes (Leonard, 1998; Powell, 2008; Rhoden, 2006; Roach, 2002). Participants acknowledged that current Black male athletes must act responsibility as a "thank you" to those who paved the way for them. This was in addition to how current Black male athletes should lead the way for future Black male athletes to build off of their success.

Participants also thought Black male athletes should be involved in Black communities as a means to help build them up. Authors such as Powell (2008), Rhoden

(2006), and others have stated in the past that Black male athletes have not lived up to their duty to serving these populations. While the participants did not necessarily agree nor disagree with these sentiments, their comments certainly illustrate a need for Black male athletes to be involved with Black communities. Along these same lines, the participants also touched on the need for these individuals to be more involved in light of realities in Black communities. The participants were quick to point out single-parent homes, school dropouts, and other factors. Given the love and adoration Black communities have for Black male athletes (Sailes, 1986), these athletes have the potential to have a large impact.

Interestingly, a survey recently conducted by ESPN and Hart Research Association touched on Black male athletes' social responsibility to Black communities. Surveying 100 Black professional athletes, 81 percent of the participants advocated Black male athletes take more of an active role in the Black community (Fainaru-Wada, 2011). One of the participants in this survey stated the following:

You need more black athletes doing more positive things. A lot of people in the ghetto, in poor neighborhoods like where I grew up, don't believe there's life outside of the city, outside what they know. We need to be in there showing them, telling them, that there is (Fainaru-Wada, 2011).

The statement not only reaffirms what was stated in this study but also illustrates the need for Black male athletes to get more involved.

Related to the point above, and also a noteworthy component of the BMASR definition, participants revealed Black male athletes should demonstrate discretionary

responsibility. Participants asserted discretionary activities must be something the athlete has a passion for and be heartfelt. These activities could very well be initiatives in the Black community. For instance, one participant mentioned how he helped out his former school that had a predominately Black population. From a CSR perspective, the way participants regarded discretionary responsibility was fairly similar to the manner in which Carroll defined it: roles left to the judgment and choice of the business. However, while Carroll stated society has no specific message as to what discretionary activity requires, from the sentiments of the participants, it was almost as if they demanded that Black male athletes carry out discretionary initiatives. This was certainly the case as it pertained to activity related to the Black community. Based on the participants' comments, an example of discretionary activity could be hosting basketball clinics in poverty-stricken neighborhoods. Educational initiatives could also take place such as offering scholarships and facilitating big brother and big sister programs.

Also in relation to the final two research questions were the participants' thoughts on Black male athletes as role models. Echoing the opinions expressed by the participants in the study conducted by Agyemang et al. (2010), the participants felt that given their role in society, Black male athletes should be role models. In doing so, the sentiments of the participants corroborate a study done by Melnick and Jackson (2002), who found that the influence of sports icons "extended well beyond simple admiration for some respondents to include impacts on beliefs, values, self-appraisals, and behaviors" (p. 429). Likewise, Williams (1994) found that Michael Jordan was deemed the most likely celebrity to influence adolescent values. The participants' responses also

support Sailes (1986) contention that Black youth are immensely shaped by Black male athletes. For this reason, Sharp (2009, p. 1) added, prominent Black male athletes “remain the most accessible examples of deliverance from childhood economic hardships because they'll remain the most familiar.” Given this role and influences these athletes encompass, the comments emanating from this theme also touched on how these athletes should conduct themselves in society.

Lastly, the responses of the participants suggested the NBA plays a crucial role in assisting with social responsibility. From the above narratives, it is apparent that this particular stakeholder has a steady program in place for their athletes. This was mostly in reference to transition camps for incoming rookies. However, there was also cause for concern as the participants suggested the NBA formulate further programs and initiatives for not only incoming rookies but veterans as well. These comments offer genuine insight and should not be ignored. Such comments could possibly lead to a revisiting of how the camps are managed, implying the use of strategic management principles (Brietbarth & Harris, 2008; Schendel & Hofer, 1979). The time period and context for this to transpire is especially important given recent incidents not only in the NBA but other professional leagues as well. For instance, in Chapter IV, Watson mentioned an incident that took place last year involving former Washington Wizards guard, Gilbert Arenas, bringing a handgun to the arena. Crafting programs to address issues such as this and others would certainly behoove professional organizations such as the NBA.

Major contributions

At the outset of this study, I stated how this study had the intention of building towards a framework for BMASR. While it is not my intent to diminish the works of previous authors who have spoken directly or indirectly on BMASR (e.g. Powell, 2008; Rhoden, 2006), I believe this study is a first step in directly articulating what BMASR entails. As stated before, previous literature touched mainly on activism among Black male athletes, thus, limiting the scope of characterizing this concept. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say this merely represents the beginning of how this term will be conceptualized in the future. However, in the event that future studies are carried out, this study provides a clearer description of this concept. As Carroll (1999) noted, it took decades for scholars to conceptualize the CSR framework. Decades of debate have led to the CSR framework being incorporated as a business strategy by numerous corporations. Ultimately, it is my hope that this can potentially lead to a framework utilized as a strategy mechanism by Black male athletes and their managers and taken into account by professional leagues and a host of other stakeholders (i.e. primary and secondary).

Also worth noting is the participants' comments concerning race and racism and the continued struggles the USA has with issues of race and racism certainly add to the extant research. However, while the participants were quick to point out this reality, they also felt Blacks in America should not consume themselves with how bad it may be but rather on how to move forward. Participants even suggested Black male athletes be catalyst for moving forward. Thus, not only does this study lend support the tenets of CRT, but it also sheds light on how such injustices can be overcome. Engaging in

BMASR is certainly an avenue of doing so and knowledgeable of these occurrences, Black male athletes could be better prepared to manage their careers.

There are also contributions to the CSR literature. For the most part, participants' characterization of BMASR corroborated the four components of Carroll's framework. There were key divergences, however, as stated in the discussion. These mainly pertained to the manner in which the participants described economic and discretionary responsibilities. For instance, from the literature review, Carroll (1979, 1999) defined economic responsibility as being profitable as a business. Furthermore, discretionary responsibility is a choice instead of a must for corporations. In this case, however, participants felt economic responsibilities pertained to not being wasteful with their money, while discretionary responsibility was a must. These deviations point to other ways to possibly look at CSR in the future. More importantly, the deviations serve as a starting point for how to conceive BMASR.

To a further extent, this study adds to current CSR literature by applying its principles to people rather than businesses or corporations. As human beings, I surmise we all have social responsibilities we must undertake amongst ourselves. In this case, I made the case as it pertains to the Black male athlete and justified why I have chosen to make this connection. Furthermore, because I applied CSR principles to the Black male, this study also contributes to the CSR literature in that it employs race-based epistemology (Scheurich & Young, 1997; Singer, 2005a) (i.e., CRT). This has not been done in previous research concerning CSR. Consequently, this is something that could possibly be further examined involving people, as I have done, as well as organizations.

Alluding to the previous point, this dissertation also points to CSR and CRT as dovetailing frameworks. One may venture to say, a synergy of sorts. Given CRT's tenet of storytelling, the study was able to provide rich data related to social responsibility of Black male athletes. Soliciting this data from the athletes themselves was of particular importance because of the nature of the topic. Furthermore, both frameworks speak of legal issues, providing further credence to the synergy of the two. Because these two complement each other, it is my opinion they should continue to be used in combination when looking at issues of social responsibility of people of color.

Also worth pointing out is the minimal research done with professional sport organizations regarding how they facilitate social responsibility among their athletes. Consequently, this study provides a foundation for researchers to add to an area in which little research is present. In a broad sense, there is a lack of research with professional athletes and professional sport organization personnel as the participants. To that end, this research adds to the knowledge in this area.

Practical implications

There are many practical implications worthy of discussion. For one, the leagues and sport organizations that employ these athletes should concern themselves more with issues of social responsibility. After all, in reference to the NBA, it was Commissioner David Stern who said the NBA has two missions, one of which is social responsibility (Genzale, 2006). In this case, Stern could have very well been speaking in terms of the league in and of itself and not individual athletes. Still, given Black male athletes may perhaps be the most significant stakeholder in big-time American sport (Agyemang et

al., 2010), leagues and sport organizations employing these athletes should see to it that Black male athletes are socially responsible. Indeed, there are current programs and policies in place such as *NBA Cares*, league specific rookie camps these athletes must attend, dress codes, suspensions for misconduct, and others. Despite this, there is still a need to implement additional methods to assist in athletes becoming more socially responsible as showcased by recent events involving Black male athletes not being socially responsible. Because participants voiced for more attention to be paid to Black communities, perhaps these organizations could initiate activities that would place Black male athletes in these communities.

Furthermore, these organizations, sponsors, and others should not deter Black male athletes from speaking on social causes or view these individuals in a negative light if they choose to do so. For instance, from the data, participants felt Black male athletes should speak up more as it relates to social issues. Although not mentioned in the results, participants felt that Black male athletes shy away from doing such activities in fear of being reprimanded by their sport organization, sponsors, and media, just to name a few. If reprimanded, it poses a potential danger to their financial bottom line. This should not be the case, and instead, these athletes should be encouraged to go beyond showcasing their athletic prowess in competition and utilize their status outside the sphere of athletics for the betterment of society.

It is also worth pointing out practical implications regarding secondary stakeholders' potential effect on the Black male athlete. For instance, take into account the Mo's recollection of a White sports media individual who spoke negatively of the

Black male athlete. While this may have been an isolated incident, it begs the question as to how many other people feel this way. This becomes important because in such positions of power, media personnel and sponsors have a great deal to do with how the Black male athlete is perceived (see Cunningham & Bopp, 2010).

As a way to control how they are perceived, Black male athletes should be mindful of the company they keep around them and to also hire capable managers to advise them. For instance, scholars have stated retaining competent managers is a resource in its own right, and when in possession of these individuals, it paves the way for businesses to acquire a competitive advantage (Castanias & Heflat, 2001; Hayes, & Schaefer, 1999; Sirmon, Gove, & Hitt, 2008). The same holds true here for Black male athletes. I suggest Black male athletes seek out seasoned managers, or at the very least, those familiar with the environment and other nuances of professional sport, that will assist them in coming up with strategies as a means of guidance for the success of their careers. Examples of different manager types include their agent, brand manager, individual responsible for the finances, and media manager, just to name a few.

Once in possession of able managers with the abilities to point them in the right direction, these athletes and their managers are better prepared to map out a plan for the athlete. Because these athletes deal with a number of stakeholders (e.g. sponsors, media, etc.), the athlete and manager should consider Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory when configuring their plan. To reiterate from Chapter II, this is defined as any group or individual that can affect or is affected by the achievement of a corporation's purpose (Freeman, 2005, p. 420). In collaboration with each of their managers, the athlete should

develop a vision for what they want to accomplish, set objectives, craft a strategy for achieving their set objectives, implement their objectives, and finally, evaluate their performance whenever determined to do so (Thompson & Strickland, 2003).

Furthermore, Black male athletes should identify who their current stakeholders are and prioritize them, while also recognizing potential stakeholders. Having identified their stakeholders, it will be possible to take into account each of their stakeholders' concerns, behaviors, values, and backgrounds/contexts, including the societal context (Freeman, 2005; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997) so that they can act accordingly based on these items. Knowing what fans, sponsors, community members, and other stakeholders generally expect, Black male athletes will be better served with a strategy or template of sorts to better manage their career and ensure social responsibility. These athletes and their managers should also internalize the effect the athlete's actions could potentially have on not only the athlete but their current and potential stakeholders.

Limitations

There are also limitations worth mentioning. For one, the relative small sample size from this study may have limited this study from garnering additional perspectives on this issue. In this case, the desire was to conduct more interviews; however, schedules and un-returned phone calls attributed to the small sample size. For this reason, I did not reach the saturation level that I would have liked. Thus, I suggest researchers in the future increase their sample size when carrying out research on this topic. However, if it occurs that saturation is reached at a similar sample size, this will be acceptable.

I mentioned in Chapter III some difficulties I had with conducting the interviews. While I was initially told I would be able to interview the athletes for a longer period of time, this did not occur. In one instance, the Communication Director sat beside me as I conducted the interview with LeMichael. I was essentially being rushed as I conducted the interview as she constantly checked her watch and signaled to me that that I needed to speed things up. This definitely affected me as I was conducting the interview with LeMichael.

The environment in which the interviews with the athletes took place was also a limitation of this study. For instance, not only was the interview with LeMichael rushed due to the Communication Director's antics, but it took place while he was signing autographs for fans. I could tell I did not have his full attention as he attempted to answer my questions and sign autographs for the fans. With regard to the other two athlete participants, these interviews took place in the locker room after the team's last preseason game. Players were ready to get home as it was reaching 11:00 PM that evening. This also attributed to the short interview time with the athletes. Thus, limited time with the athletes participating in this study may have contributed to limiting the scope of possible information that could have been gleaned. For instance, I was not able to ask the athlete participants questions regarding race. Due to the time constraints, I mainly attempted to gather information on social responsibility. Researchers who desire to conduct research with special populations should be mindful of this. Being that athletes' time is so limited, it is difficult to complete lengthy interviews with them.

This examination was able to interview only a few stakeholders of the Black male athlete. In the beginning, it was a goal to interview fans, community members, and other stakeholders. However, due to time constraints, this did not occur. Opinions from these groups could have very well bolstered what was reported. Scholars should consider this and attempt to interview a multitude of stakeholders to garner additional perceptions on this topic.

Related to the point above, the study was also limited in that it only garnered the opinions of Black males. Surely there are stakeholders of Black male athletes who are of other races, ethnicities, and gender. For this reason, future studies should look to gather the opinions from women as well as individuals from other racial and ethnicity groups. Doing so would allow for more thorough findings and a better conceptualization of BMASR.

Another possible limitation is that this investigation only garnered opinions from one professional sport organization. Thoughts on BMASR would buttress what was reported in this study. In the future, studies need to be conducted involving professional sport organizations from both the NBA and NFL. This would certainly help move towards a framework of BMASR which was stated in the purpose of the study.

In conclusion, in spite of the (de) limited nature of the study in that it contained single interviews with a small group of Black males from one particular professional sport organization, it supplies a noteworthy first-step in investigating the notion of BMASR. Personally, this preliminary attempt has been essential in fostering further question I may have concerning this topic. To that end, this examination could also be of

assistance to scholars who wish to better understand the topic of athlete social responsibility.

Future research directions

Based on what has been discussed, there are a number of future research avenues for researchers. For one, I suggest scholars continue to employ the CRT framework in combination with qualitative research designs to further investigate issues of race and racism in society and sport. Future studies could also utilize a case study approach by centralizing a particular sport organization, league or individual athletes as the unit of analysis. This approach could possibly illuminate on experiences of racism as it pertains to the specific case that is being investigated. It is possible individuals are unaware of what transpires within their own circles. Thus, depending on the results of such studies, this could create practical knowledge based in the works of the participants which could ultimately empower and challenge individuals to be agents of change (Agyemang et al., 2010; Kershaw, 1992).

Another avenue of research that could be taken related to CRT is investigations with individuals who may consider issues of race and racism to no longer exist, or possibly, those who contribute to upholding racist ideals. For instance, future research could be carried out with upper-level decision making individuals and members of the media. Considering a majority of these individuals tend to be White males, it would be interesting to gather their thoughts and perceptions on issues of race and racism individually as well as collectively (e.g. a focus group setting). This research could serve the purpose of challenging notions such as White privilege.

Given the nature of basketball, it could be argued Black male athlete basketball players have more visibility than those who compete in football. For instance, football players are masked, rarely seen without their helmets during games. In fact, football players are penalized for taking their helmets off while on the field. Meanwhile, the opposite holds true for basketball players. Not only are they not masked behind helmets, but they play longer seasons (i.e., 82 games). The aforementioned brings forth two ideas for future research. Firstly, it would be interesting to see what particular athletes potential stakeholders mention when referring to BMASR. Did the athlete compete in football, basketball, or any other sport? From there, investigation could then look into how individuals distinguish between BMASR as it relates to athletes competing in basketball and football.

Researchers may want to continue to employ qualitative techniques to further gauge Black male athletes' responsibility to Black communities. To do so, scholars may consider taking a phenomenological approach which would match Black male athletes with individuals in the Black community. The sample of Black male athletes could comprise of those who already play an active role in the Black community as well as those who may have not realized this responsibility. Furthermore, participants within the community could be those who advocate and/or wish to work alongside these athletes to foster change within these communities as it relates to a number of issues.

Related to the above notion, a participatory action research (PAR) (see Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005) approach could be taken to further explore Black male athletes' responsibility to Black communities. Via this approach, the sampled groups would be

able to have ownership of what comes from the research. Thus, the academic researcher would be working in collaboration with the individuals in the community. This effort could potentially lead to additional emancipatory knowledge, while also serving as discretionary responsibilities depending on what comes from the research. For instance, the research may inspire the Black athletes to either donate to the community or commence a scholarship for youth.

Also utilizing a qualitative approach, researchers could also garner perceptions on how respective leagues assist with athlete social responsibility. Individual athletes could be interviewed as well as communication directors, community relations representatives and other groups who have an invested interest in social responsibility among athletes. This study could elicit preliminary perceptions on current initiatives that are in place to facilitate social responsibility (e.g. Basketball without borders, and NBA Cares). Researchers could investigate if enough is being done in this regard. Other topics that could be considered are dress code policies, fines for actions occurring outside of sport, and the rookie camps players attend. Gaining information from these groups on these assorted topics could potentially lead to a reevaluation of social responsibility efforts.

What also could be examined are possible benefits of engaging in social responsibility or maybe even whether it is necessary to engage in BMASR. For instance, Walters and Chadwick mentioned (2009) how CSR has is now a strategic management tool and serves the purpose of ensuring an organization's reputation. Fitzpatrick (2000) suggested a similar sentiment, as CSR is now a way of conducting business. These same

issues could be looked into as it relates to Black male athletes. For instance, studies could look into ideals of “athlete citizenship.” Surveys could be conducted to determine whether participants feel that engaging in social responsibility bolsters the reputation of an athlete. Likewise, it could also be determined what component (i.e. economic, legal, ethical, or discretionary) is rated the highest. Such information would certainly be valuable to Black male athletes and stakeholders.

I also suggest economic impact studies be carried out. Economic impact studies have been carried out in the past related to a number of areas (e.g. Olympics, college football programs) (see Chang & Canode, 2002; Porter & Fletcher, 2008). Given the status of Black male athletes, the same could be done as it relates to their impact on professional sport leagues, sponsors, and media. For instance, a researcher could investigate the economic impact on LeBron James leaving the Cleveland Cavaliers. This could also be done as it relates to his arrival in Miami. Information could be gathered from nearby stores of the arena which the team competes.

Another avenue worth taking is ethnographic research. In this case, scholars would need to immerse themselves into a professional sport organization or league as a way of better understanding what these particular organizations do to assist with social responsibility. To that end, I suggest interested senior scholars take advantage of sabbatical opportunities so that they can possibly work with sport organizations concerning areas which deal with social responsibility. In my opinion, while there are difficulties for researchers desiring to conduct research with professional sport organizations, there are also a number of benefits if one is able to do so. For instance,

there is currently a small amount of research utilizing individuals working for professional sport organizations as participants. Thus, any research with these organizations will add to any existing literature concerning professional sport organizations. In doing so, this further advances the sport management discipline as we further progress as a field (Chalip, 2006). Furthermore, building relationships with sport professionals could enhance sport management students looking to work in the industry, as these cultivated relationships could possibly lead to internship opportunities.

In the event that scholars are able to take advantage of opportunities to conduct research with elite populations, I also suggest scholars employ personal narrative inquiry (see Chase, 2005; Rinehart, 2005). While I had my difficulties, the same may not hold true for others. When employing this method, researchers could document the experiences they encountered during their research. Issues such as gatekeepers and time constraints could be discussed. Suggestions could also be made as to how to navigate gatekeepers.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMATION SHEET

Understanding Black male athlete social responsibility (BMASR): A case study of an NBA franchise

The purpose of this study is to garner the perspective of a professional Black male athlete and some of his key stakeholders concerning the concept of Black male athlete social responsibility (BMASR), with the ultimate goal of moving toward a framework for better understanding this concept. The findings may provide insight and information concerning the responsibility of Black male athletes in the current era. It will also build toward a framework of social responsibility for Black male athletes that they may use for their benefit. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to engage in a face-to-face interview pertaining to the subject matter.

Please note the following characteristics of the study:

- There are no risks associated with this study that are any greater than the risks encountered in daily life.
- You may receive no direct benefit for your participation. However, your dialogue may lead to a greater understanding of Black male athlete social responsibility.
- You are in no way required to participate in this study. You may decide to withdraw or not to participate at any time with no repercussions. You may also refuse to answer any question at any time with no repercussions and still continue to participate in the study if you wish.
- This study is confidential and the records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research notes and records will be stored securely by the primary researcher (Kwame Agyemang) and Dr. John N. Singer; they will be the only ones with access to them.
- If you choose to participate in this study, you may partake in a face-to-face interview. All responses will be stored securely and only Kwame Agyemang and Dr. John N. Singer will have access to the notes. Any completed interview notes will be kept for no more than five years and then will be disregarded.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study you may contact Kwame Agyemang at (Dulie Bell 122) and/or kwame@hlkn.tamu.edu. Kwame Agyemang can also be reached at (214) 727-8162.

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. In the event that you have any questions or concerns pertaining to your rights as a research participant, you may contact these offices at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction.

If you agree to the above information, please complete the interview.

APPENDIX B
TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Hello sir, may I please speak with _____. My name is Kwame Agyemang and I am currently conducting research investigating Black male athlete social responsibility.

To Participant: I believe your experience on this subject will be an excellent resource enabling me to gain a better understanding of Black male athlete social responsibility. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you can choose to stop participating at any time. All that is required of you is to engage in a face-to-face interview. Any help you may be able to provide will be of great assistance to me as I conduct this research.

Email Script

Dear _____,

Greetings, my name is Kwame Agyemang and I am a doctoral student in the Sport Management Program at Texas A&M University in College Station. I am in the process of investigating Black male athlete social responsibility. I believe your input regarding this subject matter would prove to be an invaluable resource in an effort to gain a better understanding of Black male athlete social responsibility. All I would need from you is to complete a face-to-face interview (at your convenience) in order to help me explain the factors contributing this phenomenon I am researching. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you can choose to stop participating at any time. If you have any questions or concerns whatsoever, please feel free to contact me anytime by replying to this email or by calling me anytime at _____. Your participation will be of great assistance and I am eager to learn from your insight and experience. Thank you for any time and/or consideration you give this matter.

With the Utmost Sincerity,

Kwame Agyemang

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How has race impacted the Black male athlete as a business entity?
 1. How would you describe the past, present, and future state of the black male athlete in American society today? Is it positive? Negative? Neutral?
 2. What role, if any, has race (and racism) played in what we see concerning his current state of affairs?
 3. How do you conceive yourself racially, and how important is this identity to you?
 4. Do you consider yourself a business entity? Why or why not?
2. How does the Black male athlete view social responsibility?
 1. What does it mean to be socially responsible?
 2. Do you feel you have a responsibility to society? If so, what are some of the responsibilities you owe to society? Why?
 3. Within society, are there certain groups to which you owe a responsibility? Which ones? Why these groups?
 4. Within the sport industry, are there certain groups to which you owe a responsibility? Which ones? Why these groups?
 5. What do you have to offer those groups who have invested in you (i.e. your team, fans, etc.)?
 6. Have recent legal troubles of Black male athletes influenced the way you go about managing your professional career?
 7. How do you define ethics? Furthermore, how has this contributed to the way you go about managing your professional career?
 8. What activities outside of your sport competition do you involve yourself in?
3. How do stakeholders perceive of Black male athlete social responsibility? What is the nature of this Black male athlete's relationship with his relevant stakeholders?

1. Do Black male athletes have a responsibility to society? If so, what do they have to offer?
2. What legal responsibilities, if any, does the Black male athlete have to you and society in general?
3. How do you define ethics? Furthermore, how does this play a part in your relationship with the athlete?
4. What activities, if any, have you and the athlete engaged in?

APPENDIX D

TABLE 1-PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Pseudonym	Race/ethnicity	Gender	Profession	# of years in profession
LeMichael	Black/African American	Male	NBA Athlete	12 years
Pierre	Black Caribbean/French	Male	NBA Athlete	5 years
Dietrick	Black/African American	Male	NBA Athlete	10 years
Watson	Black/African American	Male	Content Manager	2 years
Marques	Black/African American	Male	Advanced Scout	15 years
Coach Cecil	Black/African American	Male	Assistant Coach	18 years as a player/3 as coach
MM	Black/African American	Male	Sales Executive	N/A
Mo	Black/African American	Male	ESPN Radio Broadcasting/Advertising	5 years

VITA

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- Email Address: kwame@hlkn.tamu.edu
- Education: B.A., The University of Oklahoma, 2007
M.Ed., The University of Oklahoma, 2008
Ph.D., Texas A&M University, 2011
- Journal Articles: **Agyemang, K.J.A.** (In press). Different from the rest: An interview with Nic Harris of the Carolina Panthers. *Journal of Management Inquiry*.
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- Selected Presentation: **Agyemang, K.J.A.** (November 2010). Black Male Athlete Social Responsibility (BMSR) in Big-time American Sports. Presented at North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Annual Conference, San Diego, California
- Selected Grant: **Agyemang, K.J.A.** (2010). Toward a framework for understanding Black male athlete social responsibility (BMSR) in big-time sport. Grant awarded by Sydney and J. L. Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine & Human Performance, Texas A&M University. \$2,500.