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Los Angeles

Pacific Islanders in College Football:
Getting In, Staying In, and Moving On

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

Keali'i Troy Kukahiko

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Pacific Islanders in College Football:
Getting in, Staying in, and Moving On

by

Keali'i Troy Kukahiko

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Mitchell J. Chang, Chair

In 2012, the American College Testing (ACT) reported that 81% of Pacific Islander (PI) high school students aspire to earn a bachelor's degree or higher (the national average is 82%), but in 2014, only 38% of PIs left high school to attend college, and only 18% actually graduated with their bachelor's degree. This suggests that PI communities have bought into the promise of higher education, but barriers exist that complicate their matriculation. This dissertation is a study of PI college football players, the most visible and vulnerable participants in US higher education today. In 2015, the National College Athletic Association (NCAA) reported that only 11% of PI college football players graduated from the FCS division, compared to their Black (51%) and White (63%) counterparts. This was the lowest of any demographic in all of college sports. While PIs are strategically targeted for athletic labor in college football, the corresponding graduation rates suggest that the relationship between the PI community and US

higher education has become one of exploitation.

This dissertation uses cultural and racial frameworks to offer counter-narratives that center PI perspectives, and decolonizes academic spaces that normalize whiteness and operationalize cultural racism in colleges and universities. This study of PI college football players focuses on three components of their college experience: 1) the college choice process (getting in), 2) transition and persistence (staying in), and 3) professional matriculation into the academy (moving on). Accordingly, this dissertation by compilation investigates each component as separate studies – Getting In, Staying In, and Moving On – but as integral parts of the same overarching research topic.

The Getting In findings suggest that PI football players often come to colleges and universities with an over emphasis on sport, while the Staying In findings suggest that PI transition and persistence may be negatively influenced by the invisibility of PIs within the academy, or the underrepresentation of PIs within the general student body, faculty, administration, and staff who represent “attainable” and “realistic” professional aspirations for PI matriculants. The Moving On findings suggest that issues of race significantly impact the experiences of college football players that wish to matriculate into the profession of coaching college football, and offer some explanations for the diversity deficit between the 55% of student-athletes of color that participate in college football, and the 75% of white college football coaches.

The dissertation of Keali'i Troy Kukahiko is approved.

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2017

DEDICATION PAGE

Early in my dissertation process I sent the following email to my dissertation committee:

First, thank you Kahunawai, Theresa, Walter and Mitch for being a part of this process with me. I know that each of you have helped so many students finish their PhD, and that your mentorship is a gift they now share with their students. It is customary for Pasifika peoples to greet each other with the exchange of *ha* (breath of life), by touching foreheads and noses, inhaling to receive *ha*, and exhaling to give *ha*. The act of sharing *ha* is a reciprocation of love and respect, and represents the centrality of relationships in Pasifika communities.

In the same way, I hope that through these final stages of my dissertation, you will accept my gift of *mo'olelo* (story), and that each of you are moved to share your *mo'olelo* with the rest of us. In the kauhale system of Hawai'i, it is our *kuleana* (responsibility and burden) to share our *mo'olelo* in teaching, learning, and the passing on of knowledge (in every *hale* and discipline) to the next generation for the survival of *lāhui* (the nation/community). Perhaps our efforts here will somehow advance the normalization of Pasifika axiology, ontology, epistemologies and methodologies that may one day contribute to humanizing US higher education.

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Prologue

Aloha pumehana kākou. ‘O wau ‘o Keali‘i Kukahiko. No Nānākuli mai ko‘u ‘ohana i ka moku ‘o Wai‘anae. ‘O Kukahiko, ‘o Ching, ‘o Lau, ‘o Mahoney ko‘u mau ‘ohana. I kēia manawa, noho au i Kaleponi, ma Lake Elsinore me ku‘u wahine. ‘Ehā a‘u mau keikikāne. Aloha. My name is Keali‘i Kukahiko. I am the embodiment of my life experiences, and of the gifts (makana) of aloha (love) and ‘ike (knowledge) that have been passed on to me by my kūpuna. I accept my kuleana (responsibility and burden) to use these gifts in the service of lāhui (the nation). This is my mo‘olelo (story), and the following events represent the milestones in the development of my critical consciousness, and therefore, points of reference that constitute my positionality as a researcher, or my research identity.

My family is from Nānākuli, Hawai‘i, an area of homestead lands that are set-aside for Kanaka Maoli, or Native Hawaiians. This land is hard to come by and there is a long list of qualified Native Hawaiians for limited resources. The economy of Hawai‘i is specialized into three main industries – tourism, construction and the military – which do not require college education. This is compounded by the cultural prostitution of tourism in Hawai‘i that has inflated the cost of living to the point where many Kanaka Maoli can no longer afford to live in their own native lands. Homelessness abounds and many families are forced to live in multigenerational homes, called the “invisible homeless,” while others are pushed into the diaspora. Under these conditions my parents decided to move our family to California for an opportunity to participate in the American Dream.

No matter the zip codes I found myself living in, Nānākuli is home. It was the place I learned to love the beach, my ‘ohana, my culture, lāhui, and where I learned to fight. At Nānākuli park, fighting was more of a recreational activity, and as my family tells it, I would get

in fights daily. Although the fights were with friends and cousins I played with all the time, and went to church with, my kupunakane (grandfather) thought it better if I went to school on the continent. I remember the aching in my na‘au for the land and people I loved, but while my dreams often took me back to Nānākuli, I would awake to find myself floundering in an educational system that did not know who, or what, I was.

Upon arrival to the “mainland,” we settled on the border of East Palo Alto (EPA) right next to the 101 freeway. At the time, the city did not have its own police or fire department. As a result, gangs from San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland competed for the unrestricted “crack” market that was created by the absence of these municipalities. While East Palo Alto was under the jurisdiction of the Palo Alto Police Department, the city line dictated by the 101 Freeway became a distinct color line that the Palo Alto PD refused to cross. During Reagan’s War On Drugs, the FBI raided crack houses to clean up its “murder capital,” followed by an attempt to create EPA’s own police department. That failed attempt ended in the prosecution of police officers “on the take,” more federal intervention, and eventually, the formation of yet another localized police presence. I did not have the words, or vocabulary, back then to name my experiences, and it was not until much later during my college education that I was able to recognize inequality, social injustice, and systems of oppression that are created and maintained by power and privilege.

My first “political” *encounter* happened when I was 8 years old. I played on a predominantly black football team. Our football practices were held on the other side of the freeway where parks were considered “safe.” One day before practice, a teammate and I went into a grocery store that was next to the practice field to buy some candy. After selecting the candy and bringing it to the cashier, she began asking us where we put the ring. We didn’t know

what she was talking about, and I do not remember responding in any way but perhaps silent deference. The cashier continued to question us until a white man who had went through the check-out line before us brought the ring back during her interrogation. A black lady behind us began to give the white cashier the riot act, but my friend and I started out the door oblivious to what was happening. That black lady caught up to us just outside the store entrance and gently, but firmly, explained to us that no one had the right to accuse us of something because of the color of our skin. Until that determined elderly black woman named it racism, the phenomenon had just been a condition of my reality for which I had no term.

My primary and secondary education took place in an area that would one day be known as Silicon Valley. I was physically and racially on the border of Palo Alto and EPA, where the 101 freeway separated the affluent white community and Stanford University from the predominantly low-income black community located in the nation's murder capital. My primary and secondary education kept me in constant contact with peers whose families lived in opulent houses and drove luxury vehicles, but I was always the visitor from the other side of the tracks. It was this socioeconomic dichotomy in my life that exposed me to social stratification, but at the time I did not understand the structures and processes that create and maintain that class system.

When I first arrived to UCLA as an undergraduate, my professional aspirations were to become a lawyer, or successful businessman. It wasn't the American Dream that drove me, so much as my insatiable need to climb out of the box others had constructed for me. It seemed I was shackled to an identity and a destiny tied to my history of abuse and tragedy. My early education taught me that children of abuse become abusive parents, that domestic violence leads to alcohol and drug abuse, and often prison. Even though I made several visits to juvenile correctional facilities in high school, I rejected the idea that my opportunities would be different

than my peers'. I wanted to succeed in life too, I also wanted to attend a good college, so that I could also get a "good" job, and be able to provide for my family in a "nice" neighborhood. I was so focused on proving the world wrong, that I did not realize how I successfully climbed out of one box, only to climb into another.

I remember my first day on campus during my undergraduate orientation at UCLA. I sat on the steps of Powell Library, looking at my newly printed student ID card, and thought, "I've made it." I was overwhelmed with the beautiful landscape and architecture, and enjoyed a moment of calm satisfaction. The moment was fleeting, however, because it took no more than a moment to realize no one else looked like me, shared my culture, or could reminisce about home with me. It took the remainder of that first year to find nine other Pacific Islanders (PIs) on campus. Four were athletes, three were graduate students, and two were staff. We were able to support one another, constantly rejecting the doubt that lurks within the halls of higher education, turning the imposter syndrome into an acceptance of responsibility to our communities. The development of my critical consciousness had begun to turn towards action, even before it was fully informed. The alienation and isolation we experienced as Pacific Islanders within UCLA campus and its curriculum moved our group to act as members of the Pacific Islander Student Association (PISA) to increase college access for PI communities.

One day I got an urgent call to come to site. Site was Carson High School where I had started an outreach program during my second year at UCLA. The program served PI high school students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), a program that provided tutoring, mentorship, leadership development and college counseling. I believed that these programming components could reduce PI high school dropout rates, increase matriculation to college, and provide alternative pathways to military and athletics. I had planned to create

“traditional” pathways to higher education. When I reflect on the challenges and obstacles that the Pacific Islander Education and Retention (PIER) program has had to overcome to survive the past twenty years, I realize the folly in my premise. PI communities are not traditional communities, an outcome of our collective histories with US colonization in the Pacific. The more I tried to create traditional pathways to higher education, the more I was asking our own people to assimilate to dominant culture and hold themselves to standards of success that are not our own. When we teach our students A-G requirements through their own cultural lenses and pedagogical tools, they remain anchored to frames of reference that are familiar and non-alienating. When we teach them that the SAT and ACT tests are written in the Test Maker’s language, and that its puzzles are meant to be deciphered with that language, the outcomes are determined by the students’ application of that tool, not their inherent deficits. These pedagogical practices disrupt settler colonial education systems that award the privileged with college choice, and create untraditional pathways to higher education for communities that survive within systems of oppression.

Upon arriving to site, the dean met me in the parking lot and briefed me on the way to our classroom; a room dedicated to the PI students at Carson High School. Apparently two of my Samoan football players had got into a fight with a Mexican gang member on campus. In response, the Mexican gang leaders had declared war on all PI students and were currently circling the campus in cars with firearms. Many leaders of the PI community were already present when I arrived, but as the program’s director I was given the floor to speak. I cannot remember all the words that spewed from my mouth during that extended diatribe, but I remember looking at each and every brown face in the room that day. I remember yelling and crying at the same time, a knowing accompanied by a sickening dread, that I would not see all of

my students again. The violence that would be incurred upon my students targeted only the color of their skin, and the features of their bodies.

Over the next two weeks, five of my students were shot, and shot at. One of the incidents involved three of my Samoan football players. I remember seeing them walk into our after-school tutoring session, and sit down with glass all over their hair and clothing. Two of the older boys with more “street” experience narrated what had just happened to them. They had been across the street at the Jack in the Box drive-through when members of the Mexican gang shot through the back window of their car. The boys responded by driving over the sidewalk and speeding to the only safe place they could think of, our classroom. As the older boys casually retold the story, the younger one sat, quiet and dazed, with a distant look in his eyes. As a football prodigy, I imagine that his mortality had never seemed so real, or fragile. Until that moment, life had probably looked like a series of pit-stops before the National Football League (NFL). That young man never returned to Carson High School. In reflection, one student left in fear of what coming to school might mean for his life, and the other two accepted their reality as one they could not run from. During that time in my developmental process, I could only see the black and white of it, the racism of a stratified system. I failed to see that the system I thought was broken was, in fact, operating as designed by its colonial architecture. US colonization has operationalized systems of privilege and oppression, a contradiction of circumstance between conquered peoples and their masters. This socioeconomic dichotomy incentivizes communities of color to assimilate, and/or to pursue US higher education even when military or college athletic pathways dehumanize and exploit their bodies as natural resources.

I find happiness and fulfillment *in* my community, with my community. I live far from the standards of success I once worshipped, in a house with the Hawaiian Sovereignty flag

hanging next to the front door. My front lawn is dead in the hot season, but the weeds become unruly in the rainy season, and they grow until the eye sore is more than my neighbors can handle, so they cut it because I do not own a lawnmower. My way of life is not the American Dream, it is so much better. I have four sons whom I love, who have pride in their cultural heritage and in our service to the PI community. Two are now in college, and share with me daily, weekly and monthly their “aha” moments and paradigm shifts. I have a brilliant and beautiful wahine ‘ōiwi that teaches our children our culture, our history, our language; a woman who would only marry a man that served our community. Over the past 20 years, we have developed, designed and implemented academic and athletic development programs with Prodigy Athletes, the AIGA Foundation and our affiliated Polynesian non-profit organizations have placed over 500 student-athletes at colleges and universities on athletic scholarships.

Throughout this process I have experienced the benefits that athletics provide in creating access to higher education, and yet, I have also seen the exploitation that has occurred as a result of neoliberalism in college sports, which emphasize the student-athletes as profit-centers and athletic laborers, and deemphasize their roles as students and consumers of the academy. It is this research imperative that drove me to enter the Higher Education and Organizational Change program at UCLA. My graduate research at UCLA has introduced me to concepts and vocabulary that allowed me to contextualize my own individual experiences, and connect those experiences to contemporary circumstances in the PI communities. I believe that a history of slavery, colonization, economic imperialism and militarization has hindered access and affordability to higher education for PIs, and consequently, the utility of college degrees in the US. These forces have created pathways to higher education that exploit brown bodies as natural resources, an inequitable relationship that can only be remediated by obtaining fair return on our

athletic labor.

This prologue contextualizes the ways in which I interpret this research. The entire process of this investigation, which I call activist research, has continued the ongoing development of my critical consciousness, and praxis. It has been a partnership with PI communities meant to identify structural and systemic issues that complicate resistance to various forms of oppression. As iron sharpens iron, I continue to teach and be taught by both my students and our communities to carry on our movement: to infiltrate institutions of US higher education and dismantle its politics of knowledge, centering the ontology, axiology, epistemology and methodology of the Pasifika. Pacific Islander scholars must continue to occupy spaces in higher education, and not only contribute to the literature, but to disrupt the dominant frameworks that maintain cultural racism. Colleges and universities have provided the pulpit for dominant research paradigms that estrange Pacific Islander scholars from their own voices, restricting them to analyses that are framed by foreign concepts that are misaligned with the values of our communities. If we do not dispel the misconception that we cannot conduct competent research as insiders, from our own cultural lenses, we relegate our political status as impotent, and incapable of defining the social issues in our own communities, their historical context, and the policies and practices that could lead to social change. As a PhD candidate in Higher Education and Organizational Change at UCLA, I believe this dissertation takes us one more step forward. We are not “We the People,” but we will be, in whatever context we choose.

Introduction

Statement of Research Imperative

Pacific Islanders (PIs) are any of the Indigenous people of the Pacific Islands, also known as the Pasifika. The ACT (2012) reported that 81% of PIs high school students aspire to earn a bachelor's degree or higher (the national average is 82%) suggesting that the PI community has bought into the promise of US higher education. While PI college aspiration rates are high, however, EPIC (2014) found that only 38% of PIs leave high school to attend college, and only 18% graduate with their bachelor's degree (the national average is 28%). The rates of bachelor degree attainment for PIs fall significantly short of their Asian (54%) and white (36%) counterparts (Ryan, 2016). This phenomenon has created a gap in educational achievement that “increases the social stratification between those educated and technically qualified to navigate government bureaucracies” and PI communities that require policy changes to remediate cycles and structures of oppression (Alfred, 2009). Since colleges and universities have the potential to empower PIs to occupy spaces of influence that transform policies and practices, increasing PI visibility in US higher education is paramount to their communities' survivance.¹ PI student-athletes represent a rich source of leadership to carry out this mission, but the data indicates that barriers or challenges exist that are discouraging their college participation, transition, persistence, and professional matriculation into the academy.

The lack of PI visibility in US higher education refers to underrepresentation in the general student body, faculty, administration, staff, and coaches who represent “attainable” and “realistic” professional aspirations for PI matriculants. While there is hyper-visibility of PI

¹ Vizenor (2008) defines cultural survivance as the “active survival and resistance to cultural dominance” (p. 24), a “renewal and continuity into the future rather than loss and mere survival through welcoming unpredictable cultural reorientations” (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013, p. xii).

participation in college football – PIs are 56 times more likely to matriculate to the National Football League than any other ethnic group– there is an invisibility of PIs beyond their athletic labor, a contradiction that Uperesa (2014) calls hyper/in-visibility. Teranishi (2009), Uperesa (2015), and Wright (2003) imply that lack of PI visibility in US higher education negatively impacts college participation, sense of belonging, transition, persistence, degree attainment and professional matriculation into the academy. In 2012, the Diversity Report Card (Lapchick, 2012) revealed that 90 percent of presidents at US colleges were white, 87.5 percent of the athletic directors were white, and 100 percent of the conference commissioners were white. Even in college football where PIs were most highly visible – and 55% of college football players were non-white – 89% of head coaches, 84% of all coordinators, and 77% of all assistant coaches were white (Lapchick, 2012). Understanding the historical trajectory of PIs within US higher education from a context of colonialism is important in disrupting eugenic explanations for low PI college participation rates, the educational achievement gap, and disparities in their ability to matriculate professionally within the academy.

Purpose Statement

Hale (2008) said activist research “is predicated on the collaborative relations of knowledge production with members of that group” (p. 20), and Goodyear-Ka’ōpua (2013) added that activist research “explicitly aims to contest existing relations of power and to envision and live new relations” (p. 40). The study of PI college football players is an activist research into the most visible and vulnerable PI participants in US higher education today. The NCAA (2015) reported that the Football Championship Series (FCS) division, only graduated 11% of their PI college football players compared to their Black (51%) and White (63%) counterparts; the lowest of any demographic in all of college sports. While PIs are strategically targeted for

athletic labor in college football, the corresponding graduation rates suggest that the relationship between the PI community and US higher education has become one of exploitation. Activist research is vital to improving equity for PIs in higher education, especially in obtaining fair return on the athletic labor provided by PI communities. Activist research offers counter-narratives and centers marginalized perspectives from epistemologies considered “inadequate” standards of knowing, and disrupts and decolonizes spaces that normalize whiteness and operationalize cultural racism in colleges and universities. A study of PI college football players guided by activist research principles should improve conditions and returns of PI athletic labor in US higher education by 1) identifying the college choice processes that improve degree attainment (getting in), 2) informing policies and programs that enhance PI transition and persistence (staying in), and 3) improving visibility and professional matriculation of PIs into US higher education (moving on). Each component is crucial to understanding the barriers and challenges that inhibit PI educational achievement rates, but more importantly, to disrupting the eugenic explanations (“scientific” stereotypes) and legal neutrality (lack of policy action-response) that maintain them. Accordingly, for this dissertation, I will investigate each component as separate studies, but as integral parts of the same overarching research topic.

To accommodate the needs of this important research, I will use a dissertation by compilation format. This convention requires at least three research papers – each requires its own literature review, theoretical framework and methodology – in publishable formats, which investigate different components of the same research topic. Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen (2012) explored the importance of three components in the college process that are intimately related and interconnected: getting in, fitting in, and moving on. My dissertation by compilation will follow the college process for PI football players from “getting in,” “staying in,” and “moving

on.” My dissertation will conclude with two chapters: 1) a reflective chapter that addresses the shortcomings and limitations of my theories and methodologies; 2) a going forward chapter that discusses the significance and implications of this study on future research, policy and practice.

Chapter 1: Getting In

The issue of PI visibility in US higher education begins with college access and their representation in the student body. Without college access, there are no participants to investigate issues of college transition, persistence, or professional matriculation into the academy. What we know is that 81% of PI high school students want to go to college (ACT, 2012), but that only 38% of them actually leave to attend college. We also know that to increase PI college participation rates, we must understand how college choice processes are inhibiting the realization of high PI college aspiration rates. Finally, the study of PI college choice (Getting In) investigates the factors that create mismatches, or alignment, between college values and college choice. This dynamic is presumed to influence degree attainment, another indicator used for measuring college participation.

Problem Statement for Getting In. PIs hold bachelor’s degrees at rates lower than the national average (U.S. Census, 2012). EPIC (2014) reported that Guamanians (13%), Samoans (11%), Tongans (11%), Fijians (10%), and Micronesians (4%) all hold bachelor’s degrees at less than half the national population (28%). As college tuitions continue to rise (Mumper & Freeman, 2005; Schoen, 2015), and meritocratic aid (Perna & Titus, 2004) replaces need based aid, there is the possibility that PI participation in higher education may be even further hampered. The research of “college choice” for PIs entering college athletics is an attempt to study alternate pathways to higher education, which are able to circumvent increasing tuition

costs and restrictive admission standards of “academic excellence.” This research should inform policy makers, staff, faculty and administrators about the goals and expectations that PI student-athletes bring with them to college, in order to better serve and support this population.

Purpose Statement for Getting In. If US higher education is to become more inclusive towards PI communities, the institution itself (i.e., policymakers, faculty, and administration), Pacific Islander (PI) high school football recruits, their families, community outreach organizations, and the staff who support them, need to better understand how “college choice” will impact this population’s ability to realize short-term and long-term academic and athletic goals. Although there is a wide body of literature focused on college choice (e.g. Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; McDonough, 1997; Perna & McDonough, 2008; Teranishi, et. al., 2004), there is a need to understand the nuances involved in the recruitment process of college football, and how these factors impact college choice for PI high school football recruits. For this population, a spot on a collegiate football team can include a college scholarship, social mobility for their family, and the potential for exposure to play professionally in the National Football League (NFL). The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the goals and expectations of PI high school football players in relation to their college decision. Specifically, this study will identify and explore the decision making process of PI high school football recruits and how they chose a particular college to launch their academic and athletic careers. This investigation is intended to advance existing knowledge about the logic PI high school football players employ when considering matriculation into higher education, and the following research questions guide this study:

- 1) What factors influence and/or determine “college choice” for Pacific Islander high school football recruits?

- 2) How do the experiences of PI high school football recruits modify or extend current models of college choice?

Theoretical Framework of Getting In. The theoretical framework used in the Getting In study combines components of Hossler & Gallagher's (1987) three-step college choice model, and Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model.

Hossler & Gallagher's college choice model (1987). Research focused on the complex, multistage decision-making process in selecting a particular postsecondary institution spans econometric (e.g. Fuller, Manski & Wise, 1982) and sociological models (Alwin & Otto, 1977), and a combination of the two (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) foundational model of college choice highlights the longitudinal process involved. The three-stage model frames the college selection process for prospective matriculants: the *predisposition* stage, a *search* stage, and a *choice* stage. While Hossler and Gallagher (1987) provide a basic model to work from, it is the intention of this study to reconceptualize the deficit perspectives of their study that assumes 1) students from low socioeconomic status (SES) have a deficiency in family and peer influences that encourage college aspirations, 2) students who attend low-performing primary and secondary schools lack certain types of capital (i.e., academic, social, cultural, navigational, and aspirational) within their *predisposition* that predispose them to make a "choice" not to attend college, and conversely, 3) that "high-ability" students committed to attending college from these same low-SES communities, have the privilege of "college choice."

For this study the *predisposition* stage represents the collective values, beliefs and experiences of a PI high school football recruit's entire being that motivates, inspires and commits him to participate in higher education as a mechanism to achieve his future goals. Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) model fails to acknowledge the nuances that exist within the

predisposition stage of matriculants from communities of color. It is the position of this paper that potential PI high school football recruits have different forms of capital within their *predisposition* that influence the development of their “choice set” in the *search* stage, and ultimately become the determinants of an ideal college *choice*.

Community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Institutions of higher education select PI football players based on the forms of capital these recruits are able to accrue within their *predisposition* stage, which align with the values of the institution. These various forms of capital represent 1) the value of a high school football recruit to an institution, and 2) assets that high school football recruits can use to achieve college access. Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model provides an appropriate and critical framework for this concept. Yosso (2005) identified six components of Community Cultural Wealth, a CRT model that challenges the deficit view of communities of Color as sites of cultural poverty. In this way, the Community Cultural Wealth model is useful for framing this research by challenging racism, revealing cultural wealth, and therefore, reconceptualizing the deficit perspective of Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987) college choice model. This study uses four of the six forms of capital from Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (aspirational, navigational, social, and familial) and added athletic and academic capital due to the specific nuances of my research population.

Methodology for Getting In. The methodology for this study is primarily a qualitative phenomenological research design and was ideal for this inquiry for three primary reasons. First, qualitative phenomenological methods were chosen for this study because they allow for the exploration of a topic, or concept, through “lived experiences” (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). Second, qualitative methods were selected because they are the best approaches for answering “how,” “what,” and “why” questions. Thirdly, it allows for this PI researcher – who

identifies culturally and racially within PI affiliations – to use my experiences to understand those of the participants. Therefore, qualitative phenomenological methods were deemed appropriate for investigating the aforementioned research questions by exploring the shared narrative of PI high school football recruits. Quantitative data was collected for a cursory descriptive analysis, and will assess the extent to which the initial qualitative findings generalize to PIs, and the PI student-athlete population.

Identification and Recruitment. The participants were selected from an annual Polynesian cultural event for top PI high school football recruits. These high school football recruits are identified at several high school football developmental camps, and are sent consent forms and surveys with their invites to a Polynesian cultural event that celebrates the top recruited PI high school football recruits in the world. Participants come from any of the 49 states in the continental US, Samoa, Tonga, Hawai‘i, Australia and New Zealand. Each cohort is made up of 70-85 high school football recruits, and the data for this study has been collected from the 2014 and 2016 graduating cohorts.

Data Collection. The survey was designed to provide the study with a descriptive analysis, and is distributed at an annual high school all-star event for Polynesians. Participants were asked to complete a survey that included questions about demographics, their perceptions on college recruiting experiences, and desirable college institutional characteristics (e.g. contact with college recruiting staff, importance of strong academic programs, importance of athletic facilities). After being identified as student-athletes with college football scholarship offers, the recruits were given an opportunity to share written accounts of their experience, and participate in focus groups of 2-5 people for 30 minutes in a private room. High school football players that were actively recruited by college football programs were asked to respond to questions

regarding their college decision-making process. At this stage, participants were given the ability to self-select out of the focus group portion of the data collection. Participants were given pseudonyms prior to focus group interviews, and were informed that a password-protected electronic linking document is used ensuring that all identifiable data will be secured and confidential. Along the way, the high school participants provided qualitative data during interviews that required an institutional perspective to maintain the trustworthiness of my data analysis; thus, several FCS college football coaches were asked specifically about their recruiting strategies of this research population.

Data Analysis Procedures. The qualitative data analysis was framed within the concepts of the study's theoretical frameworks. To ensure reliability of the research, however, the data was coded using three techniques within a constant comparative analysis (Creswell, 2003). During open coding, or the initial stage of organizing the data, narratives were categorized into each of the six sub-categories of their community cultural wealth. Through axial coding, or the interconnecting of categories, student experiences and narratives were placed into the appropriate stages of Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model: *predisposition*, *search* and *choice*. During the selective coding process, the analysis attempted to understand whether participants' *research* experiences were associated to specific characteristics of *predisposition* in a predictive manner. This analysis will not only give us a better understanding of how athletic, academic, aspirational, social, cultural and navigational capital impacts the choice of the participants, but what characteristics of their predisposition influence the selection process of the institutions.

Summary of Findings for Getting In. My findings suggest that there are three distinct categories of PI high school football recruits, with very different college decision making

processes, and that only the highly recruited PI high football recruits had the luxury to exercise “college choice” as framed by traditional models. While college football increases access to higher education for PI high school football recruits due to lower academic requirements and athletic aid, the evaluation of athletic talent, position needs, and limitation of scholarships of each college football program restricts actual college access; therefore, national college participation rates for PIs are not likely to gain significant increases through the college football pipeline. Lastly, the dependency of this population on the accumulation of athletic capital has a majority of participants attending colleges that do not align with their “college choice” values, and are simply following the money (athletic aid).

Significance and Implications of Getting In. While PIs are strategically targeted for their athletic labor they maintain the lowest graduation rates of any group of any sport in the NCAA (2015). These low graduation rates could suggest that discrepancies between college values and college choice uncovered in this study (Getting In), may be impacting participants’ ability to transition and persist once they arrive on campus. An alternate perspective is that PI high school football players’ views on what is important in their college choice does not align with what they actually need to persist at four-year universities. Another possibility is that while institutions of higher education value certain physical, racial and cultural aspects of PI football players’ *predisposition*, colleges and universities vary in their ability, or willingness, to accommodate PI football players’ cultural capital within its own physical, racial and cultural identity, or campus environment. A continuation of this research as a longitudinal study could help us to understand the high attrition of PI college football players.

Qualitative data from a college transition and persistence study, or “Staying In,” is necessary to inform policy makers, faculty, administrators and the staff that support this

population, on how they can minimize attrition and retain the Pacific Islander football players they recruit. If institutional agents continue to purposefully and intentionally recruit PI football players (Uperesa, 2014; Kukahiko, 2015), this research could help to identify interest convergence opportunities between the institutions that financially benefit from college football, and the athletic labor that represent its profit centers. In other words, transition and retention of PI college football players serve the interest of both the institutions and the PI community, by maximizing each party's return on investment. The "Staying In" study has the potential to inform and direct funding to culturally responsive programs that enhance transition, well-being, sense of belonging, and student persistence (Allen, 1991; Morita, 2013; Tierney, 1999; Wright, 2003). Marketing this information and the success of these programs to future generations of PI high school football recruits should also improve an institution's ability to secure commitments from top recruits during their college decision making process.

Chapter 2: Staying In

Problem Statement for Staying In. Museus and Quaye (2009) state, "if current racial and ethnic disparities in educational attainment persist, projections indicate that the numbers of college educated workers in the United States will fall short of those needed to sustain current levels of economic and social growth, a reality which may have devastating consequences for the nation's economy" (p. 68). Pacific Islander (PI) four-year graduation rates in 2013 was 26.7 percent compared to their white counterparts of 43.7 percent (US Department of Education, 2016). As economic pressures continue to confound PIs place in higher education, it will become increasingly more important to improve the persistence of those PI student-athletes who have circumvented the rising costs of higher education through "athletic scholarships." The NCAA

(2015), however, reported that the Football Championship Series (FCS) division, only graduated 11% of their PI college football players compared to their Black (51%) and White (63%) counterparts. While PIs are strategically targeted for their athletic labor, the corresponding graduation rates suggest that the relationship between the PI community and US higher education has become one of exploitation.

Purpose Statement of Staying In. This study operates under the hypothesis that higher education operates as a mechanism of US colonialism, and therefore, low PI graduation rates are a natural outcome of institutionalized cultural racism. The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate how culture and race impact the college experiences of PI football players, how those experiences enhance or inhibit their persistence in higher education, and to introduce PI-CRiT as a guiding framework to decolonize US higher education. The following research questions guide this study:

- 1) How do PI college football players experience culture and race?
- 2) What experiences of culture and race enhance, or discourage, the transition and persistence of PI college football players?

Summary of Theoretical Framework for Staying In. Racism is an inherent symptom of colonization (Smith, 1999), but identifying the symptom is different than recognizing the process by which power structures are built, reified and evolve over time. Policies and educational reform in the US have served to eradicate Indigenous culture, because living Indigenous cultures inhibit assimilation to the colonial regime and encourage Native resistance (Silva, 2004). A persistent strategy and operational tactic of colonization is the compulsory education of Indigenous peoples that institutionalize various forms of cultural racism (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013). This paper offers Pacific Islander Cultural Racism Theory (PI-CRiT) as a

theoretical framework of colonialism that ensures research (a) of PIs in higher education are historically contextualized, (b) challenges cultural racism in higher education, and (c) deconstructs dominant research paradigms in higher education that normalize “western” ontology, axiology, epistemology, and methodology. PI-CRiT offers seven tenets that guide the research of PIs in higher education.

Methodology for Staying In. The methodology for this study weaves three PI cultural constructs together to ensure that the research process is respectful of each participant, their community, and their gift of mo‘olelo (story). This PI methodology disrupts dominant research paradigms by suggesting that data collection, analysis and interpretation should align with its participants’ ontology, epistemology and axiology (Lebakeng, Phalane, & Dalindjebo, 2006; Wilson, 2008). That is, the methods to gain more knowledge about reality (methodology), should align with the participants’ views about reality (ontology), their ways of thinking about reality (epistemology), and their ethics, morals and values that guide their interaction and interpretations of reality (axiology). ‘Ōlelo No‘eau (proverbs) are integral cultural references of how these components intersect to form Pacific frames of reference (Pukui, 1983). These are gifts of ike (knowledge) passed on to us from our kupuna (ancestors) to help guide us, but also meant to ground us in ways that define who we are as individuals and communities. Embedded within the proverbs are kaona (hidden meanings) that teach us to be aware and mindful of multiple perspectives, to think critically and creatively. A common tool of ‘Ōlelo No‘eau are their use of metaphor to develop critical thinking. PI-CRiT uses three cultural constructs in weaving together its PI methodology: ‘Awa ceremony (ritual), Kakau (rite of passage), and Kauhale (community).

Identification and recruitment. Following the example of the ‘awa ceremony, I followed

cultural protocol by approaching elders from the AIGA Foundation² ask permission to conduct this research and its value to the PI collective. The elders of the AIGA Foundation agreed to participate in this study in hopes that research on this population would help inform policies that will improve college access, retention and diversify PI professionalization; specifically, the promotion of PI college football players to faculty, administration, and coaching positions in higher education. The participants were selected from an annual Polynesian cultural event held by the AIGA Foundation for top PI high school football recruits since 2011. These college football players were identified at several high school football developmental camps, and were sent consent forms and surveys with their invites to a Polynesian cultural event that celebrates the top recruited PI high school football recruits in the world. The event is hosted by the AIGA Foundation, and its volunteers are predominantly Polynesian ex-college and NFL football players, who were also asked to participate in this study. Participants of the event come from any of the 49 states in the continental US, Samoa, Tonga, Hawai‘i, Australia and New Zealand. Each cohort is made up of 70-85 high school football recruits, and this study uses the data collected from the 2011 through 2016 graduating cohorts.

Data collection. Of the 120 PI college football players that agreed to participate in the college choice study, forty volunteered to participate in a survey and interviews on the impact of culture and race on their college experiences. The survey is designed to complement the qualitative focus of this study with a descriptive analysis. The participants who agreed to participate were selected based on diversity of island affiliation, college type, location, whether

² Aiga is the Samoan word for family, but it is also an acronym for All Islands Getting Along (AIGA). The acronym is significant because the elders, representative of many different island affiliations, are committed to what they believe is a movement to increase opportunities for PI student-athletes in higher education. Their events also celebrate and teach their participants culture from the various Pacific Islands to reinforce connections to the PI collective.

they had Pacific Island courses available at their college or university, campus proximity to PI communities, and overall nuances in college experiences. This follows the example of the Kauhale system in understanding that all knowledge does not reside in one house. To further extend the application of this methodology, this study required PI participants that have experienced college football from additional perspectives.

Data analysis procedures. The qualitative data analysis was framed within the concepts of PI-CRiT. The data analysis uses a constant comparative analysis (Creswell, 2003) based on the principles of contemporary kakau, allowing the participants to dictate what symbols (culture and race) are relevant, or irrelevant, to their identity and college experiences. During open coding, or the initial stage of organizing the data, narratives were categorized into each of the seven forms of cultural racism. Through axial coding, or the interconnecting of categories, student experiences and narratives were vetted for statements, feelings and/or experiences of colonialism: self-hate, cultural dissonance (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Museus, 2008), liminal identities, psychophysical trauma, and perceptions of exploitation as athletic laborers). During the selective coding process, the analysis attempted to understand whether participants' experiences of *culture* and *race* were associated to specific characteristics of *colonialism* in a predictive manner.

Summary of Findings for Staying In. The findings show that PI college football players believe they must be resilient to persevere through the demands of being student-athletes, and that too few institutional agents, support programs, activities, policies, and curriculum reinforce their cultural identity development, or make their education relevant to their communities. The qualitative data also reflects a critical awareness about issues of cultural racism, their exploitation as athletic labor, and a desire for praxis to create transformative change on campus,

and in the PI communities. Participants name specific types of institutional agents, support programs, curriculum and policies they believe would improve their academic and professional return on athletic investments. The tenets of PI-CRiT have provided a critical framework to understand PI college football players' otherwise disconnected narratives as a manifesto to institutions of higher education, demanding that their athletic labor be compensated with an education that is culturally and racially informed, enacted upon, and supported by policy that allows for a sustainable and fluid program meant to adapt to the needs of this population's many intersectionalities.

Significance and Implications for Staying In. The professional matriculation of PIs into US higher education is of the utmost importance if we are to see long-term improvements in college participation and graduation rates. Improving college aspiration, sense of belonging, transition, and persistence for PIs in higher education is fundamentally connected to this goal, and are enhanced by “visible pipelines” (i.e., PI scholars, administrators, staff, and coaches) for PI communities (Teranishi, 2009; Wright, 2003). This means that while “getting in” (college access) and “staying in” (persistence) are important aspects of this research, the “moving on” study that investigates professional matriculation into the academy is crucial to correcting institutional cultural racism that isolates and alienates PIs within US higher education. Alfred (2009) suggests that participation and persistence in higher education is necessary to bridge the educational gap between communities of color and spheres of influence that drive legislation and governance, which either disrupt or maintain cycles of oppression. For this reason, professional matriculation of PIs from higher education is paramount to the long-term improvement of our communities, and their membership in the US democracy.

Chapter 3: Moving On

Problem Statement for Moving On. The diversity deficit in college football can be understood as the significant gap between the percentage of student-athletes of Color and college coaches of Color. According to the NCAA, as of March 2010, 11 percent of head football coaches at Division I-A schools were nonwhite (Pike, 2011) contrasted with the 55 percent of nonwhite student-athletes who compete in these top programs. At the NCAA Division I-AA level – and excluding historically black colleges and universities – 7 percent of head coaches were of color. In 2012, at both the DI-A and DI-AA levels, coaches of color accounted for 16 percent of the offensive and defensive coordinator positions, 23 percent of the assistant coach positions, and a combined total of 25 percent of all full-time coaching positions (Lapchick, 2012). These numbers suggest a pipeline issue, given that nonwhite coordinators and assistant coaches (25 percent) fall significantly short of the percentage of nonwhite student-athletes (55 percent). Given that over half of football student-athletes in the United States are of color, how can hopeful candidates become full-time college football coaches? Researchers need to examine the entry-level positions (i.e., GA, QC and restricted earning positions) to better understand pipeline issues that restrict or enable access for minorities into the profession of coaching college football.

Purpose Statement for Moving On. The diversity deficit is a symptom of neocolonialism, a manifestation of white supremacy, and a result of the continued marginalization of minority voices and bodies in US higher education. This social justice issue is not just a Pacific Islander problem; it is a circumstance of injustice shared by all communities of color. Disrupting the diversity deficit, however, requires transformative change, a paradigm shift away from the normality of a white hegemony that has been the leadership of US higher

education. Can institutions and the communities of Color that provide their athletic labor find interest convergence? This study investigates pipeline issues for all communities of Color. This paper began with three fundamental hypotheses: 1) a diversity deficit does in fact exist, 2) that the experiences of racism, tokenism, colorblindness, etc. are shared by multiple groups of color in connected and similar ways, and 3) that activist research and policies aimed at increasing overall diversity will improve opportunities for PI college football coaches. Citing the experiences of people who work in the GA, QC and restricted earnings positions, this paper examines their varied levels of perception of the importance of racism, stereotyping and tokenism in shaping the coaching profession, and offers suggestions for making entry-level positions points of access for the advancement of coaches of Color. The following research questions guide this study:

- 1) What are the experiences of GAs and QCs of color, and how are their entry-level roles and positions interpreted within the professional pipeline of college coaching?
- 2) What do administrators, staff, full-time college coaches, GAs, QCs and restricted earnings coaches believe is limiting the ability for coaches of color (in entry-level positions) to be promoted to full-time staff positions?

Theoretical Framework for Moving On. Critical Race Theory is the framework that guides the Moving On study – which include concepts of whiteness, colorblindness, individualism and meritocracy – and helps to understand tokenism and symbolic boundaries.

Critical Race Theory (CRT). Within college football, the pipeline of student-athletes to college coaching positions should be reinforced to improve transition, retention, and matriculation of student-athletes of Color into the profession. Visual representations of this

pipeline offer student-athletes of Color physical and psychological support in aspiring and pursuing their place in higher education. The causal relationships between histories of oppression and the academic and professional trajectories of student-athletes of Color can best be framed and understood through the application of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Among the many CRT scholars who make invaluable contributions to the literature, Kohli and Solorzano (2012) suggest five tenets of CRT that provide appropriate guidelines for this research: 1) Centrality of Race and Racism; 2) Challenging the Dominant Perspective; 3) Commitment to Social Justice; 4) Valuing Experiential Knowledge; and 5) Being Interdisciplinary.

Tokenism and Symbolic Boundaries. Nonwhite college coaches who work in environments dominated by whiteness and colorblindness often are ‘pigeon-holed’ into certain types of coaching positions that are considered appropriate for minorities. Lower level coaches of color often are given less mission-critical responsibilities, and more relational player personnel roles. In this hiring context, tokenism has become a popular method for the use of nonwhite coaches to recruit nonwhite student-athletes. The organizational outcome of physical diversity without psychological, social, cultural and financial validation is tokenism. Hurtado et al. (1998) state that tokenism can contribute to the hyper-visibility of underrepresented groups, an exaggeration of group differences, and the distortion of images and situations to fit existing stereotypes.

In this type of environment, the diversity deficit also can be affecting the pipeline of student-athletes into the profession of college coaching. Nonwhite student-athletes may perceive that college coaching is not a ‘realistic’ professional goal if cues indicate to them that only whites can become college football coaches, or that nonwhite coaches are tokenized. Prudence Carter (2012) called these cues “symbolic boundaries.” Student-athletes may be dissuaded from

pursuing this profession if cues or boundaries indicate to them that only white heterosexual men become college football coaches, that only white coaches occupy positions with meaningful roles, or that nonwhite college coaches do not receive the same financial reward as their white counterparts. Given the media coverage of college football games, perhaps we also must be concerned that these symbolic boundaries are being conveyed not only among student-athletes but also to the national and international community.

Methodology for Moving On. The aforementioned theoretical frameworks provide the basis for this qualitative phenomenological research methodology. CRT directs this research project to center marginalized voices, to use narratives and lived experiences to contextualize quantitative data and to provide a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse on diversity in higher education. These methodological strategies intend to reach beyond cursory survey responses and to ask participants what different perspectives mean to them. This methodology places ‘meaning making’ in the domain of the participants, not the researcher.

Identification and Recruitment. The study incorporates the narratives of seventeen football coaches who were navigating, or who have navigated the pipeline to coaching college football. The narratives were collected in 2014. Research participants were selected because they had once been GAs, QCs, restricted earnings coaches, or had matriculated to full time staff/athletic administrators. These participants are people with whom I have had varying degrees of contact during my work with student-athletes, and are employed at college football programs across the U.S.

Data Collection. I used semi-structured interviews, in which questions are used flexibly throughout the interview with a mix of structured questions and some less structured questions (Merriam, 2009). In all, I interviewed fourteen coaches (full-time, GAs, QCs and restricted

earnings), two staff/administrative support positions and one athletic director. Six of these participants were white, including three head coaches, two coordinators and one director of football operations. The remaining eleven nonwhite coaches included two coordinators, two full-time coaches, three QCs, one GA, one restricted earnings coach, one Player Personnel staff member and one athletic director/administrator. Of the total participants, six had once been a QC or Restricted Earnings coach. I took notes, because video or audio taping would have been too intrusive and threatening for the casual tone of conversation I planned to have with them.

Data Analysis Procedures. The qualitative data analysis will initially be framed within the concepts of the study's theoretical frameworks. Each participant was asked to respond to three specific prompts: (1) What is hindering the development of coaches of color to full-time coaching positions? (2) Is the GA or QC position an appropriate mechanism for creating a to full-time positions? (3) Describe your coaching experience, position and racial identity. The responses to those questions were coded based on recurring themes and theoretical concepts that emerged in their narratives. From this analysis I created a synoptic table to understand whether patterns existed within the qualitative data.

Summary of Findings of Moving On. The findings indicate that whites generally perceive the diversity deficit from a colorblind perspective and value meritocracy, while nonwhites fault the good ol' boy network, racism and stereotypes. Investigating these research questions allowed me to explain some of the issues preventing the matriculation and promotion of coaches of color in the pipeline to full-time coaching positions. Of the white participants that volunteered for the study, three were head coaches, two were coordinators, and one was a staff/administrator. All but the staff/administrator have carte blanche in the hiring and selection

process for full-time coaching positions, and all but one made statements that reflect colorblindness.

In contrast, ten of the eleven nonwhite college coaches believe that 1) good ol' boy networks are the major influence within the hiring and selection process, 2) there are not enough head coaches and coordinators of color, 3) coaches of color experience racism and stereotyping that hinder their promotion from entry-level positions, 4) coaches of color experience tokenism and are often used for recruiting student-athletes of color, 5) the GA position is not diversifying college football, but 6) the GA and QC positions are appropriate mechanisms for developing coaches of color for full-time positions. In fact, every participant but Coach 2 believed that the GA and QC position are good mechanisms for promoting 'young' coaches to full-time coaching positions. Coach 2 did not say, however, that either the GA or QC position was bad, but simply stated, "The GA or QC [position] is always iffy for anyone regardless if they are persons of color. No guarantees."

Summary of Significance and Implications. This research establishes that a disconnection exists between white coaches and coaches of color on issues of individualism and meritocracy, and on the challenges of fixing pipeline issues (aka the 'diversity deficit'). First, if whites make up 75% of college coaches, and their views reflect those of this study's population, then a majority of this 'fraternity' adopts the colorblind perspective, and refuses to acknowledge that there is a 'problem.' Second, if a majority of the coaches of color believe that racism, stereotyping and tokenism are indisputable certainties of college football, but their white colleagues are oblivious to it, then this duality of reality within work environments suggests that coaches of color maintain their silence around these issues. Future research should investigate the impact that this liminality has on the well-being of coaches of color. What does it mean to

make it into the fraternity of coaching college football, and what are the costs to staying there? How does their silence impact their ability to mentor and lead student-athletes towards self-advocacy, community-advocacy, or a commitment towards social justice?

Chapter 5: Reflective Chapter

The Reflective chapter offers me the opportunity to synthesize all three studies. During the research of each topic, my focus was compartmentalized within the parameters of space and time, but this reflective chapter will allow me to consider the longitudinal aspect of the entire college process for Pacific Islander college football players. From this perspective I will synthesize the findings and discuss their overall contributions to the existing knowledge base. I will also reflect on the shortcomings and limitations of my theoretical approach and methodologies. Since two of the three papers have been published, or accepted for publication, it is fitting that this chapter allow for critique in lieu of revisions that may infringe upon copyright law.

Chapter 6: Going Forward Chapter

The Going Forward chapter uses the same holistic and longitudinal perspective as the Reflective chapter in considering the significance and implications of this research on future research, policy and practice. The questions I will use to guide this chapter include: What questions have these studies collectively raised? What questions remain unanswered regarding the overarching problem and purpose statements of this research? Given the collective analyses of all three studies, what future research should be conducted to fill in the gaps? Given the collective analyses of all three studies, what steps must be taken within policy and practice to better support this population?

Conclusion

The journey of Pacific Islanders (PIs) in US higher education has traveled and traversed many pathways. The most visible evidence of PI men in higher education is through college football, a college “access” mechanism that has enabled many in the PI community to overcome social, economic and cultural barriers created by a history of colonization, economic imperialism and militarization in the Pacific. The low participation rates of the PI community in US higher education made the study of “getting in,” or college choice, paramount to providing context in the overall understanding of the college process for PIs. The findings from the “getting in” study established a baseline of goals and expectations that PI high school football recruits took with them to college. Understanding how PI college football players negotiated their “college choice” values once they were on campus, offered the study of “staying in” a unique and nuanced window to observe how college experiences interact with that value system to enhance, or inhibit, persistence. Our findings from the “staying in” study confirmed the impact that a “visible pipeline” has on PI college football players, and suggested that something was constricting the pipeline into coaching college football given the significant number of PI high school football recruits and college football players that aspired to matriculate into the profession. The “moving on” study investigated the entrance level positions in coaching college football, and collected narratives to understand the hiring process, perceptions of the “diversity deficit,” and solutions that participants believed would improve the pipeline for coaches of Color.

The “getting in,” “staying in” and “moving on” studies of PI football players, each establish their own significance and implications for future research, recommendations for educational policy and cause to reconceptualize dominant research paradigms. This dissertation by compilation contributes to the existing body of knowledge around three stages of the college

process for Pacific Islander football players, and delivers a platform for the PI community to demand more in return for their athletic labor. The collective findings of these studies reveal clear opportunities for interest convergence between the PI communities and institutions of higher education willing to intentionally and purposely promote programs, policies and institutional agents that enhance PI football players' holistic development. This activist research offers counter-narratives and centers marginalized perspectives whose epistemologies are considered "inadequate" standards of knowing, and is meant to disrupt and decolonize spaces that normalize whiteness and operationalize cultural racism in US higher education. The improvement in PI college participation, persistence and matriculation into the professional trajectory of higher education is a blow to white supremacy, and a step toward equity for all communities of resistance.

Getting In: College Choice for Pacific Islander High School Football Players

Pacific Islander (PI) communities are underrepresented in US higher education, and hold bachelor's degrees at rates lower than the national rate (U.S. Census, 2012). EPIC (2014) reported that Guamanians (13%), Samoans (11%), Tongans (11%), Fijians (10%), and Micronesians (4%) all hold bachelor's degrees at less than half the rate of the national population (28%). As college tuitions continue to rise (Mumper & Freeman, 2005; Schoen, 2015), and meritocratic aid (Perna & Titus, 2004) replaces need based aid, there is the possibility that PI participation in higher education may be hampered even further. The research of "college choice" for PIs entering college athletics is an attempt to study alternate pathways to higher education. This research should inform policy makers, staff, faculty and administrators about the goals and expectations that PI student-athletes bring with them to college, in order to better serve and support this population.

If US higher education is to become more inclusive towards PI communities, the institution itself (i.e., policymakers, faculty, and administration), Pacific Islander (PI) high school football recruits, their families, community outreach organizations, and the staff who support them, need to better understand how "college choice" will impact this population's ability to realize short-term and long-term academic and athletic goals. Although there is a wide body of literature focused on college choice (e.g. Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; McDonough, 1997; Perna & McDonough, 2008; Teranishi, et. al., 2004), there is a need to understand the nuances involved in the recruitment process of college football, and how these factors impact college choice for PI high school football recruits. For PI high school football recruits, a spot on a collegiate football team can include a guaranteed four-year college scholarship, social mobility for their family, and the potential for exposure to play professionally in the National Football

League (NFL). The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the goals and expectations of PI high school football players in relation to their college decision. Specifically, this study will identify and explore the decision making process of PI high school football recruits and how they chose a particular college to launch their academic and athletic careers.

Key Research Questions

This investigation is intended to advance existing knowledge about the logic PI high school football players employ when considering matriculation into higher education, and the following research questions guide this study:

- 3) What factors influence and/or determine “college choice” for Pacific Islander high school football recruits?
- 4) How do the experiences of PI high school football recruits modify or extend current models of college choice?

Global Relevance of Pacific Islanders in American College Football

The significance of Pacific Islanders in sport goes beyond the borders of the US, and hopefully, we can find answers beyond our borders to questions that escape the scope of local paradigms. In Australia for example, I have had conversations with several universities that are considering the function of college athletics. Executives of these athletic divisions realize the ability of college sports to create cultures of belonging, the ability of sports to merge institutional identities with student identities, and the impact of this relationship on alumni affiliations and economic profit (i.e., increased enrollment, alumni donations, sales and broadcasting revenue, etc.). Therefore, this study presents a contribution to systems of higher education that do not currently employ athletics as a major resource for the functions of college sport aforementioned. The perspectives of PIs in sport found in Australia and New Zealand, specifically the policies and

programming initiated by the National Rugby League (NRL), provide the US with a paradigm shift in addressing the demographic and research population of this study, but these realizations will be made in the implications and significance of this paper.

Road Map to College Football

The value of student-athletes to the empire of college sports has grown exponentially since the inception of the NCAA in 1905. March Madness, the National College Football Championship, its associated Bowl Games and college rivalries has made the two “revenue sports” of basketball and football a multi-billion dollar industry (Berkowitz, 2014). The profitability of this industry has compelled the members of Division 1 college football programs to invest heavily in the recruiting of potential talent within the ranks of our high school football system, and the international community. Within the US many athletes and their families begin the journey in youth football, where talent is scouted by high school coaches interested in having the best talent matriculate to their individual programs. From the best high school football programs, young football players hope to be showcased to the top college football programs in the country.

The high school coach has traditionally been the gatekeeper that provided a solid buffer between college football recruiters and the high school athlete, but the recent participation in private off-season football academies have allowed “specialist” coaches to begin advocating on behalf of the high school football recruits and college football coaches. Big Man academies (that work with offensive and defensive lineman) and 7 on 7 teams (that work with many of the “skill” positions) compete at national showcases sponsored by major athletic companies (i.e., Nike and Under Armor), and are meant to showcase the best talent in the US. Not only has attending the right high school football program become important then, but also participating with the right

football academy in the off-season has become a major concern for those families intent on receiving college football scholarships.

Once a high school football recruit has shown proficiency at the sport, college recruiters can find them in several ways. As aforementioned, high school football coaches and academy football coaches can introduce prospective players to the college coaches on the high school campuses or on the phone, but there are also institutional and non-institutional football camps where the high school football recruits are trained and assessed by college football coaches. University compliance offices are responsible for regulating their own football staff with regard to the recruiting rules and schedule set by the NCAA. These rules and schedules protect 1) the integrity of the sport by maintaining a level playing field when recruiting, 2) high school football recruits by limiting frequency and periods that college coaches can contact them, and 3) establishing guidelines for professional and responsible moral conduct of institutional agents.

While high school football recruits may contact college coaches and visit college campuses as many times as they want without regulation, unless the college football program is interested in offering the recruit athletic aid (scholarship), their efforts are often in vain. For example, “junior days” are non-evaluation events where college football programs try and attract the best high school juniors they can recruit, but a majority of high school players that attend these events have no chance of being offered a scholarship because they have not been identified by any of the institutional agents as “recruitable” candidates. The personnel needs and the numbers of athletic scholarships college football programs have available each year restrict access for these non-ranked high school football players. In 1978, the NCAA split Division 1 football into two divisions: the 1A division known as the Football Bowl Series (FBS), and 1AA division known as the Football Championship Series (FCS). In 2016, there were 128 teams in the FBS,

each with a maximum of 85 full athletic scholarships, but limited to 25 new scholarship offers per year. The FCS consisted of 125 teams, each allowed a maximum of 63 full athletic scholarships, and limited to 30 new scholarship offers a year. Unbeknownst to many college football recruits, scholarships are often one-year renewable contracts, but the NCAA (2013) recently allowed institutions to offer 4-year scholarships to incoming recruits in response to a number of court cases that highlight the exploitation of college student-athletes (Kukahiko & Chang, 2016).

Once recruits have been deemed a good fit athletically by agents of a given institution, their grades are evaluated to assess whether they meet the minimum academic requirements set by the NCAA as eligibility standards for athletic aid. Many institutions, however, have higher standards of admission than those set by the NCAA, and these further restrict the opportunities for high school football recruits with low academic capital. Once an institution is convinced that the high school football recruit is a good fit, they will offer the recruit an athletic scholarship. This offer is not guaranteed, as institutions hedge their bets by offering multiple players the same scholarship “slot” in case some choose other universities. This offer has traditionally been a one-year renewable scholarship that can be denied for renewal for any reason, including failure to contribute to team success.

The next step on the pathway to college for high school football recruits are home visits (NCAA limits each institutions two home visits by a maximum of two coaches per visit), where the area recruiter, position coach, coordinator and/or head coach visit the recruit’s home. Here the institutional agents share why their program, university, community and staff are best fit to provide for the overall growth of the high school football recruit, and often persuade the recruit to take an official visit to their campus (Kukahiko, 2015). Each high school football recruit is restricted to five “official visits,” which are campus visits paid for by the university and include

the costs for travel, food and hotel (NCAA, 2015). These official visits are often reserved for recruits that have been offered an athletic scholarship by the university, or for recruits the college football programs are very interested in solidifying as “commits.” Once a player commits, however, the institution can rescind their offer until a letter of intent is signed on, or after, the National Signing Day (for college football it is the first Wednesday of February).

Literature Review

The NCAA conducted its GOALS study (Growth, Opportunities, Aspirations and Learning of Students in college) to inform NCAA policymakers and member institutions about the college goals and expectations of student-athletes across all sports and NCAA divisions (Paskus, 2006). The study collected objective and attitudinal data from student-athletes on their college choice, aspirations, expectations, realizations and experiences, health and well-being (including stressors and impact on mental health), and possible academic and social trade-offs, or sacrifices, they made in order to participate in collegiate athletics (NCAA, 2015). This would be an important source of collective data on PI college choice, and their transition and persistence, but the data is not disaggregated for Pacific Islanders. Therefore, there is a need for research that investigates and acknowledges the factors and circumstances that influence college choice for PI high school football recruits. The literature review herein will determine why institutions search, identify and recruit PI high school football players, and then consider how scholars have studied the nuances of PI football players’ goals, aspirations, and educational experiences. Lastly, this literature review will investigate how other researchers have problematized “traditional” college choice models, and use Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987) model to illustrate the need for a culturally responsive critical framework when investigating college choice for communities of color.

Pacific Islander (PI) Football Players: Target Population for College Recruiters

Although Black male athletes are often the focus of collegiate student-athlete studies (e.g. Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013), Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (PI) are another highly visible student-athlete population in collegiate football. Despite small overall numbers in comparison to the total football student-athlete population, PI players are often a target population because of their perceived strength, size and ferocity in the way they play the game of football (Morita, 2013; Uperesa, 2014). The perception is that PI players' tenacity on the football field and respect for elders, are cultural traits College football coaches find especially suited for the game (Uperesa, 2014). Thus, college football recruiters specifically target PI populations and attend various "college showcases" hosted by PI non-profit organizations, including the AIGA Foundation's camp in Southern California, PrimeTime Polynesian's Kumite event in Southern California, the All Poly camp in Utah, the Pacific Islander Athletic Alliance event in Hawai'i, and the Troy Polamalu bi-annual camp in Samoa.

PI Football Players as Holistic Beings and Multi-faceted

Uperesa (2014) and Morita (2013) contend that PI college football players are marginalized not simply as racially and culturally underrepresented students, but also as student-athletes assumed to have inherent academic deficits, while at the same time navigating student-athlete schedules that are far more demanding than the general student body (Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Nishimoto, 1997; Parham, 1993; Petitpas & Champagne, 1988; Smallman, Sowa, & Young, 1991). Hokowhitu (2004) points out that the construction of Polynesian masculinity and the PI as "the natural sportsman" who is inherently physical and academically inept is a dominant discourse that is "constructed to limit, homogenize, and reproduce an acceptable and imagined"

Polynesian masculinity, one that is rooted in the colonial context and meant to be internalized by the colonized to solidify the working caste (p. 262).³

Morita's (2013) study makes three important claims that are important towards relevant models of college choice for PI high school football recruits: 1) the PI community (PI non-profit organizations) recognize the value of higher education and use football as a mechanism to empower and advance the overall community, 2) PI football players' goals, aspirations, and educational experiences influence, and are influenced by, different forms of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), and 3) the importance that PI football players place in certain capital shape their values and educational experiences in unique and specific ways. Most importantly, Morita's study recognizes PI football players as holistic beings that are multi-faceted individuals, not one-dimensional brutes defined by the sport of football, but whose choices are driven by the values and responsibilities implicit in their cultural identities.

Wright's (2003) research illustrated the importance of cultural identity in the educational experiences of Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians), and challenged institutions to make academic curriculum, programming and campus spaces responsive to students' cultural identities to nurture a sense of belonging and place for Kanaka Maoli students. Since cultural responsive policies, programming, and curriculum enhance college experiences for students of color (Allen, 1991; Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013; Wright, 2003), college choice models for PI high school football recruits should also use cultural frameworks to understand those educational experiences. When considering the value of their participation at highly competitive football programs, Uperesa et al (2015) suggests that highly coveted PI football recruits alter their *search* strategies to include

³ The discussion on colonialism's role in the college experiences of PIs in sport will be addressed in the following Staying In study that looks at their transition and persistence.

institutions that have support and academic programming designed specifically for the cultural needs of PIs.

College Choice for Students of Color

Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee (1997) problematize traditional models of college choice, and suggest that socio-demographic characteristics influence predisposition, search and choice of colleges for students of Color. Income and race proved to be significant determinants in applying for college. While the responses to college aspiration questions were at parity with white counterparts, only half of the high-performing students of Color had taken their SATs by college application deadlines, and therefore, did not apply. Although Pacific Islanders were not a demographic measured in this study, Black, Latino and Asian students were found to be less likely than whites to attend their first choice college. Hurtado et al (1997) state that future research of college choice must “develop more precise models of predisposition phase to understand the vast differences in student preparation for college among various racial/ethnic groups” (p. 64).

The Need for a More Critical College Choice Model

Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987) study introduced a colorblind college choice model that presumes all high school students have “choice.” Their study has become a fundamental framework in the discipline of US higher education, a college choice model that assumes all students compete for opportunities from a level playing field, and the resources that prepare students for college are created equal. Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987) study suggests that GPA and standardized test scores correlate to ability, and that high-SES correlates with high-ability. Using black students as an example, Hossler and Gallagher (1987) insinuate that communities of Color do not apply to college because their limited and unsophisticated *search* does not inform

their families of the true affordability of college, and that policies to make financial aid information more accessible to these communities may be moot, because “many low-income students do not enjoy education and would be unlikely to go to college under any circumstances” (p. 215). When considering college access and choice for Pacific Islander (PI) students, ahistorical “research” and eugenic assumptions only support the stereotypes that maintain white supremacy in US educational policy and public opinion.

When studying communities of Color that have high poverty rates and low matriculation into higher education, ahistorical “research” and eugenic assumptions only support the stereotypes that maintain white supremacy in policy and public opinion (i.e., anti-affirmative action). Critical scholars, on the other hand, understand that low-SES students do not have access to equal resources: books, computers, Internet, quality instruction, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, STEM programs, international exchange programs, SAT/ACT prep, etc. (Betts, 2002; Shields, 2001). Also, socioeconomic and cultural barriers often inhibit educational “sense of belonging” that enhance feelings of isolation and institutional alienation (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Wright, 2003). To say minority students from low-SES schools “do not enjoy education” is indicative of the cultural racism embedded in fundamental studies like Hossler (1987), Tinto (1988) and Bourdieu (1977), and reflects the institutional elitism that has historically excluded communities of Color from higher education (Karabel, 2006). These studies ignore the innate resistance to an education of racism that teaches “white is right,” and that slavery and colonization were “necessary evils” in fulfilling the “white man’s burden,” or his Manifest Destiny (Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2013; Haunani-Kay, 1999). This study fundamentally presumes that 1) college decisions often happen without “college choice,” 2) SES is simply the *level of access* to privilege and resources, 3) GPA and standardized test scores are measures of *performance* at points in time,

and 4) ability is the *potential output* of a student given optimal resources.

Theoretical Framework

College Choice

Research focused on the complex, multistage decision-making process in selecting a particular postsecondary institution spans econometric (e.g. Fuller, Manski & Wise, 1982) and sociological models (Alwin & Otto, 1977), and a combination of the two (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) foundational model of college choice highlights the longitudinal process involved. The three-stage model describes college selection process for prospective matriculants: the *predisposition* stage, a *search* stage, and a *choice* stage. Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model is a fundamental piece that continues to inform policy and institutional administrators on college decision making, but this study requires a more nuanced framework that recognizes PI ontology, axiology and epistemology, or cultural frames of reference. This is important if we are to disrupt access and equity policies that are meant to create "traditional" pathways to higher education for "non-traditional" students. This theoretical section reconceptualizes the three stages of Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model, making it relevant in the exploration of PI high school football recruits and how they choose a particular college to launch their academic and athletic careers.

Predisposition. During the *predisposition* stage, students evaluate the options beyond high school graduation, including matriculating into higher education. Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) state that the predisposition stage is not only the developmental phase where students decide whether to continue their education, it is also an aggregate of their background characteristics and resources; for example, SES, academic and athletic "ability," peer and family values towards

college attendance, and resources and organizations that provide counseling and college exposure. The Hossler (1987) model, however, does not account for the impact of colonization, economic imperialism and militarization of the Pacific, and how those specific experiences have created legacies within PI communities that position PI student-athletes as cultural and racial beings within US higher education (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013; Grainger, 2006; Mayeda & Dutton, 2014; Okamura, 2008; Trask, 2006), and whose restricted access to those institutions have precariously put an over-emphasis on college sports. Because PIs are often invisible as participants in the academy (student body, faculty, staff and administration), the academy is often perceived as an unrealistic place for PIs (EPIC, 2014), which has discouraged a “sense of belonging” for past, current and prospective PI college matriculants (Teranishi, Behringer, Grey, & Parker, 2009; Wright, 2003). These perceptions reside within the *predisposition* of PI students. However, these same circumstances have also motivated PIs to participate in higher education 1) to honor their family and become an example for their community, 2) to contribute to conversations and literature about PI communities, and 3) as a mechanism for social mobility and an escape from generational poverty (Morita, 2013).

Search. In the traditional college choice model, it is the *search* stage where students begin to consider their various values in terms of college/university, and when institutions search for students according to the accumulation of “merit” within potential matriculants’ *predisposition* (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Institutions assess “traditional” students for admissions based on GPA, standardized test scores, personal statements, and interviews that consider the various types of capital students can access and contribute on their campuses. Traditional students within that will make up the general student body, consider their college values, or determinants, and develop

a “choice set”⁴ during the *search* stage. For PI high school football recruits, however, these institutional assessments are primarily done with an exclusionary emphasis on athletic ability. Academic capital is also emphasized in this stage, but generally only to ascertain whether the PI high school football recruit will meet the institution and NCAA’s minimum academic requirements to be eligible for athletic scholarship. Consequently, the “choice sets” of PI high school football recruits are less often products of their college values and determinants, and more likely to be limited to the institution(s) that have offered them an athletic scholarship.

The reality for PI high school football recruits is their *search* stage is a one-way power dynamic with institutions searching out the most sought after recruits (Uperesa, 2015). While the *search* process can be flattering for highly sought-after recruits, it can also be a dehumanizing one that enables institutions of higher education to colonize PI communities by exploiting its student-athletes as natural resources for their athletic labor, and the student-athletes are vetted as livestock for genetic upside and physical prowess (Beamon, 2008; Uperesa, 2014). This is also a racialized process within what Edwards (1991) calls the plantation system (Branch, 2011; Hawkins, 2013), where 55 percent of the athletic labor are college football players of color, and 75 percent of the college football coaches that recruit them are white (NCAA, 2012).

Choice. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) state that the *choice* stage is the final stage of the college selection process wherein potential matriculants make their final decision based on college determinants such as academic reputation, cost of attendance, location, campus environment, financial aid, etc. In the *choice* stage, college values are become, or are replaced by, college determinants. Again, this model fails to acknowledge that many “high-ability” individuals

⁴ Hossler and Gallagher (1987) define a choice set as “a group of institutions that a student has decided to apply to and seek more information about in order to make a better final matriculation decision” (p. 214).

from communities of Color who want a college education do not have “college choice,” and that their college decisions are often restricted by cultural and financial barriers that leave them with short “choice sets” that do not align with their college goals and determinants. For example, prospective PI high school football recruits may perceive their college options limited to institutions that offer them an athletic scholarship, which limits their choice set to 1) playing football on athletic scholarship at a 4-year college/university, 2) community college, or 3) the labor market (non-participation); regardless of their academic preparation, eligibility, or college values.

Community Cultural Wealth for PI High School Football Recruits

The *predisposition* stage represents the collective values, beliefs and experiences of a PI high school football recruit’s entire being that motivates, inspires and commits him to participate in college as a mechanism to achieve future goals. If institutions are selecting college football players based on athletic ability alone, what aspects of participants’ *predisposition* do institutions ignore, or fail to acknowledge, when searching for PI high school football recruits? It is the position of this paper that potential football recruits have different forms of capital within their *predisposition* that influence their “choice set” in the *search* stage, and ultimately become the determinants in their college *choice*. Institutions then select potential applicants based on the forms of capital that are valuable to their admissions practices, and the amount of capital each applicant is able to accrue within the *predisposition* stage. These types of capital represent assets that potential college football recruits can use to achieve college success, and the value of that individual to the institution. Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model provides an appropriate and critical framework for this concept. Yosso (2005) identified six components of

Community Cultural Wealth, a CRT model that challenges the deficit view of communities of Color as sites of cultural poverty. In this way, the Community Cultural Wealth model is useful for framing this research by challenging racism, revealing cultural wealth, and therefore, reconceptualizing the deficit perspective of traditional college choice models.

This study uses four of the six forms of capital from community cultural wealth: aspirational, navigational, social, and familial. Linguistic capital fit within this study's definition of "Cultural" capital, and Resistance capital, as defined by Yosso (2005), was less relevant for the participants of this "college choice" study. However, these forms of capital may prove significant factors in a longitudinal aspect of this study that investigates this population's ability to transition and persist, especially if Resistance capital is a dormant legacy, whereby critical studies courses in higher education become catalysts for the development of critical consciousness. Navigational capital has been included because PI college football players' goals and professional aspirations are largely dependent on their ability to navigate the college recruiting process, the college selection process, and successful academic and athletic matriculation (Keung, 2014; Morita, 2013; Shahawy, 1999; Uperesa, 2014; Yosso, 2005). Social and Aspirational capital both play large roles within the "college choice" process, as many high school football recruits aspire to increase social capital by means of a college degree, and/or athletic careers. Cultural capital for this study adopts Yosso's definition of Familial capital to provide counter-context to the dominant culture; this will help the researcher understand how PI high school football engage their cultural values within the "college choice" process. These concepts allow the student-athlete to assign an internal value to several types of capital that make-up their Community Cultural Wealth, an important contrast to the external value assigned by institutional agents, NFL representatives,

media, sports fans, etc. These concepts become important in discussions that complicate the use of traditional college choice models across racially, economically and culturally diverse groups.

Athletic capital. Athletic capital is the significance that student-athletes place on their sport, perceptions of their athletic ability, opportunities afforded to them because of their athletic talent, or the value of their athletic labor assigned by institutional agents, the general student body, alumni, college sports fans, college sports analysts and NFL recruiters (El Shahawy, 1999; Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991). Morita's (2013) research of PI college football players found that athletic capital was a major determinant on how participants negatively or positively viewed their college experience. El Shahawy (1999) stated that student-athletes might have an inflated idea of their athletic capital, which may not accurately reflect the student-athlete's ability to receive athletic scholarship offers, or the ability to matriculate to the NFL. It is the position of this author that both internal perceptions (i.e., self, family, friends, etc.) and external perceptions (i.e., sports media, college football coaches, sports analysts, etc.) of athletic capital can significantly impact *predisposition*, and therefore, the *research* and *choice* stages of college choice. Within the context of participants' narratives, high academic capital is interpreted by the importance of football in their decision making processes (internal), and the number of athletic scholarship offers that were received (external).

Academic capital. Academic capital is both the level of academic performance reflected by GPA and standardized test scores, and the attitude, level of importance and academic confidence to succeed once given the opportunity to attain a college degree (Keung, 2014). Eligibility standards are set by the governing body of college athletics (the NCAA), which require that student-athletes graduate high school with a minimum GPA, and achieve minimum scores on one of two standardized tests (SAT or ACT). Some universities place higher standards for GPA

and test scores than the minimums set by the NCAA, which ultimately diminishes the size of their recruiting “net.” That is, the lower the GPA requirement, the more eligible recruits a university has to choose from, and the greater opportunity there is for the institution to obtain the maximum amount of athletic capital to secure a financial return.

Recalling historical context is important to understanding low-academic success indicators for PIs, and becomes necessary when challenging eugenic explanations that assign low academic capital to PI high school football recruits.⁵ The history of US colonialism in the Pacific provides one counter-narrative, and explains how imperial nations placed specialized dependent economies on island nations that would eventually make living on Native lands financially difficult for the Indigenous communities, and forced many PIs to migrate to the continental US in search of the American dream (Barman, 1995; Halualani, 2002; Kauanui, 1991; Nihipali, Pelayo, Lozada, Olaes & Roberts, 2012). Many of these PI communities, however, settled into urban areas that are underfunded, have stressed infrastructure, limited academic resources, and college pipelines that are constricted to athletics and military pathways. These conditions hinder the visibility of PIs in primary, secondary and higher education – specifically, in faculty, staff, coaching, and administration positions – which have a negative impact on sense of belonging and place within academic spaces for PIs (Lipka, 1991; Morita, 2013; Teranishi et al, 2009; Wright, 2003).

For some PI high school football recruits, this has led to the internalization of academic inferiority, a phenomenon where PIs emphasize the accumulation of athletic capital over academic capital, and a perception that college football is their only pathway to higher education (Morita, 2013; Uperesa, 2014). For others, however, the disadvantaged conditions of their upbringings have motivated them to participate at high academic institutions even when they have

⁵ Eugenic explanations assert that PIs are genetically predisposed to laziness, stupidity and violent crimes that render them ineligible for participation in higher education.

low GPA and standardized test scores. This analysis of academic capital is important, because while the “external value” assigned to intelligence – by means of GPA and standardized test scores – by the institution might be low, a PI high school football recruit can still have high academic capital when their “internal value” places a high academic standard, or fit, as a major determinant in their college choice set. This anomaly in “college choice” is made possible because PI high school football players can circumvent academic requirements at elite universities with high athletic capital.

Aspirational capital. Yosso (2005) defines Aspirational capital as the “ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real or perceived barriers” (pp. 77-78). Aspirational capital is an individual’s desire or ability to overcome present circumstances, and/or to surpass parent’s current occupational/socioeconomic status. Aspirational capital influences college choice, and eventual persistence, because community and family circumstances, SES status, etc. often become reasons to participate and persist in college (Yosso, 2005). Specific to PI high school football recruits, the prospect of playing in the National Football League (NFL) has a significant impact on college choice (Keung, 2014; Morita, 2013; Uperesa, 2014), but the challenge may be getting this population to identify aspirational goals after football, and getting them to make college decisions based on a balance of short-term and long-term aspirations.

Social capital. Bourdieu (1977) argues that Social capitals are forms of assets that an individual has by their social status that can be converted to economic resources. Bourdieu’s assumption that some are socially and culturally rich, however, presupposes that “others” are socially and culturally poor. Bourdieu’s (1977) model suggests that an individual with limited access to social capital from an “underperforming” community may strive to increase access to large resources of social capital to improve the circumstance of their family, or community, by

participating in higher education at elite institutions, or participating in college football programs that offer access to elite social networks. Yosso's (2005) model and definition of social capital disrupts the deficit perspective that "minority" students carry inherent disadvantages because they are socialized in communities that are devoid of social capital, and that this ultimately inhibits their academic success (Tinto, 1988). Instead Yosso (2005) considers social capital "as networks of people and community resources" (p.79) that represent instrumental, emotional, and cultural support that alleviate feelings of alienation and isolation during the process of pursuing higher education. Most importantly, Yosso (2005) uses the example of mutual aid societies to illustrate the reciprocal relationship of cultural capital, where the community provides networks and resources to the individual, who is then empowered to serve their community, or what she called "lifting as we climb" (p.80). This is a popular theme in the narratives of this study's participants.

Cultural capital. Lamont and Lareau (1988) state that Cultural capital is a family's social and cultural understanding that can have an impact on the academic success and institutional experience of a student. Franklin's (2002) definition of cultural capital may best encapsulate the kuleana (responsibility) that PI high school football recruits bring with them to the university, a "sense of group consciousness and collective identity that serves as a resource aimed at the advancement of an entire group" (p. 177). In this way we understand cultural capital as also being reciprocal: the resources the PI community has to support their students, and the kuleana of PI football players to come back and support their community. Cultural capital is also found within their PI identities and in the cultural values and characteristics of PI communities; for example, devotion to God, family, tradition, and respect (Morita, 2013). Yosso (2005) suggests that cultural knowledges nurtured in 'ohana (family) can develop courage, confidence, or strength from a "sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition" (p.79). These definitions best define

the role of cultural capital found in the narratives of the study's participants.

Navigational Capital. Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions, or the access to resources to help one do so. Yosso (2005) extended the notion to include “critical navigational skills to maneuver through structures of inequality permeated by racism” (p. 80). Within the context of college sports, the recruiting process is complicated by NCAA rules, with guidelines and policies that change every year. Knowledge of how to navigate this muddled process could significantly impact opportunities for athletic scholarships, and the ability to pursue professional aspirations beyond college choice and degree attainment. This process is further obscured by the inability of institutions in providing families with definitive answers and clear expectations (Kukahiko & Chang, 2016). Currently there are organizations and institutional agents that help families to navigate this recruiting process, however, well-meant individuals and non-profit organizations are often in competition with profit-minded “street hustlers” that make scholarship promises they have no power or authority to deliver on.

Methodology

The methodology for this study is primarily a qualitative phenomenological research design and was ideal for this inquiry for three primary reasons. First, qualitative phenomenological methods were chosen for this study because they allow for the exploration of a topic or concept through “lived experiences” (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). Second, qualitative methods were selected because they are the best approaches for answering “how,” “what,” and “why” questions. Thirdly, it allows for this PI researcher – who identifies culturally and racially with the research participants – to use my experiences to understand those of the participants. Therefore, qualitative phenomenological methods were deemed appropriate for investigating the aforementioned research questions by exploring the shared narrative of PI high

school football recruits. Quantitative data was collected for a cursory descriptive analysis, and will assess the extent to which the initial qualitative findings generalize to the PI population.

Positionality

I have trained and mentored hundreds of student-athletes for over 20 years, and have helped to place them into college athletic programs all over the US. Throughout this process I have experienced the benefits that athletics provide in creating access to higher education, and yet, I have also seen the exploitation that has occurred as a result of neoliberalism in college sports, which emphasize the student-athletes as profit-centers and athletic laborers, and deemphasize their roles as students and consumers of the academy. I believe that a history of slavery, colonization, economic imperialism and militarization has hindered access and affordability to higher education for racialized minorities, PIs included, and consequently, the utility of college degrees in the US. These forces have created “untraditional” pathways to higher education for many communities of Color through military service and college athletics.

Data Collection

The participants were selected from an annual Polynesian cultural event for top PI high school football recruits. These high school football recruits are identified at several high school football developmental camps, and are sent consent forms and surveys with their invites to a Polynesian cultural event that celebrates the top recruited PI high school football recruits in the world. The event is hosted by the AIGA Foundation, and its volunteers are mostly Polynesian ex-college and NFL football players. Participants of the event come from any of the 49 states in the continental US, Samoa, Tonga, Hawai‘i, Australia and New Zealand. Each cohort is made up of 70-85 high school football recruits, and this study uses the data collected from the 2014 and 2016 graduating cohorts. 120 PI high school football recruits agreed to participate in this study.

Participants were asked to complete a survey that included questions about demographics, their perceptions on college recruiting experiences, and desirable college institutional characteristics (e.g. contact with college recruiting staff, importance of strong academic programs, importance of athletic facilities). After being identified as student-athletes with college football scholarship offers, the recruits were given an opportunity to share written accounts of their experience, and participate in focus groups of 2-5 people for 30 minutes in a private room. 25 high school football players that were actively recruited by college football programs were asked to respond to interview questions regarding their college choice. At this stage, participants were given the ability to self-select out of the focus group portion of the data collection. Participants were given pseudonyms prior to focus group interviews, and were informed that a password-protected electronic linking document is used ensuring that all identifiable data will be secured and confidential. Some of the players that participated in the interviews had to be contacted to confirm the meaning of their perspectives to maintain the trustworthiness of this study's analysis, and several were contacted after arriving to their college campus to reflect on their experience. Also, several college football coaches were contacted specifically about their recruiting strategies for this research population to verify and provide context to the recruiting practices mentioned in the interviews.

Interviews. I used semi-structured interviews, in which questions are used flexibly throughout the interview with a mix of structured questions and some less structured questions (Merriam, 2009). This was a suitable interview strategy because the structured questions can be carefully crafted to inquire about 'sensitive' topics, but were also used flexibly depending on how the interview went. I did not use a completely unstructured interview strategy because there were specific things I wanted to understand from the interviews, and I wanted to ferret out the social

desirability responses. I considered a fully structured type of interview, in which the wording and order of questions were predetermined, because I wanted to ensure that interviews explored issues equally across participants. However, to fully tease out the complexities and perspectives of college choice, and how participants attribute value to this concept, I needed to consider the impact of interviewing the participants myself. As an event coordinator, I believed my role might influence the responses and contribute to the social desirability of participant responses, so I had academic colleagues conduct the interviews in my stead.

Questions. My interviews were constructed around five major questions:

- 1) What factors are important to you in selecting a college?
- 2) Ultimately, what will determine your college choice?
- 3) What kind of cultural support would you like in college, and was this a factor in choosing your institution?
- 4) Tell me about your recruiting experiences and how these influenced your college decision?
- 5) Do you know whether your scholarship offers are 1-year or 4-year athletic scholarships?

I was concerned that answers to the first question would be highly influenced by social desirability, and that participant narratives would simply reflect how their high school counselors and teachers have conditioned them to respond, and therefore, I expected the data collected from the first question to be very similar. To counter the social desirability factor, the second question was crafted to understand the most significant determinants to their college choice. The third question was meant to understand what cultural support PI high school football recruits would like to have, rather than what they believe is available. The fourth question is meant to understand the *search* stage, and how institutions are recruiting PI high school football recruits, and what messages or experiences resonate with them in the college choice process. The last question is to understand what PI high school football recruits do not know, and what information is not being taken into consideration during the college choice process. Some participant responses and

anecdotes redirected the interview process, forcing my colleagues to engage tangential issues, but those too elicited important qualitative data.

Survey. The NCAA GOALS study, which collected data on student-athlete college expectations and realizations is not an open data source, and since the data does not disaggregate PI responses it was necessary to collect original data for this demographic. The survey used in this study contains open-ended questions on college choice, but many of the questions also use a Likert scale that ask participants to rank the importance of certain aspects of college choice from 1-5, with 1 being not important at all, to 5 being very important. The researcher recognized that many of the open-ended survey and interview responses to college choice may be influenced by social desirability (conditioned responses deemed appropriate rather than candid), and that there may be discrepancies between internal and external values of capital within their community cultural wealth. Using the Likert scale, the survey was able to measure, or account, for internal values (level of importance or desire) of each capital component within participants' community cultural wealth, as well as, the external values (i.e., family income, GPA, standardized test scores, national rankings, number of scholarship offers, etc.). For example, some PI student-athletes came from low-income households, and therefore, had low external evaluations of social capital (with regard to household income); however, earning high salaries after graduation were college values and determinants that drove their college choice. For these participants, we can suggest that high internal social capital influenced their college choice.

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative Analysis. The qualitative data analysis was framed within the concepts of the study's theoretical frameworks. To ensure reliability of the research, however, the data was coded using three techniques within a constant comparative analysis (Creswell, 2003). During open

coding, or the initial stage of organizing the data, narratives were categorized into each of the six sub-categories of their community cultural wealth. Through axial coding, or the interconnecting of categories, student experiences and narratives were placed into the appropriate stages of Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model: *predisposition*, *search* and *choice*. During the selective coding process, the analysis attempted to understand whether participants' *research* experiences were associated to specific characteristics of *predisposition* in a predictive manner. “

Each form of community cultural wealth represents this study's universe of “factors” within each of the three phases of college choice (*predisposition*, *search* and *choice*). The constant comparative analysis the first question within the open and axial coding processes: What factors influence and/or determine “college choice” for Pacific Islander high school football recruits?” My second question was answered during the selective coding process: How do the experiences of PI high school football recruits modify or extend current models of college choice? This analysis not only gave us a better understanding of how athletic, academic, aspirational, social, cultural and navigational capital influence the college choice for PI high school football recruits, but what characteristics of their predisposition determines 1) the type of *search* experience they will have, 2) whether they will have the opportunity to exercise their college values and determinants to create a choice set, and 3) whether their college choice aligns with their college values and determinants.

Descriptive Analysis. The descriptive analysis uses survey responses and national data sources, to create generalizability in the research population. The survey asked questions that were specific to each component of Community Cultural Wealth, and the descriptive analysis investigates what those components look like for PI high school football recruits within each

stage of this study's college choice model. The *predisposition* represents the accumulation of athletic, academic, aspirational, social, cultural and navigational capital that participants come to the "bargaining table" with. The *search* stage tells us what college "values" are important to the participants is creating their "choice set," or list of college options (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). The *choice* stage separates what is important to participants, from what will ultimately determine their actual college decision; in this stage college values are replaced by college determinants. This descriptive analysis will tell us whether there are nuances in the college values of participants with different *predispositions* and *research* experiences, and whether there is a contradiction between what participants believe is important, and what ultimately determines their college decision.

Limitations

PI high school football recruits are often from households that are hard pressed to support the financial weight of the increasing cost of tuition in US higher education. The significance of an athletic scholarship offer on the college choice for PI high school football recruits could be influencing the level of importance they are attributing to some of the college values/determinants on the survey, and/or during interviews. That is, if the anxiety of receiving an athletic scholarship were removed, or that participants could all assume multiple offers from highly competitive academic and athletic programs, would they rank the college choice determinants differently? Would they assign more importance to certain determinants if receiving an athletic scholarship were not a concern? A limitation of this data set is that this population is not representative of all PI high school football recruits, because the participants of the Polynesian all-star event are vetted by the host organization not only by talent assessment, but by GPA requirements that align with the NCAA academic standards; thus, the participants of this study only represent 4-year

university eligible PI high school football recruits.⁶

Findings

The findings of this study answer two guiding questions of the research: 1) What factors influence and/or determine “college choice” for Pacific Islander high school football recruits? 2) How do the experiences of PI high school football recruits modify or extend current models of college choice? This study had three major findings. First, the data analysis uncovered three distinct *research* experiences based on the athletic capital within the *predisposition* stage of the participants. Second, while academic capital either extended, or limited, the number of athletic scholarships available to participants, scholarship opportunities remained dependent on the presence of significant athletic capital. This did, however, empower highly ranked PI high school football recruits with low GPA and standardized test scores (low academic capital), to develop choice sets that prioritized universities with high academic standards, and thus, made college choices that aligned with that college value (high academic capital). This finding highlights the importance of both external and internal values of academic capital, at least for highly recruited PI high school football recruits, and should therefore, modify and expand current college choice models for this particular research population. Third, while all other forms of Community Cultural Wealth were reported to be meaningful pieces of the participants’ identities, and intrinsic to their college values, only participants that had accumulated enough athletic capital within their *predisposition* stage had the opportunity to use the full range of values and determinants to develop a “choice set,” and then act upon that choice set in making their college *choice*. This finding is especially important because the NCAA’s GOALS study aggregated the data from 611

⁶ Since this event occurs in January (or second semester) of their senior year, some participants may become ineligible for scholarship, per the NCAA academic standards, during the course of completing their senior year in high school.

Division IA, Division IAA, Division II and Division III member institutions on college choice, transition and persistence factors. If the analyses of PI high school football recruits are relevant to the larger population of college student-athletes, however, the findings herein suggest that the highly ranked “outliers” attending the most competitive college sports programs will corrupt the generalizability of the data collected in the NCAA’s GOALS study. A descriptive analysis of the six capitals of PI high school football players’ Community Cultural Wealth is provided in the Appendix: *Exhibit 1- Additional Findings*.

The Role of Athletic Capital in the Predisposition and Search Stages

Predisposition. The data analysis found that the aggregate amount of athletic capital that PI high school football players accumulated within their predisposition predetermined their recruiting, or *search* experience. The Power 5 are the top five ranked college football conferences in the NCAA, and high school football recruits offered by any of these schools have the opportunity to accrue the most athletic capital. Conversely, recruits with “offers” from Division 2, Division 3, or NAIA programs have low external evaluations of athletic capital. This analysis discovered that three categories of recruits existed within the predisposition stage. One group had multiple offers, with at least one from a Power 5 football program; this category was named the “3-5 star recruits.” The second group had an average of 2-3 offers from FCS schools, but no Power 5 offers, and was named the “0-2 star recruits.” Participants in the third category did not receive any Division 1A-AA (FBS and FCS) scholarship offers, and were labeled the “non-ranked high school football players.” Within the narratives of all participants, two major themes were believed to influence their access to college athletic scholarships: exposure at competitive high school football programs, and the evaluation of their talent by sports media and college recruiters at football showcases/camps.

Competitive high school football programs. For the participants involved in this study, the value that external actors (i.e., high school/academy coaches, sports media companies, and college coaches) attributed to their athletic talent was highly indicative of whether they had any college choice at all. Participants shared that athletic capital was often something that was accumulated over time. For many, it began in youth football (ages 8-14) when coaches recruited “the best talent” to create highly competitive club teams whose quest was to win national championships in multiple age divisions. One 3-5 star participant explained how youth football gained him access to one of the top high school football programs in the country, which helped him to attract the most media attention, and provided him credibility and exposure to college coaches.

I played Pop Warner with a bunch of other Polynesians, and so I enjoyed the game, and learned to love football. One of my Polynesian Pop Warner coaches played college football, and he really got me to believe I could earn a college scholarship playing football. He introduced my cousin and I to the [name of high school deleted] head coach, who told us that he had just graduated several players to major college football programs. My family and I decided that we would attend [name of same high school deleted], because Coach [name deleted] had convinced us that playing at a competitive high school football program was key in getting us to the next stage.

This 3-5 star recruit believed that matriculation from youth football to a successful high school football program weighed heavily on his college opportunities by affording him a competitive advantage in the accumulation of athletic capital. This was a common theme, and some participants were even recruited onto the middle school football team as a “feeder” system into the high school football program.

Sports media and football showcases/camps. Participants also shared that sports media played a part in the evaluation of their athletic capital by identifying top performers at Nike and Under Armor camps, football showcases/camps and football academy competitions. Interviews revealed that while the internal value of participants’ athletic capital influenced their football

effort⁷ in high school, the value that sports media and college recruiters attributed to their athletic talent ultimately directed their recruiting, or *search* stage of “college choice.” One highly recruited participant, now at one of the top college football programs in the country, shared his experience being evaluated by sports media and college recruiters:

When I was a freshman I attended Nike’s elite camp, and performed well against one of the top ranked defensive guys in the country. It kind of put me on the map. During my sophomore and junior years, some coaches liked my highlight film, and I picked up some offers at camps and unofficial visits. By my junior year Scout.com and Rivals had me ranked as a four star recruit until I won Under Armor’s five star challenge, which showcased the top offensive and defensive lineman in the country. After I won that, they had me ranked as the number one high school player at my position. By my senior year I had offers from every major college football program, but most of those came over the phone from coaches that never even met me [he laughs]. I think all of us that were invited to play in the Army and Under Armor All American Bowl games had the same offers from the same schools.

This narrative suggests that athletic capital is not only something that can be accumulated by PI high school football players; it is something that is being distributed by sports media and college recruiters. The evaluation of athletic capital by sports media and college recruiters correlated to the number of athletic scholarship opportunities each participant was able to evaluate in the *search* stage.

Search. The data analysis confirms that the three categories of predisposition for PI high school football recruits correlate with three distinct recruiting experiences. While the national ranking system for high school football recruits is convoluted and often more problematic than helpful – a process further complicated by sports media companies that report different rankings on the same individuals –these rankings play heavily into the *search* stage of this research population. Again, the three predisposition categories are the 3-5 star recruits, 0-2 star recruits, and non-ranked high school football players.

⁷ Football “effort” is defined here as the amount of time, preparation and focus put into football as a pathway to college.

3-5 star high school football recruits. 16 of the 120 participants of this study were identified as 3-5 star high school football recruits with multiple scholarship offers, and at least one from a Power 5 school. Participants share how FBS schools had identified and recruited them as early as eighth grade. One participant was offered in ninth grade through a network of youth, high school and college football coaches, and all of the 3-5 star recruits in this study had their first offer no later than Spring of their junior year.⁸ One 3-5 star participant shared his recruiting process and how he created his “choice set”:

I had done well at several elite camps like the AIGA camp and the Rivals camp. After that several college coaches came to my high school to visit and talk with me. Wyoming was the first to offer me a scholarship during my junior season, after that San Diego State, then Fresno State, and then the rest of the Mountain West schools. It wasn't until I attended the Arkansas elite camp, and got an offer from them, that the bigger schools started offering me. Once I got my UCLA offer, the rest of the Pac 12 schools and several other Power 5 programs offered me. My family and I really took a look at my options, what schools fit my academic goals, what coaches we felt were honest and would support me, and then we narrowed it down to my top five schools before I made my decision.

This narrative reflects how institutions search and evaluate recruits, and through that process, how and when PI high school football players are able to search and evaluate the institutions. The “reciprocal” *search* process was unique to participants within the “3-5 star recruit” category.

0-2 star high school football recruits. 25 of the 120 participants of this study were identified as 0-2 star high school football recruits with at least one offer from an FCS football program, but no Power 5 offers. 0-2 star high school football recruits were often *searched* for by institutions, or recruited, “late” in the recruiting process. One FCS college coach elaborated on his reasons for offering recruits late in the process:

I would like to think that every kid I recruit has a dream of playing at our school, but the reality is he doesn't. Most kids who we end up signing [committing to us] believe they will play at a Power 5 school during their sophomore and junior years. I've thrown out offers to kids during their junior years, and though most of them are genuinely appreciative, you

⁸ Official written offers cannot be made until August 1, of recruits' senior year.

can still sense the lack of pure excitement. It's hard for me to gauge how interested a kid is in our school when he doesn't have a lot of interest at the time. I tend to save my offers for kids when they are in their senior years. Sometimes I even wait for their season to be over. The other big reason I don't like to throw offers out too early is I simply don't want to tip any "sleeper recruits" off to the big schools. Granted, everyone knows who everyone is, but the second a kid is offered, he has an immediate target on his back in which other schools are aiming much more at.

The strategy described by this FCS coach allows for lower-revenue schools to avoid wasting time and money on athletes that will accept scholarships from more “competitive” programs whose broadcasting contracts provide athletes more media exposure. Most of the 0-2 star recruits in this study were offered within the final 3-5 months leading up to National Signing Day.⁹ One 0-2 star participant shared about the brevity of his *search* process:

I only had one offer going into January of my senior year. Two weeks before Signing Day the coaches from the AIGA Foundation helped me pick up two more offers. I was able to fit in two official visits on the last two weekends of January, to Montana State and Sacramento State, before committing on Signing Day. Both the schools were able to come meet with me and my family on home visits three days before I took my official visits to their campus.

When offers are made late into the process, official visits must fit within a smaller time frame that already competes with high school game schedules, SAT/ACT tests, final exams and the December and January dead period (where institutions cannot have contact with recruits); thus, the search process is significantly curtailed for 0-2 star recruits. Some participants in this study were even offered after National Signing Day, although most college football programs have already committed their available scholarships by then.

Non-ranked high school football players. 79 of the 120 participants of this study were identified as non-ranked high school football recruits with no scholarship offers from any D1A or D1AA college football programs. This finding suggests that a majority of potential high school

⁹ The first National Signing day occurs on the first Wednesday of February. This is the first day that high school football recruits can sign their Letters of Intent (LOI) to the institution they wish to attend.

football recruits, even amongst targeted all-stars, are not receiving athletic scholarship offers. The non-ranked high school football players in this study required assistance in initiating the *search* stage for colleges, because Division 1A-AA college football programs had not identified them as “recruitable” candidates. Volunteers at the AIGA Foundation’s Polynesian high school football all-star event found out which participants did not have college athletic scholarship offers, and assisted these non-ranked high school football players in reaching out to the organization’s network of college coaches. One non-ranked participant at the event shared his college *search* experience:

I have started varsity since I was a sophomore, and have competed well at every camp I have been to, but I don't have an offer yet. If I don't receive a D1 offer, than I will go to a junior college to prove myself. The coaches from the AIGA Foundation got me some D2, D3 and NAIA offers, but I know I can play D1 ball. Coach [name deleted] said that the D2 schools can offer me half academic scholarship and half athletic scholarship, but I don't have the grades or the [test] scores to get the academic scholarship. If junior college doesn't work out, my grandfather can get me into the union.

Many of the non-ranked participants shared their *search* process was often limited due to logistical access to college coaches in environments where they could be evaluated, since the NCAA heavily regulates this process, and the financial barriers in traveling and attending camps and recruiting events at college campuses. The narrative above was common amongst non-ranked players that were not offered a Division 1A-AA scholarship, and many were in the process of deciding whether playing football would remain a college value/determinant for them. Many in this non-ranked group were also considering to play at a community college to gain exposure for D1A-AA football, or play for a Division 2, Division 3, or NAIA college football program. These non-D1 programs are able to offer partial athletic aid, and/or academic aid, but not full athletic scholarships. These non-D1 programs also do not have the recruiting budgets that D1A-AA programs have to engage recruits in the *search* process.

Factors that Shaped the Choice Process

The descriptive analysis provided in Exhibit 1- Additional Findings in the Appendix indicate that although all participants had similar college values, 0-2 star and 3-5 star participants attributed more importance of nearly all six components of their community cultural wealth in their “college choice” values than non-ranked participants. The hypothesis that emerged from this finding was that the significance of an athletic scholarship offer on the “college choice” for non-ranked high school football recruits could be influencing the level of importance they are attributing to other college values and determinants, while 0-2 star and 3-5 star recruits who already have scholarship offers have the privilege of putting higher levels of importance on those same values and determinants. That is, would non-ranked recruits, if given the breadth of college choice afforded by scholarship offers from multiple collegiate division-1 programs, rank college choice values and determinants differently? Would non-ranked recruits assign more importance to certain determinants if receiving an athletic scholarship were not an issue of concern? The following section explains how this study tested this hypothesis.

Non-ranked high school football players. 86% of the non-ranked participants mentioned that playing football, and/or getting a scholarship offer, would determine their college decision. When asked, “What is important in selecting a college/university?” participants shared various college values that had to do with academics, home and family, religion, and comfortability. Here are some responses non-ranked participants shared to this question:

What is important to you in selecting a college/university?
It has my intended major, and is really good at producing Graphic Designers into the work force.
The overall university and business program they provide plus job placement after graduating.
I feel comfortable on the campus and I like the city it's in.
College campus is close to home.
Family in the area of campus.

Figure 1: College “Choice” Values for Non-ranked

However, when asked, “Ultimately, what will determine where you will commit, or attend?” 44% of non-ranked participants shared that a scholarship offer will ultimately determine what college they will attend. This finding suggests that 44% of non-ranked participants are making college decisions that misalign with their college values, because an athletic scholarship is the deciding factor. Figure 2 illustrates the dichotomy that exists between what non-ranked participants say is important in their “college choice” versus how they are actually making college decisions:

What is important to you in selecting a college/university?	Ultimately, what will determine where you will commit or attend?
What is important to me is that I get to go to a university that has my field of study and a football program	Wherever I get offered I will go
The education and the football program.	Offering a full scholarship.
Fits my strengths Has my major	Where I can play the most
An offer to play football	An offer to play football
The academics of the school.	Scholarship
I have friends that play or attend the school.	Scholarship. Otherwise will start my LDS Mission
Education, community, culture, well rounded athletic program.	Money situations and comfort.
How much do my parents have to pay?	If I have a scholarship to pay for it, I will go there.
A school that me and my family are comfortable with.	I am not looking to go to a specific school. I will most likely commit to the school that offered me first.
Distance from home, majors that are offered, the environment that the school has	The best offer, and the best fit for me
Play football	Scholarship offer
Quality of academic support	Where I can play football
I want to have a good feel for the college. A good relationship with the coaches. And a good environment overall.	The right fit at the college and a full ride scholarship.
A relationship with my coach and academics.	Scholarship offer or affordability.
I want a program that best fits my education, supports me with school and sports. I am not picky just want to play a sport I love and furthering my education.	How much they offer

Figure 2: College “Choice” Values vs. College Decision Determinants for Non-ranked

0-2 star ranked high school football players. 60% of the 0-2 star ranked participants mentioned that playing football, and/or getting a scholarship offer, would determine their college

decision. 28% of the 0-2 star participants shared that a scholarship offer will ultimately determine what college they will attend. Figure 3 illustrates some examples of the dichotomy that exists between what 0-2 star participants say is important in their “college choice” versus how they are actually making college decisions:

What is important to you in selecting a college/university?	Ultimately, what will determine where you will commit or attend?
I like the college football coaches	Scholarship offer
Teammates, coaches, and the environment	Scholarship offer
Academics of the school. Placement rate in the NFL Excellent education	Scholarship offer
Parents want me to go there.	Scholarship offer
I want to feel my college to feel like a home away from home.	What will determine my choice of commitment will be the opportunity of my chances of playing.
My parents wanting me to go there.	Depth chart on my position. If my family can get to watch me play. Scholarship offer!
Being close to home.	Scholarship and close to home
Parents want me to go	Scholarship offer

Figure 3: College “Choice” Values vs. College Decision Determinants for 0-2 Star

While the same dichotomy existed for 0-2 star participants between their college “choice” values and college decision determinants as with non-ranked participants, college values remain an important part of understanding what components of community cultural wealth are going unrealized in the “college choice” for PI high school recruits. The narrative of one 0-2 star participant suggests that cultural capital is important in the decision making process, but one that may be unrealized by a majority of this study population:

I want to commit to a college football program filled with other Polys like me. Being surrounded with Polys [makes it] very competitive, but it brings all of us together as a family.

3-5 star ranked high school football players. 27% of the 3-5 star ranked participants mentioned that some component of football was important to their college choice. None of the 3-5 star participants mentioned “scholarship” as a determinant of where they will attend college.

Figure 3 compares some of the most salient college choice values of the 3-5 star participants with

the determinants of their actual college decisions:

What is important to you in selecting a college/university?	Ultimately, what will determine where you will commit or attend?
The feel is right	Relationships and feel
I consider what the university has for me after college is over.	It is a family decision, but academic majors and football will help me decide where I commit to.
Relationships	Relationships
It fits me and has great academic and football program	My parents and I
School will provide great alumni/professional network	School will provide great alumni/professional network
Food	Coaching Staff
Relationships	Relationships and academic support
Academic support	Its a family decision
My major and academic support	Major and academic support
Academics	Which school is the best fit for me
Weather	Weather
If I will grow mentally, physically, socially and most importantly spiritual.	Where I will grow into the best version of me possible.

Figure 4: College “Choice” Values vs. College Decision Determinants for 3-5 Star

Implications and Significance

Future Research

While PIs are strategically targeted for their athletic labor they maintain the lowest graduation rates of any group of any sport in the NCAA (2015), which suggests that the relationship between the PI community and US higher education has become one of exploitation. The low graduation rates suggest there are discrepancies between what PI high school football recruits believed was important in their college choice and what they actually need to persist at four-year universities. A continuation of this research as a longitudinal study could help us to understand the high attrition of PI college football players. Is the high attrition because PI high school football recruits are making college decisions that do not align with their college values/determinants, or because they are arriving to campuses that are not designed to acknowledge and develop their cultural capital?

Qualitative data from this future research is necessary to inform policy makers, faculty, administrators and the staff that support this population, on how they can minimize attrition and retain the Pacific Islander football players they recruit. If institutional agents continue to purposefully and intentionally recruit PI football players (Uperesa, 2014; Kukahiko, 2015), this research could help to identify interest convergence opportunities between the institutions that financially benefit from college football, and the athletic labor that represent its profit centers. That is, transition and retention of PI college football players serve the interest of both the institutions and the PI community, by maximizing each party's return on investment. In this way, interest convergence can be realized by funding culturally appropriate programs that enhance transition, well-being, sense of belonging, and student persistence (Allen, 1991; Morita, 2013; Tierney, 1999; Wright, 2003). Marketing this information and the success of these programs to future generations of PI high school football recruits should also improve an institution's ability to secure commitments from top recruits during the *search* stage of their college decision making process.

Conclusion

This study revealed that PI high school football recruits had similar college values despite their different recruiting experiences, but only the highly recruited PI high football recruits had the ability to exercise "college choice" as framed by traditional models. Our findings reflect that there are three distinct categories of PI high school football recruits, with very different college recruiting experiences depending on the amount of athletic capital each has been able to accumulate. Consequently, college football increases access to higher education for PI high school football recruits by lowering academic requirements at elite universities and providing

athletic aid, but the evaluation of athletic talent, position needs, and the limitation of scholarships at each college football program restricts this pipeline. Therefore, national college participation rates for PIs are not likely to gain significant increases through college football, and the dependency of this population on the accumulation of athletic capital has a majority of this study's participants attending colleges that do not align with their "college choice" values. The findings of this study suggest that a majority of PI high school football recruits are simply following the money (athletic aid), and perhaps narratives that romanticize college football should also consider critical perspectives. Yosso (2005) said the different forms of capital that Students of Color bring with them to the classroom often go unacknowledged or unrecognized, and for PI high school football recruits, their community cultural wealth also represents under-utilized assets in the college decision making process.

Appendix

Exhibit 1- Additional Findings

Athletic capital. Figure 1, represents the predisposition of 0-2 star and 3-5 star participants, and the importance they put on the influence of athletic capital in making their college decision. 0-2 star recruits had an average of 2.68 offers from D1A-AA schools, but no Power 5 scholarship offers. All 3-5 star recruits had at least five scholarship offers from D1A-AA schools, with a range for 85% of this group between 5-30 offers, and several outliers with 50+ offers whom the participants called “5 stars” during the interviews. The survey used a Likert scale that asked participants to rank the importance of certain aspects of “college choice” from 1-5, with 1 being not important at all, to 5 being very important. There were only two questions that varied by more than half a point between the two groups.

Athletic Capital	Predisposition	Search	Non-ranked	0-2 Star	3-5 Star
Athletic capital is the significance that student-athletes place on their sport, perceptions of their athletic ability, opportunities afforded to them because of their athletic talent, or the value of their athletic labor assigned by institutional agents, the general student body, alumni, college sports fans, college sports analysts and NFL recruiters.	0-2 star PI high school football recruits had an average of 2.68 offers from D1 schools, with no offers from Power 5 schools.	How important is the quality of the strength and conditioning program?	4.2	4.44	4.4
		How important is the team’s Defense or Offense fitting your strengths?	3.77	4.28	3.67
		How important is the quality of the athletic facilities?	3.75	3.88	3.4
		How important is being recruited at the position you want to play?	3.38	3.84	4.33
	3-5 star PI high school football recruits all had at least 5 offers from D1A-AA schools, and at least one from a Power 5 football program. The range for 85% of this group was between 5-30 offers, with several outliers of 50+ offers.	How important is it for you to start as an incoming freshmen?	3.06	3.63	2.85
		How important is for the Football program to be in a major conference?	2.68	3.08	3.33
		How important is having nationally televised games?	2.54	3.16	2.67
		How important is it that the school is nationally ranked in college football?	2.25	2.76	2.47
		How important is the school offering a 4-year scholarship instead of a 1-year renewable scholarship	4	4.58	4.6

Figure 1: Athletic Capital in Predisposition and Search stage

Academic capital. At the time the surveys were distributed, the minimum GPA required by the NCAA to receive an athletic scholarship was 2.0, and accordingly, the AIGA Foundation used the same standard to select the participants of this study for the Polynesian high school football all-star event. Therefore, the population may, or may, not be representative of the larger populations' GPA. However, national data shows that 81% of PI high school students want to obtain a bachelor's degree, but only 38% matriculate to college, and only 18% graduate with their bachelor's degree, which coincides with the 17% of PIs that met all four college readiness benchmarks for English, reading, math, and science (EPIC, 2014). This tells us that PIs want to participate in higher education, but barriers or challenges exist that are discouraging their matriculation, and their eventual transition and persistence. This national data also supports the qualitative data collected for this study that suggests academic capital is an important part of the participants' college values/determinants.

Academic Capital	Predisposition	Search	Non-Ranked	0-2 Star	3-5 Star
Academic capital is both the level of academic performance reflected by GPA and standardized test scores, and the attitude, level of importance and academic confidence to succeed once given the opportunity to attain a college degree.	16% have a GPA > 2.1 < 2.6, 39% > 2.5 < 3.1, 29% > 3.0 < 3.6, and 16% > 3.5	How important is having significant academic support while playing football?	4.57	4.76	4.86
	39% have not taken AP classes, 46% have taken 1-3, and 14% have taken 4 or more.	How important is having high quality academics at the school?	4.38	4.46	4.87
	According to the 2012 ACT report, about 81% of all PI students aspire to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher, but only 38% matriculate to college, and only 18% earn a bachelor's degree (EPIC, 2014).				
	EPIC (2014) reported that only 17% of PI high school graduates met all four college readiness benchmarks for English, reading, math, and science, a rate less than average (25%) and much lower than White students (32%).				

Figure 2: Academic Capital in Predisposition and Search stage

Aspirational Capital. 20% of the participants plan to go directly to the NFL after college, 21% wish to get a job in college athletics, 36% plan to enter the workforce, 7% plan to attend graduate school, 5% plan to join the military, with the remaining 18% hoping to serve their community through missions, law enforcement, or non-profit work. The fact that all the participants put such a high importance in having their intended major at the university they attend, suggests that they understand college can prepare them for professions after football. Whether these PI high school football recruits are allowed to enter those majors once they are at college, is a question for another study.

Aspirational Capital	Predisposition	Search	Non-Ranked	0-2 Star	3-5 Star
<p>Yosso (2005) defines Aspirational capital as the “ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real or perceived barriers” (pp. 77-78). Aspirational capital is an individual’s desire or ability to overcome present circumstances, and/or to surpass parent’s current occupational/socioeconomic status.</p>	<p>Many participants shared that they want to earn a college degree, so that they can get a good job, and take care of their current and future family.</p>	<p>How important is it that your future position coach produces NFL players?</p>	<p>2.75</p>	<p>3.60</p>	<p>2.8</p>
	<p>20% plan to go directly to the NFL after college, 21% wish to get a job in college athletics, 36% plan to enter the workforce, 7% plan to attend graduate school, 5% plan to join the military, with the remaining 18% hoping to serve their community through missions, law enforcement, or non-profit work.</p>	<p>The school offers my intended major.</p>	<p>4.04</p>	<p>4.4</p>	<p>4.5</p>
	<p>60% would still go to college if they did not receive a scholarship.</p>				
	<p>50% said that their career goals after football require a college degree.</p>				

Figure 3: Aspirational Capital in Predisposition and Search stage

Social capital. While Hossler and Gallagher (1987) suggest that low SES and being a student of Color are factors of attrition in education, the participants of this study were motivated to participate in higher education to improve the circumstance for themselves and their families. The participants seemed to understand that as institutional agents, college coaches were important relationships to have, that existing friends could help them transition and persist, and not only what they learned but who they met could deliver significant returns after college football. During focus group interviews, the participants seemed to share a collective Pacific Islander identity that understood financial struggles; in fact, they seemed to celebrate not being “rich kids.” One participant felt that his high school coaches expected him to be tougher than the rich white kids on his team because he was Polynesian. He said that it made him play through injuries.

Social Capital	Predisposition	Search	Non-Ranked	0-2 Star	3-5 Star
Bourdieu (1977) argues that social capital are forms of assets that an individual has by their social status that can be converted to economic resources. Social capital can be the level of access to economic resources, or the restriction to such resources.	35% of total household incomes are less than \$50, 000, 41% between \$50k-100k, and 24% above \$100k.	How important is it for the college to provide a strong professional/alumni network after graduation?	3.86	4.32	3.8
	51% receive food stamps, reduced lunch or social security	How important is having a good, working relationship with college coaches?	4.13	4.42	4.53
	EPIC (2014) reported that PIs have a higher national poverty rate (15% versus 14%), a greater proportion who are low-income (35% versus 32%), and a lower per capita income (19,051 versus \$27,334)				

Figure 4: Social Capital in Predisposition and Search stage

Cultural capital. Open-ended responses and interviews suggest that participants perceive their cultural capital as an essential part of their identity. A recurring theme in participant narratives was their commitment to family, and their responsibility to contribute to their family’s social mobility through their participation in college football. The descriptive analysis of cultural capital, however, seems to indicate a lower importance for cultural resources in their college experience. This could mean that participants have been indoctrinated to understand education as an anti-cultural institution, that including cultural resources in their college values/determinants is unrealistic, and/or that culture is anti-intellectual.

Cultural Capital	Predisposition	Search	Non-Ranked	0-2 Star	3-5 Star
<p>Yosso (2005) suggests that cultural knowledges nurtured in the ‘ohana (family) can develop courage, confidence, or strength from a “sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (p.79). For PI high school football recruits, cultural capital can manifest itself in their commitment to 1) honor their community with their college education and athletic performance, and 2) the advancement of community well-being. Cultural capital can also found within their PI identities, in the cultural values and characteristics of PI peoples, for example, devotion to God, family, tradition, and respect (Morita, 2013).</p>	<p>Family, Faith and Respect are embedded into the cultural fabric, and therefore, the identities of many Pacific Islanders.</p>	<p>College campus seems to welcome different cultures, races, sexual identities, and economic backgrounds.</p>	3.89	4.20	3.79
	<p>Kuleana (responsibility) to family and community are cultural practices that have names and are acted upon, not simply "morals" (i.e., fa’a samoa).</p>	<p>Something felt right during my official college visit.</p>	3.96	4.16	4.57
	<p>Over one in seven PIs are foreign born (14%), and nearly 29% speak a language other than English at home.</p>	<p>I like the surrounding community/city/town</p>	3.67	4.12	3.93
	<p>Many of the participants shared that they feel culturally connected to the sport of football, and that they are able to honor their family and their community when they perform well.</p>	<p>Having numerous cultural, community, social, or political organizations on campus.</p>	3.04	3.36	2.86
	<p>Participants also share that because they are Polynesian, they are expected to be tougher than teammates of other ethnic/racial groups.</p>	<p>There are teammates, coaches, student body, professors, and community look like me and understand my culture.</p>	3.04	3.44	3.36
		<p>Having numerous off campus activities (Pacific Islander fraternity, surfing, etc.)</p>	2.91	2.92	2.86
		<p>How important is having college coaches that are from the same culture/race/ethnicity?</p>	2.45	3.00	3.21
		<p>Having Family in the area of campus.</p>	2.38	2.92	2.86
		<p>My Parents really want me to attend the school.</p>	2.71	3.28	3.64
			<p>The campus location is close to my home area.</p>	2.29	2.60

Figure 5: Cultural Capital in Predisposition and Search stage

Navigational capital. The academic achievement of our participants’ parents was similar to the national data for PIs, but this does not mean that they lacked navigational resources. First, many families had relatives that participated in college football. Second, many participants had been recruited to play at competitive high school football programs frequented by the myriad of college recruiters. Thirdly, the Polynesian high school all star event, the AIGA Foundation held college recruiting meetings for the players, sent player information out to their network of college coaches, and set up small group sessions for participants to ask volunteers about the specific college football programs they played for. While 71.05% of the participants said that they had varying degrees of discussion around the rules and regulations surrounding NCAA eligibility for athletic scholarships, 100% of the participants assumed all offers were 4-year scholarships, and none knew whether they had been offered a one-year or four-year scholarship.

Navigational Capital	Predisposition	Search	Non-Ranked	0-2 Star	3-5 Star
<p>Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions, or the access to resources to help one do so. Yosso (2005) extended the notion to include “critical navigational skills to maneuver through structures of inequality permeated by racism” (p. 80). Within the context of college sports, the recruiting process is complicated by NCAA rules, with guidelines and policies that change every year. Knowledge of how to navigate this muddled process could significantly impact opportunities for athletic scholarships, and the ability to pursue professional aspirations beyond college choice and degree attainment.</p>	<p>35% of the participants’ parents graduated from high school, 32.5% went to college, but only 18.33% graduated with a bachelor’s degree, 9.17% earned a Masters degree, and none of our participants parents earned a Doctorate or Professional degree.</p>	<p>How important is having a good, working relationship with college coaches?</p>	4.3	4.52	4.80
		<p>How important is having a good relationship with the college recruiter?</p>	4.13	4.42	4.53
	<p>18% of PIs in the US have a bachelor’s degree</p>		3.25	3.96	3.60
	<p>No participant in the 2014 or 2016 cohort knew if they were receiving a 1 or 4 year athletic scholarship.</p> <p>71.05% of the participants had varying degrees of discussion about the rules and regulations regarding recruiting, NCAA eligibility, scholarship options, requirements to transfer from one 4-year institution to another, or transferring from community colleges.</p>				

Figure 6: Navigational Capital in Predisposition and Search stage

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Staying In: Pacific Islander Cultural Racism Theory (PI-CRiT)

Museus and Quaye (2009) state, “if current racial and ethnic disparities in educational attainment persist, projections indicate that the numbers of college educated workers in the United States will fall short of those needed to sustain current levels of economic and social growth, a reality which may have devastating consequences for the nation’s economy” (p. 68). For example, Pacific Islander’s (PI) four-year graduation rates in 2013, was 26.7 percent compared to their white counterparts of 43.7 percent (US Department of Education, 2016). As economic pressures continue to confound PIs place in higher education, it will become increasingly more important to improve the persistence of those PI student-athletes who have circumvented the rising costs of higher education through “athletic scholarships.” The NCAA (2015), however, reported that the Football Championship Series (FCS) division, only graduated 11% of their PI college football players compared to 63% of their White counterparts. While PIs are strategically targeted for their athletic labor, the corresponding graduation rates suggest that colleges and universities are the only ones benefiting from “scholarship” agreements, and that the relationship between PI communities and US higher education has become one of exploitation.

This study operates under the hypothesis that higher education operates as a mechanism of US colonialism (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Wright & Balutski, 2016), and therefore, low PI graduation rates are a natural outcome of institutionalized cultural racism. The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate how culture and race impact the college experiences of PI football players, how those experiences enhance or inhibit their persistence in higher education, and to introduce PI-CRiT as a guiding framework. The following research questions guide this study:

- 3) How do PI college football players experience culture and race?
- 4) What experiences of culture and race enhance, or discourage, the transition and persistence of PI college football players?

Literature Review

This literature review informs the theoretical framework of this study, and challenges dominant paradigms in higher education that marginalize, obscure, and erase the unique experiences of PI college football players. Uperesa (2015) called this particular phenomenon the hyper/in-visibility of PI college football players. The research that support these dominant paradigms suggest that colleges and universities are intractable and hegemonic institutions where student success is the responsibility of the students, and entirely depend on their ability to adjust and accommodate the dominant culture. These frameworks, however, assume that students have no transformational value to the institutions they attend, and that students have everything to gain by their assimilation. This study operates on the hypothesis that institutions optimize learning environments when they recognize the nuances of a diverse student population, and respond accordingly to better serve them.

To understand the unique experiences of PI college football players, this literature review will define the hegemonic paradigm in US higher education, or the dominant culture, that determines “otherness” for this particular student population. The literature review will also consider foundational studies in higher education on student departure (Tinto, 1988), social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), factors that contribute to PI college football players’ academic success, and culturally specific and responsive frameworks that enhance PI college transition and persistence.

The Hegemony of US Higher Education

The hegemony of US higher education originates from its exclusive power over the politics of knowledge – the governance over what knowledge is valid, important, published, etc. – which have become the standards that impose the hegemonic identity, or dominant culture in higher education. Said’s (1993) discourse from the politics of knowledge to the politics of identity proposes that when politics of knowledge become hegemonic, it then reflects the superiority of the hegemonic identity, which then becomes the standard within the institutions ruled by that hegemony. This is illustrated in Benham and Heck’s (1998) examination of educational policies in Hawai‘i settler colonialist school systems.¹⁰ Their study uncovered how cultural values of the colonizing regime, or dominant culture, were impressed upon the colonized Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) subjects through its governance of the politics of knowledge. That led to the complete erasure of Kanaka Maoli culture from the public school system for nearly a century, cultural genocide, and the adoption of identities disconnected from Kanaka Maoli axiology, ontology, methodology, and epistemology. If institutions of higher education do not continue to evolve and accommodate the contemporary issues specific to PI cultural identities and communities, the academy risks becoming obsolete and irrelevant to this population.

Student Departure Model

Tinto’s (1988) student departure model, suggests that college freshman must disrobe their “home cultures” and instead adopt the dominant culture to achieve student success; consequently, and perhaps unknowingly, advocating for the continued assimilation,

¹⁰ Settler colonial school systems “enact the logic of elimination by suppressing Native histories and contemporary realities, by discounting Indigenous epistemologies and knowledge bases, and by individualizing and disciplining Native bodies” (Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2013, p. 24).

deculturalization and erasure of nonwhite students' cultures and communities. Tinto's model places the responsibility of socialization onto the student, a perspective that has increased the popularity of research in student "resilience," as opposed to institutional change. This dominant paradigm implies that PIs are participating and graduating at lower rates because they are unable, or unwilling, to disconnect themselves from their home culture. While the high attrition of PI college football players may have a high correlation to cultural dissonance¹¹ (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Museus, 2008), Tierney (1992,1999), insists that there is an institutional responsibility to preserve nontraditional college students' cultural integrity – students who are not white, middle class, and ages 18-24 – which is focused on the affirmation of students' cultural identities and enacted through "programs and teaching strategies that engage students' racial/ethnic backgrounds in a positive manner toward the development of more relevant pedagogies and learning activities" (p.84).

Social Reproduction Theory

Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) social reproduction theory argues that knowledges of the middle and upper classes are forms of capital that can be converted into economic resources, and that those born of "high" status in this hierarchal society are socially and culturally rich. This assumes then that "others" of lower economic status are socially and culturally poor. Bourdieu (1977) further asserts that habitus, an individual's view of the world and their place in it, is the product of social structure, producer of social practice, and the reproducer of social structure that "forges the unconscious unity of a class" (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 77). This habitus is transferrable,

¹¹ Cultural dissonance is the conflict caused by the inconsistencies between college students' home culture and the university campus culture (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012), or "the tension students feel as a result of incongruence between their cultural meaning-making-systems and new cultural information they encounter" (Museus & Quaye, 2009, p. 81).

and therefore, a college student born into low socioeconomic status may achieve sustained social mobility for herself/himself and their future generations by: 1) acquiring access to social capital through higher education and investing it into “fields,” or competitive markets, and 2) the assimilation of middle and upper class habitus. This is another foundational study in higher education that normalizes the assimilation of the dominant culture at the expense of “other” cultures, and perpetuates dominant research paradigms that insist cultural assimilation will promote “student success,” even when racial assimilation is impossible.

Predictors of Academic Success for Polynesian College Football Players

Keung (2014) used the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) to study what factors, or predictors, influence and impact Polynesian college football players’ academic performance. Keung (2014) found that 1) attitude toward behavior, 2) perceived behavioral control, and 3) subjective norm directly impact several types of motivation that ultimately make up student athletes’ intentions about their academic and athletic career, and consequently, their academic success. Attitude toward academic behavior, for example, reflects one’s willingness to exert effort towards their academic success. Perceived behavioral control is the confidence one has in their ability either academically and/or athletically, which can also influence their effort towards those corresponding goals, plans, or decisions. Subjective norm refers to “the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior” (Ajzen & Driver, 1991, p. 188), and is driven by ethnic identity, culture and family for PI college football players (Keung, 2014). This finding suggests that when the home culture is absent from the college experience of PI college football players, negative results may include 1) an unwillingness to exert effort towards academic or athletic success, 2) a decline of confidence in their academic or athletic ability, or 3) loss of motivation to perform academically or athletically.

Impact of Cultural Identity and Cultural Integrity on PI “Student Success”

Wright (2003) research highlighted the importance of Native Hawaiian identity in the transition and persistence of Kanaka Maoli students at the University of Hawai‘i. Her research called for institutions to make academic curriculum, programming and campus spaces responsive to students’ cultural identities to nurture a sense of belonging. The study also claims that colleges and universities best serve their students when implementing policies and practices that support students’ psychological, social and cultural well-being. Wright’s (2003) and Lomawaima & McCarty (2002) emphasize the importance of space, or pu‘uhonua (place of refuge), to recognize the cultural identities of Indigenous students, and to participate in their development by creating decolonized spaces on campus to cultivate them (Tierney, 1992,1999). Tierney’s (1992,1999) research similarly advocates for universities to enact cultural integrity on campus, or otherwise, maintain learning environments that alienate and isolate nontraditional students (Stanton-Salazar, 1997), and contribute to their cultural dissonance (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Museus & Quaye, 2009). Allen’s (1991) study substantiates the significance of cultural reinforcement on higher retention and graduation rates for black students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Theoretical Framework

This section responds to the conceptual gaps identified by the literature review, and offers Pacific Islander Cultural Racism Theory (PI-CRiT) as a guiding framework for this study. PI-CRiT is a framework of colonialism that 1) connects the history of US colonialism in the Pacific

to the contemporary circumstances of PI communities, 2) identifies forms of cultural racism¹² that operate within institutions of higher education, and 3) is ultimately fulfilled in the praxis of its seven tenets. Beginning with a brief history of Critical Race Theory (CRT), this section will explain the importance of both culture and race in critical frameworks, and how these lenses help to examine the unique experiences of PI college football players' in US higher education. Before introducing the seven tenets of PI-CRiT, this section will also describe its theoretical roots in TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and ŌiwiCrit (Wright & Balutski, 2014).

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) sprouted from Critical Legal Studies, a framework further developed by Derrick Bell (1979) to investigate how the US legal system created different sets of experiences and outcomes that privileged whites and maintained the subordination of African Americans. Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) then applied the theory to education, and since then the theory has been used to frame issues across multiple disciplines and contexts. However, traditional CRT focuses on the black and white binary, which is problematic when studying PI participation in American football. For example, the Racial and Gender Report Card for the NFL in 2013, reported all players within two racial categories: African-American and White (Lapchick, Beahm, Nunes, & Rivera-Casiano, 2013). While PIs are celebrated for their size, physicality and contribution to the most successful NFL teams (Corbett, 2015), they remain invisible within the data.

The Importance of Culture and Race in Critical Frameworks

PI communities' experiences within the US cannot be framed by race alone, and Howard (2015) addresses the importance of both race and culture in closing the educational achievement

¹² Consedine and Consedine (2005) define *cultural racism* as the assumption that one culture has the right, power and authority to define normality.

gap.¹³ It is the claim of both racial and cultural superiority that are the legacies of US Imperialism,¹⁴ and subsequently, US colonization of the Pacific. The history of US colonization has worked to eradicate Indigenous cultures by normalizing capitalist values, and therefore, perpetually marginalize Pacific Islander peoples through various forms of cultural racism (Grainger, 2006; Mayeda & Dutton, 2014; Okamura, 2008; Trask, 2006). Akumatsu (2002) states, “If cultural racism is like the air we breathe; if it is everywhere amongst us; if it is within the social discourses and social histories that shape our very identities; then we will enact racist thoughts and practices without necessarily realising that we are doing so, or realising the effects on other people’s lives” (p. 50). In short, race alone is not responsible for the persisting mechanisms of colonization that normalize dominant ontology, axiology, epistemology and methodology in US higher education today.

Colonialism as a Framework

Racism is an inherent symptom of the process that is colonization (Smith, 1999), but identifying the symptom is different than identifying the process by which power structures are built, reified and evolve over time. Policies and educational reform that treat the symptom do not address forms of cultural racism that operationalize the process of colonization. The first goal of the colonizer is to eradicate Indigenous culture, because living Indigenous cultures inhibit assimilation to the dominant culture and encourage Native resistance (Silva, 2004). Lomawaima and McCarty (2002) suggest that while the US colonial education system “masquerades” as a

¹³ Howard (2015) defines the achievement gap as “the discrepancy in educational outcomes between various student groups” (p. 11), and insists that comparisons “must be informed by both a historical understanding of the experiences of those groups in the United States, and an examination of the correlation between their systemic exclusion from educational opportunities and the current state of their educational performance” (p.12).

¹⁴ Imperialism is generally understood as the policy of extending the rule or authority of an empire or nation over foreign countries, or of acquiring and holding colonies and dependencies.

tool for equal opportunity, its process of standardization has continued to marginalize Native peoples. Standardization is a persistent strategy and operational tactic of US colonization, achieved through the compulsory education of Pacific Islanders within settler colonialist school systems that institutionalize cultural racism (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013).

As a result of US colonization in the Pacific, PI community issues extend beyond race and equity into various issues of sovereignty (i.e., intellectual, cultural, political, etc.). While racial oppression has certainly influenced the opportunities for PIs to access US higher education, but it does not explain the experiences of anomie¹⁵ and aboriginalism¹⁶ found in PI communities. Alfred (2009, p. 50) explains that anomie and aboriginalism are contemporary outcomes of US colonialism, and are products of the unresolved historical trauma caused by three of its directives: 1) Ongoing multigenerational processes of dispossession and oppression; 2) Violent and systematic marginalization and assimilation; and, 3) Forced acculturation to Christianity and forced integration to market capitalism. Alfred (2009) suggests that the enduring function of colonialism enables it to be used as a theoretical framework to investigate its psychophysical effects¹⁷ on Indigenous people within institutions of the colonial regime. College football has enabled institutions of US higher education to maintain the colonization of PI communities by industrializing sport (Holthaus, 2011), indenturing PI college football players

¹⁵ Alfred (2009) defined anomie as “the state of profound alienation that results from experiencing serious cultural dissolution, which is then the direct cause of serious substance abuse problems, suicide and interpersonal violence” (p.49).

¹⁶ Alfred (2009) defined aboriginalism as “the social and cultural reimagining of genocide, is based on the idea that what is integral to Indigenous peoples is an irrelevant relic, and that if First Nations are to have a viable future, it will be defined by and express itself only at the discretion of the dominant society” (p. 51).

¹⁷ Trask (2006) also discusses the psychophysical effects of colonization and states, “neo-colonialism refers not only to dominant colonial retentions but also to psychological injuries suffered by the colonized that continue to wound our internal and external lives” (pp. 102-103).

(Branch, 2011; Edwards, 1991; Hawkins, 2013), and profiting from them through the exploitation of their athletic labor (Beamon, 2008; Holthaus, 2011).

Theoretical Roots of PI-CRiT

TribalCrit. A prevalent component of my analysis is the prioritization of colonization within CRT, a precedent set by Brayboy (2005) who enhanced the CRT framework to incorporate the pervasive impact of US colonization on the contemporary circumstances of Native Americans. TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) stipulates that culture and epistemology also define the framework from which Native American experiences should be researched and understood. Here, I summarize Brayboy's (2005) nine tenets of TribalCrit that guide research on issues of Indigenous peoples in the US (pp. 429-430): 1) Colonization is endemic to society, 2) US policies towards Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, white supremacy, and a desire for material gain, 3) Indigenous people occupy liminal spaces, 4) Indigenous peoples desire cultural sovereignty (Tsosie, 2002),¹⁸ 5) Culture, knowledge and power have new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens, 6) Government and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked to assimilation, 7) Tribal ontology, axiology, epistemologies and visions for the future are central to understanding lived realities of Indigenous peoples, 8) Stories are ways of knowing, of collecting and gaining knowledge, and therefore, are legitimate sources of theory and methodology, and 9) Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways that compel scholars to enact critical praxis through activist research.

ŌiwiCrit. Research on Pacific Islanders in higher education should not only create new

¹⁸ Tsosie (2002) defines cultural sovereignty as the process of Indigenous peoples reframing the content of Native sovereignty through a Native lens, or through their own cultural and spiritual values, rather than "western" jurisprudential ideals.

knowledge, but also empower PI communities to create praxis from this knowledge, thus, empowering them to create a future of their own making. Labrador and Wright (2011) first introduced the need for a Pacific Islander CRT to “incorporate the experiences and political struggles of Pacific Islanders that focus more on ideas of indigeneity, land, and sovereignty” (p. 139) when functioning within the context of Asian American Studies. Recently, Wright & Balutski (2014) proposed ŌiwiCrit and defines specific tenets for framing the research of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi in higher education. Wright and Balutski (2014) state that ŌiwiCrit “enables us to simultaneously name the oppression, whether structural, normative, or overt, while helping us to reframe the issues and build equitable educational environments” (p. 3).

While ŌiwiCrit is built on the CRT principles of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Brayboy (2005), the authors clearly direct their narrative to Kanaka ‘Ōiwi scholars. Three of their five tenets of ŌiwiCrit are: 1) Aloha ‘Āina, 2) Kuleana, and 3) an insistence that consequences of colonialism and occupation are pervasive and unique to Hawai‘i in its exploitation of ‘āina and appropriation of identity. The first two tenets are fundamental pillars of Hawaiian epistemology that counter the US educational principles of individualism and meritocracy. The third tenet pertains to the awakening and realization of a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi critical consciousness. Wright and Balutski (2016) focus their message on empowering Kanaka ‘Ōiwi to occupy theorizing spaces and use ŌiwiCrit to create our own narratives with our own voices and from our own way of conceptualizing the world, within academic spaces dominated and controlled by the colonizing regime.

PI-CRiT

This paper offers Pacific Islander Cultural Racism Theory (PI-CRiT) as a theoretical framework of colonialism that ensures research (a) of PIs in higher education are historically

contextualized, (b) remediates harmful effects of cultural racism in higher education, and (c) deconstructs dominant research paradigms in higher education that normalize “western” ontology, axiology and epistemology. PI-CRiT offers seven tenets that guide the research of PIs in higher education:

- 1) The mechanisms and institutions of colonialism continue to fulfill their four directives through seven forms of cultural racism.
- 2) Re-center marginalized voices and PI epistemologies with cultural survivance: a decolonizing qualitative methodology that collects, analyzes and interprets mo‘olelo (stories) through culturally relevant and contemporary lenses.
- 3) PI activist research enacts critical consciousness development through cultural survivance, and necessary to challenge legal neutrality and cultural racism in US higher education.
- 4) US educational policies create positions of liminality for PI student-athletes that complicate their transition and persistence in higher education.
- 5) Kuleana to name experiences, policies, programs and structures of power that maintain cultural racism in U.S. higher education.
- 6) Reject blood quantum logic.
- 7) Develop Agents of Transformational Resistance (ATRs) and Revisionist Histories.

The four directives of colonialism and seven forms of cultural racism. The first tenet of PI-CRiT asserts that mechanisms and institutions of colonialism maintain *four essential directives* that are fulfilled by US education: 1) Rationalize and justify US colonization through slavery and genocide, 2) Maintain colonial privilege of conquerors, or normalize socioeconomic, political, and cultural superiority, 3) Relieve settler colonialist of guilt and historical

responsibility, and 4) Integrate and subjugate conquered peoples into the colonial regime (i.e., market capitalism). These four directives are enabled by educational policies, curriculum, programming and leadership that operationalize *seven forms of cultural racism*: objectification (dehumanization), epistemicide, erasure, elitism (i.e., racism, sexism, etc.), colorblindness (whiteness, individualism, and meritocracy), deculturalization, and symbolism (i.e., stereotypes, symbols of dominant values).

Cultural racism occurs when the culture of the colonial regime becomes the default standard “by which all other groups of colour are compared, evaluated and made visible. Racial minorities are judged using this standard and often found to be lacking, deviant, inferior, or abnormal” (Addy, 2008, p. 11). Consedine & Consedine (2005) define cultural racism as the assumption that one culture has the right, power and authority to define “normality.” PI-CRiT predicts that when PI student-athletes are exposed to institutions in higher education that fulfill the four directives of colonialism through its seven forms of cultural racism, there will be experiences of self-hate, cultural dissonance (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Museus, 2008), liminal identities, psychophysical trauma, and perceptions of exploitation as athletic laborers.

Objectification. This study defines objectification as a process of dehumanization by treating human beings as objects, and/or profit centers. Within the sports industrial complex, student-athletes are the profit centers in a multi-billion-dollar industry (Holthaus, 2010). The Ed O’Bannon case claimed that the NCAA and their membership institutions have exploited student-athletes and have been allowed to profit from their likeness in perpetuity. In 2014, the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of O’Bannon, a former collegiate athlete, and “all others similarly situated,” but the NCAA and its member institutions have been decidedly undecided on how to respond to the ruling (McCann, 2014). While there have been several attempts to relieve

some of the exploitation by offering “four-year athletic scholarships,” 1-year renewable scholarships remain the norm and pro-student-athlete educational policies have not been standardized, and remain within the purview of the individual institutions (Byers, 1995; McCann, 2014; McCormick & McCormick, 2006). Objectification is operationalized within higher education when the athletic labor of student-athletes is more valuable to the institution than their cultural and racial identities as students.

Epistemicide. This study defines epistemicide as the destruction of cultural ways of thinking, in order to normalize dominant ways of thinking. Epistemicide has “valorized and affirmed western epistemology and absolved it from its existential and epistemological violence against Indigenous epistemology” (Lebakeng, Phalane, & Dalindjebo, 2006, p. 71). This process continues to standardize a politics of knowledge in US higher education that “privilege western symbols, rituals and behaviours” (Lebakeng et al, 2006, p. 70), and therefore, Nakata, Nakata, Keech & Bolt (2012) contend that critical theory and decolonizing methodologies are forms of epistemic disobedience essential in countering epistemicide. Thus, PI-CRiT calls for a PI methodology that marginalizes dominant symbols, rituals and behaviors by centering Indigenous rituals (‘awa ceremony), symbols (kakau), and behaviors (kauhale). Epistemicide is also operationalized in higher education when PI student-athletes lack the space to analyze and interpret knowledge through their cultural and racial lenses, or when those spaces are limited and defined for them (i.e., spaces amongst other PIs through prayer, song, dance, or only on the football field).

Erasure. This study defines erasure as the process 1) to negate, suppress, or remove people, or their culture, from an academic environment, 2) to withhold information that maintains institutional power over athletic labor, or 3) to erase evidence of their experiences

through the obliteration of writing, recorded material, or data. Erasure is operationalized in US higher education in various ways, and several examples are specific to college football players. First, college football players are required to sign 1-year renewable contracts that are marketed to them as “full scholarships,” which many incorrectly assume are for the duration of their degree earning tenures.¹⁹ These contracts also do not address necessary health care for players that incur injuries caused by college football. It is not until college football players arrive to campus that they are asked to sign a waiver that indemnifies the university from any unpaid medical expenses, and players are prohibited from participating in any team sanctioned activity until the waiver is signed. Since 2005, the NCAA requires that student-athletes at member institutions have accident insurance, but does not require institutions to pay for it (Sheely, 2015). Currently, educational policies do not require institutions to provide transparency in what medical expenses they are paying for – or what medical expenses college players are left with – and ignore altogether the long-term psychophysical and financial consequences of football injuries that require health care after college players leave the institutions.²⁰

There is also the literal erasure of information, research and discussions on the degenerative brain disease chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) caused by the number of

¹⁹ In 1973, the NCAA made a total break from its original four-year scholarship model and allowed athletic scholarships to be renewable on an annual basis. This shift enabled the cancelation of an athlete’s scholarship at the end of one year for virtually any reason, including injury, lack of contribution to team success, the need to make room for a more talented recruit, or failure to fit into a coaches’ style of play (Byers, 1995; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Yasser, 2012). In 2012, the NCAA “revived” the multiyear scholarship (Sack, McComas & Cakan, 2014). It is important to note, however, that multiyear scholarships were simply made available for member institutions to use at their discretion, making them the exception, not the standard.

²⁰ The NCAA Catastrophic Injury Insurance provides \$20 million in lifetime benefits to student-athletes who become “totally disabled” while practicing or playing, but the NCAA defines totally disabled as “complete loss of sight or hearing, loss of use of at least two limbs, loss of the ability to speak or severely diminished mental capacity (Sheely, 2015).

collisions players endure over a career in the sport of football. Football players of all ages are treated for concussions but not educated on CTE, a disease that has claimed the lives of at least 87 NFL football players including Samoan prodigy, and Hall of Fame inductee, Junior Seau (Vrentas, 2015). A recent study presented at the American Academy of Neurology in 2016, found signs of traumatic brain injuries in more than 40 percent of retired NFL players (Conidi, 2016). This erasure in college football exists despite 1) the \$20 million dollars that the NFL has spent on developing technologies that diagnose and prevent traumatic brain injuries, 2) the blockbuster movie “Concussion” that revealed the erasure of scientific evidence connecting football collisions to CTE, and 3) the \$765 million dollars that the NFL spent to settle the lawsuit brought by 4500 players that alleged the NFL concealed the dangers of head trauma (Vrentas, 2015).

Lastly, the “critical mass argument” – the notion that relatively small numbers of PIs justify their invisibility within data collection – is used to validate the absence of funding for culturally relevant support services, programming, and curriculum. The aggregation of PIs within the pan-ethnicity of the “model minority,” or Asian Pacific Islander affiliation, is an example of how the critical mass argument is operationalized, and contributes to PI invisibility within educational outcome data.²¹ The invisibility of PI data leads to common sense paradigms that exclude PIs from conversations of sport and culture, race, education, politics, etc. Kaomea (2003) reasons that erasure necessitates methodologies that “include the persistent excavation of perspectives and circumstances that have been buried, written over, or erased” (p. 16).

Elistism. This study defines elitism as the power of a dominant group to maintain privilege and assert their superiority over other groups through discrimination, as in race, gender,

²¹ The aggregation of PI educational data within the API pan-ethnicity creates an invisibility in the research of PIs; specifically, the low educational outcomes for PIs, and certain Asian groups.

class, etc. Elitism identifies all the “isms” from cultural racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, etc. Elitism is inherently tied to power, specifically, the power to discriminate using contemporary socioeconomic and political processes that reify its many forms, and maintain their stratification (i.e., cultural, racial, etc.). While elitism is most often operationalized through microaggressions (Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), it is most egregiously operationalized in US higher education by institutions’ inability and unwillingness to educate and respond to its many forms. In this way, the intractability, stubbornness and embeddedness of elitism in US higher education maintains the structures, processes, and institutions of white supremacy in the US through the education of its leadership. This was illustrated in the 2016 election for US presidency, when Donald Trump received the larger share of white college-educated votes.

Colorblindness (whiteness, individualism and meritocracy). This study defines colorblindness as the inability or unwillingness to recognize race or culture as having an impact on individual, or group, experiences and opportunities. Colorblindness is the refusal of the dominant group to see white as a color, or having its own culture, while maintaining a commitment to the assimilationist agenda of Americanism. Colorblindness asserts that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s catapulted U.S. society into a post-racial era where race no longer matters. Whiteness, a “symptom” of colorblindness, serves three objectives: 1) “downplaying” white privilege and being unwilling “to name the contours of racism”; 2) avoiding to identify with a racial experience or group, thereby, normalizing Whiteness, and marginalizing ethnically identified groups as “other”; and 3) minimizing racist legacies by placing racism in a historical, rather than contemporary context (Addy, 2008; Ulluci & Battey, 2011, p. 1199). Other symptoms of colorblindness include meritocracy and individualism:

standards for success that are based on merit and individual accomplishments.²² Colorblindness is operationalized in higher education when physical diversity is ignored as having impact on students' of color sense of belonging, and therefore, transition and persistence.²³

Deculturalization. This study defines deculturalization as the educational process of destroying a people's culture (cultural genocide), and replacing it with a new culture. This is operationalized by the normalization of dominant culture within "core subjects" required of college students to fulfill graduation requirements in US higher education. When PI courses in history, language, religion, cultural practices, and service learning are available, they are offered only as course electives. While the introduction of the Diversity Requirement at some schools would allow such courses to fulfill a single course requirement, students are still obligated to complete courses in US history, English, Sciences and sometimes Religion to graduate. Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2013) "literacies are not politically neutral skill sets but social practices embedded within cultural and historical contexts. Literate practices as forms of knowledge are imbricated with power" (p. 36). The absence of cultural knowledge from the education of PI college football players can lead to a heightened sense of liminality and self-hate, as they are forced to participate in their own deculturalization to maintain their roles as athletic laborers.

Symbolism. This study defines symbolism as the process of attaching meaning to symbols, and/or defining an individual by generalizing the characteristics and values of a group, or community. Stereotyping is one way that symbolism is operationalized in US higher

²² As core values, meritocracy and individualism are destructive to PI communities whose people and cultural knowledge have survived on the principle of communalism and genealogical responsibility (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013). Fa'a Samoa, for example, literally means the Samoan way, and is an epistemology that prioritizes family and community before self, a realism that constructs Samoan identities (Ng Shiu, 2011).

²³ Colorblindness is also realized when educational policies fail to educate and create protocol that responds to elitism, even on "zero tolerance" campuses.

education, which is different from elitism because oppressed groups may stereotype other groups, but they do not have the power to discriminate based on those stereotypes. For dominant groups it is important to understand and identify stereotypes because of their ability to institutionalize the values they attribute to those symbols. This can directly impact the ways that PI student-athletes are able to maintain their own self-defined identities, or whether they live within the symbolic identities that are constructed for them by coaches, media, college football fans, etc. Symbolism is also operationalized in US higher education through physical diversity (or lack of), culturally and racially specific resources (or lack of), and other symbols that have institutional values attached to them (i.e., the names of buildings on campus).²⁴ Therefore, symbolism can impact the way that PI college football players interpret their athletic, academic, and cultural/racial value to the institution, their football program, and themselves.

PI methodology. The second tenet conjoins Indigenous methodologies to critical theory (Dunbar, 2008), as complementary and symbiotic components in the research of PIs in US higher education. In an Indigenous framework, the research methodology is the theory and analysis of how the research should proceed, while research methods are the techniques used for gathering evidence. The Indigenous methodologies address the politics and strategic goals of the researcher, while the methods become the “means and procedures through which the central problems of the research are addressed” (Smith, 1999, p. 143). What Smith (1999) makes clear in her *Twenty-five Indigenous Projects*, is that the application of Indigenous methodologies is intentional and purposeful, grounded in cultural knowledge and practices, but also operationalized through its specific methods, and therefore, replicable. PI-CRiT offers a PI

²⁴ In the Queen Lili‘uokalani Center for Student Services at the University of Hawai‘i, Manoa, the Native Hawaiian Students Services office decided to display the Hawaiian flag in its window, and in response, the cashier’s office next door put the American flag up in their window.

methodology that marginalizes dominant research paradigms, in order to, center the ontologies, axiologies and epistemologies of its PI participants. PI-CRiT utilizes three cultural constructs – ‘Awa ceremony (ritual), Kakau (rite of passage), and Kauhale (community) – to guide its PI methods and methodology.²⁵ Applying these cultural constructs (a) safeguard the data collection as a safe and familiar process for participants, (b) gathers multiple perspectives from diverse actors who inform issues around PI college football players, while (c) protecting the integrity of the qualitative data within a culturally contextualized analysis.

PI activist research enacts critical consciousness development through cultural survivance, and necessary to challenge legal neutrality and cultural racism in US higher education. The remaining five tenets of PI-CRiT necessitate an activist research design, because they enact standards for educational policies, pedagogy, and curriculum that enhance the college experience for PI students, improve their transition and persistence, and minimize mental well-being issues associated with colonial education systems (Mayeda & Dutton, 2014). Hale (2008) said activist research “is predicated on the collaborative relations of knowledge production with members of that group” (p. 20), and Goodyear-Ka’ōpua (2013) added that activist research “explicitly aims to contest existing relations of power and to envision and live new relations” (p. 40). Activist research is an outcome of PI critical consciousness development (Wright & Balutski, 2016), a form of critical praxis²⁶ (Freire, 1970), and a counter mechanism that

²⁵ Vaughn (2016) employed lei making as a methodology, to gather, interpret and present knowledge, and through this cultural construct, was able to understand the nuances and connection between place and people. In her study, Vaughn used three strands in the weaving together of her lei (or methodology): ‘Āina (land) as source, ‘Āina as people, and ‘Āina as ongoing connection and care.

²⁶ Critical praxis is the combination of knowledge and action, the inherent outcome of critical consciousness development (Freire, 1970).

challenges legal neutrality²⁷ (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The social embeddedness of settler colonial education systems requires that contemporary education “decolonize the minds” of generations of PIs that have been taught that their intelligence and success are represented by the accumulation of western symbols, values and knowledge outside of their own cultural ways of knowing (Thaman, 2003). The colonial process casts a wide web that captures everything within its system, numbing and desensitizing its victims with cultural racism; thus, PI critical consciousness not only liberates conquered peoples, but empowers each individual to deconstruct mechanisms of colonialism. The development of critical consciousness in PI student-athletes realizes the political potential within the PI communities, by equipping these catalysts with the ability to deconstruct contemporary issues with historical contexts, finding root issues to colonial oppression, empowering them to imagine alternate realities, and enacting social change through their critical praxis. This critical praxis is disruptive to the tranquility of the colonizing regime, because it refutes assimilation as a standard of citizenship.

PI critical consciousness is a reclamation of language, history, communal definitions of success, and ways of knowing as a matter of cultural survivance. Kukahiko and Barrera (2015) suggest that cultural survivance offers forms of experiential learning that develop students’ cultural and racial identities, which directly corresponds to their critical consciousness development. Vizenor (2008) defines cultural survivance as the “active survival and resistance to cultural dominance” (p. 24), a “renewal and continuity into the future rather than loss and mere

²⁷ Neutrality is the belief that doing nothing, despite the recognition of social injustice, is a neutral act, rather than a deliberate decision to maintain the status quo. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) suggests that neutrality is racism, and challenges traditional claims of legal neutrality, objectivity, and color-blindness (whiteness, individualism and meritocracy) in education as camouflages for the self-interest of dominant groups in American society.

survival through welcoming unpredictable cultural reorientations” (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013, p. xii). Survivance is perhaps the most vital political weapon of PI sociopolitical and educational movements, because PI culture disrupts the normality of colonial oppression, provides a counter narrative to eugenic explanations manufactured by dominant groups, and liberates PIs from the psychological shackles of whiteness and cultural racism (Alfred, 2009). Cultural survivance is enacted through this research, the methodology, the sharing of stories, and in its critical praxis.

US educational policies create positions of liminality. Brayboy (2005) describes liminality as an “in betweenness” where Indigenous peoples are both political and racialized beings. The following types of policies heighten PI college football players liminal identities as athletes, students and cultural/racial beings: 1) One-year renewable scholarships; 2) colorblind admissions and hiring policies that ignore physical diversity of student populations, administrators, faculty and staff; 3) policies that do not extend the medical care of injured college football players after they leave their college or university; 4) policies that ignore the importance of culturally responsive curriculum, programming and support; 5) aggregated data and research methodologies that continue to lump the educational experiences of PIs with those of “model minorities” (i.e., Asian Pacific Islander). These types of policies exacerbate PI college football players’ perceptions of belonging, enhance internalization of “imposter syndrome,” and remind PI football players of their perpetual roles as athletic laborers, whose cultural/racial knowledge and identities are non-consequential in their roles as students.

Kuleana to name experiences, policies, programs and structures of power that maintain cultural racism in U.S. higher education. Tengan (2008) explained experiences of anomie and aboriginalism in Kanaka Maoli males as outcomes of colonialism, but more specifically, due to the loss of kuleana: communal roles and responsibilities. Kuleana is not only

a responsibility to serve our family and community, but it is our right, authority, privilege, and burden. Wright & Balutski (2014) found that Kanaka Maoli students at the University of Hawai‘i often articulated kuleana as “the culmination of their educational journeys” – both as privilege and burden – and felt compelled to participate in higher education to improve the conditions in their community, or towards the betterment of lahui. If PI participation in higher education is to improve the conditions in our communities, PI students, staff, faculty and administrators must challenge cultural racism in educational research, programming, curriculum, and policies. Critical praxis is the fulfillment of our kuleana, which disrupts processes and structures that 1) fail to create decolonized spaces for PIs to gather and learn, 2) minimize cultural racism’s impact on PI educational experiences and outcomes, and 3) inhibit participation, transition, retention, and professional matriculation of PIs into academe.

Reject blood quantum logic. Blood quantum is a concept that “measures” race, and excludes cultural significance in the construction, or deconstruction, of identity. Kauanui (2008) states that “Blood quantum logic presumes that one’s ‘blood amount’ correlates to one’s cultural orientation and identity” (p. 35). PI-CRiT offers six counterpoints to blood quantum logic that are essential in the research and education of PIs. First, mobilizing communities diminish their political power by alienating, or stratifying, its members based on “blood quantum” (Kauanui, 2008). From a Kanaka Maoli perspective, blood quantum²⁸ is a colonial construct that is used to limit the resources of conquered peoples, and a process that divides lahui (the Hawaiian nation). Second, the prioritization of race in the absence of culture marginalizes the voices of multiracial

²⁸ The poem by Namoi Noe Losch (2003) entitled Blood Quantum, ends with the line “They not only colonized us, they divided us” (p. 120).

individuals, because blood quantum logic considers them less than “whole.”²⁹ Third, discussions of race and “diversity” mean little without an actual understanding of the cultures within communities of research. Fourth, recognition of race and privilege is not the same as having empathy, cultural knowledge and an understanding of cultural nuances. These are important components of qualitative data analysis. Lastly, PI cultural education as survivance is necessary to progress PI students and activist researchers through continued stages of critical consciousness that contextualize ‘ike kupuna (cultural and ancestral knowledge) in contemporary terms, which enable future generations to identify modern translations of cultural racism.

Develop agents of transformational resistance (ATRs), and revisionist histories.

Revisionist histories provide context to contemporary issues and problematize eugenic explanations for low PI educational outcomes, and expose how communities of color have resisted, and continue to resist, oppression as agents of transformational resistance (ATRs). Alejandro Covarrubias & Anita Revilla (2003) name six critical roles of ATRs: 1) create a community of inclusiveness; 2) provide valuable resources for community members; 3) provide a critical voice for the community regarding community issues; 4) empower the community through the expansion of resources and development of skills; 5) help members of the community develop a raised level of consciousness and a commitment to social justice; 6) provide hope for educational advancement of many community members by providing visible symbols of academic achievement. Four events illustrate how these roles have been fulfilled by student-athletes, and the scope of their immense political potential.

²⁹ Multi-racial people experience holistic racism (Kukahiko, 2013) that is experienced by the sum of one’s racial identities and not solely between the racial binaries. This racism places multi-racial people within a liminal identity, and presents the opportunity for more complex discussions of racial conflict in the US.

In 2013, Grambling players refused to participate in football activities due to poor working conditions, including mold and mildew in facilities, maintenance conditions that led to staph infections, etc. In 2014, O’Bannon vs. NCAA, the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of O’Bannon and other former college student-athletes that claimed the NCAA had exploited them by profiting from their likeness in perpetuity. On March 26, 2014, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Chicago ruled that the Northwestern Football team could unionize, because Northwestern football players had successfully argued that the one-year renewable “scholarships” were identical to “at will” employment contracts. On Saturday, November 7, 2015, 30 black members of the University of Missouri football team announced on social media that they would not participate in any football related activities until the university president Tim Wolfe resigned due to his responses to racism on campus. By Monday, November 9, the rest of the Missouri team stood in solidarity with their black teammates, and President Wolfe and Chancellor Loftin resigned. There are many other historical examples of student-athlete activism, but it is important to understand revisionist history not only as examples of political action, but contemporary relevance and the ability to participate in making revisionist history.

PI Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach that weaves three PI cultural constructs together to protect the integrity of the research process, and that the process is respectful of each participant, their community, and their gift of mo‘olelo (story). This PI methodology disrupts dominant research paradigms by suggesting that data collection, analysis and interpretation should align with its participants’ ontology, epistemology and axiology (Lebakeng, Phalane, & Dalindjebo, 2006; Wilson, 2008). That is, the methods to gain more knowledge about reality (methodology),

should align with the participants' views about reality (ontology), their ways of thinking about reality (epistemology), and their ethics, morals and values that guide their interaction and interpretations of reality (axiology). 'Ōlelo No'eau (proverbs) are integral cultural references of how these components intersect to form Pacific frames of reference (Pukui, 1983). These are gifts of ike (knowledge) passed on to us from our kupuna (ancestors) to help guide us, but also meant to ground us in ways that define who we are as individuals and communities. Embedded within the proverbs are kaona (hidden meanings) that teach us to be aware and mindful of multiple perspectives, to think critically and creatively. A common tool of 'Ōlelo No'eau are their use of metaphor to develop critical thinking. PI-CRiT uses three cultural constructs in weaving together its PI methodology: 'Awa ceremony (ritual), Kakau (rite of passage), and Kauhale (community).

Positionality

I am Kanaka Maoli, the oldest son, brother, cousin, nephew, and grandson. I am the father to Makoa, Kekoa, Kaleimamo'oka'ala, and Kaleiwaihonahalia. I am husband to Kalehua Kukahiko. I am a teacher, a student, a coach, a friend, and a Pasifika activist researcher. I am not simply interested in the recognition of racial inequity, but it is my kuleana (responsibility) to challenge western-neocolonial education systems whose agendas are realized by the institutionalization of cultural racism. While there has been some return of investment on PI athletic labor in college football, there is a significant socioeconomic, cultural, psychophysical, historical, educational and moral debt owed to our communities due to US colonialism. Since college football players represent a potential source of political leadership, it is of paramount importance that this population perseveres in higher education, and that education should develop their critical consciousness and cultural identities, while presenting opportunities for

new knowledge to be made relevant to issues within their communities. In this way, their education can become relevant and transformative.

Cultural Protocol

The process of colonialism has embedded itself into US institutions (i.e., settler colonial education systems, prisons, etc.) that strip PIs of their cultural rituals, rites of passage, and communal roles and responsibilities. Cultural rituals and rites of passage, connect PIs to our heritage, reminding us that we were born to greatness as royal descendants, intellectuals and warriors. The participation in cultural rituals and rites of passage unshackle us from colonial measurements of success (individualism and meritocracy), and commit PIs instead, to identities that are grounded in communal roles and responsibilities meant to improve the collective. As researchers, it is important to recognize the rituals, rites of passage, the different hale ike (houses of knowledge) within the communities we study, and the protocols that guide them. To properly gather qualitative data in PI communities, researchers must navigate cultural protocol to locate “cultural leaders” that act as gatekeepers to research participants, and to maintain those relationships once the data has been collected.

The value of cultural protocol can be illustrated in a study where I visited the Waianae boat harbor – the largest houseless³⁰ camp on O‘ahu – where I was looking at the benefits of incorporating the kauhale system in Hawaiian houseless communities. Several friends of mine had once lived in the community, understood the rituals and protocols that guided it, and had offered to take me to visit with its members. Before entering the camp, I was taken to a Hawaiian minister at the corner of the park, where we sat and talked story. After he shared his testimony, he introduced us to his daughter, who was the selected leader of the houseless community. After

³⁰ The term houseless is often used to identify with Kanaka Maoli that do not live in hale. Since the aina (land) is our home, we can never be homeless.

we properly introduced ourselves (my name, where I grew up, my parents' and grandparents' names, etc.), she explained to us what was expected from members of the community and the general rules, but in short manner gave us her blessing to walk through the community and talk to whomever we wanted.

'Awa Ceremony

The 'awa ceremony is an important ritual of PI Methodology, because it centers PI narratives in research. The use of the 'awa ceremony as a research methodology disrupts dominant research paradigms, and is therefore, a mechanism of decolonization. This is fitting given the colonial history of the drinking culture in the Pacific. The properties of the 'awa root calms and relaxes the drinker, and therefore, the ritual has been used to promote peaceful relationships in both formal and casual settings (Patrinos & Perry, 2010). The introduction of alcohol in the Pacific, however, disrupted and changed the drinking culture from one of "social cohesion and cultural integration," to a violent and deviant drinking culture that changed the cultural identities of its participants, and arguably the gender and familial dynamics of our PI communities (Patrinos & Perry, p. 142).³¹ From this perspective, the 'awa ceremony is literally a decolonizing methodology.

The traditional 'awa ceremony has different protocols all over the Pacific, but it has always been a place where mo'olelo are shared, discussed and made relevant to contemporary circumstances and the future of PI communities. Tengan (2008) says that the 'awa ceremony is a ritual space for transformation and sharing of stories, and is a ritual that has evolved to accommodate multiple Pacific Island influences. The protocol has become fluid and innovative,

³¹ Patrinos & Perry (2010) share one 'Ōlelo No'eau that says, "He kanaka ka mea inu 'awa; he pua'a laho ka mea inu kuaipa," which means "The man who drinks 'awa is still a man, but the man who drinks liquors becomes a beast" (p.146).

but guided by Pacific epistemologies and the needs of its attendees. During one ‘awa ceremony for the Hale Mua³² in 2005, members were served from oldest to youngest and each shared their mo‘olelo, which referenced something of the past, the present and the future (Tengan, 2008). At the end of each narrative a member of the ‘awa crew called out pa‘i ka lima (clap hands) and the members would clap three times to honor the speech and drink.

Some sharing circles are in “other” languages. Dominant research methodologies often record these narratives, and then translate and transcribe them later. ‘Awa ceremony can provide a more seamless and interactive technique. I attended an ‘awa ceremony at the Sea Life Park on O‘ahu that was hosted by the park’s fire knife dancers, which included two matai (Samoan chiefs), and a contingent of the University of Hawai‘i college football staff. We formed one big circle with the matai and Samoan native speakers to one end of the circle, and the younger non-Samoan speakers to the other. Sitting in the circle with us, but at a place where he could hear and translate, was a member of the UH football staff. He would translate the matai’s stories, culturally contextualize it for us, and teach us the language. This lasted about four hours. In this way, qualitative data can be extrapolated from a fluid conversation within a culturally familiar context, and provide context without subordinating the cultural framework of the storyteller (participant).

The ‘awa ceremony reminds researchers to make time for rituals and protocol when addressing PI individuals and communities. This may include reaching out to the appropriate kupuna (elders), or asking permission from community leaders and organizations. Presentation

³² The Hale Mua is an organization that believes the loss of traditional protocol, ritual and rites of passage have left many kane (men) Kanaka Maoli without a sense of kuleana (responsibility) to lahui (Hawaiian nation or community). It is the absence of this sense of kuleana that the Hale Mua seeks to instill in kane Kanaka Maoli through cultural reclamation, and in doing so, reframe the way this demographic is socially defined (i.e., violence, crime, drug abuse, etc.).

of gifts and sharing food are appropriate at any prospective meeting. Another appropriate expectation is that research on PIs require lead authorship is offered to a PI researcher, if one is on the research team. This ensures that PI scholars are properly trained to conduct research in their own communities, and not tokenized or used for their access to PI participants. It is also important to understand that the interview process is not about getting answers to your questions. It is about participating in the sharing of stories, and allowing participants to connect and communicate in a way that is non-threatening to their epistemologies, their intellect, and their identities. In the same way that Wilson (2008) presents research as ceremony, the ‘awa ceremony organizes the findings section of this study by presenting participants’ narratives around various topics in a conversational format.

Identification and recruitment. Following the example of the ‘awa ceremony, this methodology followed cultural protocol by approaching elders from the AIGA Foundation³³ to discuss my research and its value to the PI collective. The elders of the AIGA Foundation agreed to participate in this study in hopes that research on this population would help inform policies that will improve access, retention and diversify PI professionalization; specifically, the promotion of PI college football players to faculty, administration, and coaching positions in higher education. The caveat was that I would maintain control of the data and be responsible for the statements made by any resulting studies. The participants were selected from an annual Polynesian cultural event held by the AIGA Foundation for top PI high school football recruits, an event they have coordinated since 2011. These college football players were identified at

³³ Aiga is the Samoan word for family, but it is also an acronym for All Islands Getting Along (AIGA). The acronym is significant because the elders, representative of many different island affiliations, are committed to what they believe is a movement to increase opportunities for PI student-athletes in higher education. Their events also celebrate and teach their participants culture from the various Pacific Islands to reinforce connections to the PI collective.

several high school football developmental camps, and were sent consent forms and surveys with their invites to AIGA's annual cultural event. The volunteers at the AIGA event are predominantly Polynesian ex-college and NFL football players, who were also asked to participate in this study. Participants of the event come from any of the 49 states in the continental US, Samoa, Tonga, Hawai'i, Australia and New Zealand. Each cohort is made up of 70-85 high school football recruits, and this study uses the data collected from the 2011 through 2016 graduating cohorts.

Kakau

Kakau (tattoo) is an ancient rite of passage. For PI men, the pain endured during kakau is perhaps as close as we can get to childbirth, a rite of passage experienced by women.³⁴ While traditionalists of kakau often defend rigid cultural rules and practices, contemporary kakau kumu (teachers and master practitioners of tattoo) insist that historically those rules and practices varied by geographic location and island affiliation. The common thread between the two schools of thought is the ability of kakau to connect PI people to their land, to their specific island community and to communicate an individual, familial, and/or collective story that is a narrative of their identity. Contemporary kakau kumu allow our mo'olelo (story) to reach beyond the rigid boundaries of traditionalists, by allowing each of us to narrate from a contemporary lens, one that weaves the mo'olelo and experiences of the Pacific Islander collective. As a research methodology, kakau empowers us to not only interpret the world through our own lens, or specific Pacific island affiliation, but to see the historical and contemporary experiences that connect a PI collective to colonial legacies.

³⁴ The author acknowledges that the pain of childbirth can be significantly more painful than kakau, not having experienced the pain of labor, but having witnessed the birth of his own children.

Kakau is a rite of passage that draws from traditional ike (knowledge) and mana‘o (thought) to acknowledge our past, its connection to the present, and a commitment to the future. This methodology allows for this researcher to favor a Kanaka Maoli lens because it is the Pacific island culture and epistemology I am familiar with, and a framework that I can identify the commonalities of other PI communities and experiences. At the same time, this methodology allows me to integrate other specific Pacific island lenses to recognize the nuances in our cultural identities, and the anomalies that might make an individual participant’s narrative uniquely different. Contemporary kakau kumu remind us that in the data analysis we cannot code our PI participants’ narratives and experiences into cultural boxes with static and formulaic symbols, but to allow our PI participants to choose the symbols and design that will tell their stories, and relate them to their culture as they define it. Their perspective is reality, and their kakau represents the ways in which culture defines their reality, and their identity. I am also reminded during my time with kumu kakau Jordan Souza that mo'olelo, mana'o and ike are exchanged during kakau. The two of us talked story, I shared my mo‘olelo, and we learned from each other through the process. During kakau there is a telling and recording of one’s story, a trust between the narrator and researcher that the story will be articulated in kakau appropriately, and a relationship between the two are established and maintained.

7 Forms of Cultural Racism	Definition
Objectification	A process of dehumanization by treating human beings as objects and/or profit centers
Epistemicide	The destruction of cultural ways of thinking, in order to normalize dominant ways of thinking
Erasure	This study defines erasure as the process 1) to negate, suppress, or remove people, or their culture, from an academic environment, 2) to withhold information that maintains institutional power over athletic labor, or 3) to erase evidence of their experiences through the obliteration of writing, recorded material, or data.
Elitism	The power of a dominant group to maintain privilege and assert their superiority over other groups through discrimination, as in race, gender, class, etc.

Colorblindness (whiteness, individualism, and meritocracy)	The inability or unwillingness to recognize race or culture as having an impact on individual, or group, experiences and opportunities
Deculturalization	The educational process of destroying a people's culture (cultural genocide), and replacing it with a new culture.
Symbolism, or stereotyping	The classification of culture and race as symbols of social value, or the process off using static and rigid generalizations to define individuals, groups, or communities.

Figure 1: Seven forms of cultural racism.

Data analysis. Data analysis procedures in this methodology are thoughtful to the interconnectedness of the PI collective, the nuances between island cultures, and the fluidity of culture itself. While participant responses are often similar and connected, each experience reflects a unique perspective from various cultural contexts. The kakau method is analogous to a constant comparative analysis (Creswell, 2003) but grounded in the ike and mana‘o of contemporary kakau, allowing the participants to dictate what symbols of culture and race are relevant, or irrelevant, to their identity and college experiences. During the initial stage, or open coding, narratives were categorized into each of the seven forms of cultural racism defined in Figure 1 below. The axial coding stage, or interconnecting of categories, was used to find narratives of cultural racism that overlapped with experiences of self-hate, cultural dissonance (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Museus, 2008), liminal identities, psychophysical trauma, and perceptions of exploitation as athletic laborers. During the selective coding process, the kakau analysis attempted to understand whether participants' experiences of *culture* and *race* were associated to specific characteristics of *colonialism* in a predictive manner. It is important to understand, however, that the “success” of the kakau method is not in finding predictive patterns in qualitative or quantitative data, the research value of this methodology is its inherent cultural quality of honoring kaona (hidden meanings and multiple perspectives), by centering the narratives of diverse perspectives. The kakau method aligns with Wilson’s (2008) description of

Indigenous methodologies in *Research is Ceremony*, which calls for researchers to present data in a way that does not muddle the narratives of its participants. This methodological concept allows mo'olelo to dictate the nuances and similarities within the Pacific Islander collective from participants' meaning making perspectives, while limiting the "validation" effect of the researchers' synthesis and interpretation.

Kauhale System

The kauhale system is a community design whose construction and designation of each hale (building) is role specific. Each hale serves a purpose: sleeping, cooking, menstruation, men's meeting house, etc. When a male child comes of age, for example, they enter the hale mua (men's house) and dawn their malo (loincloth) marking their coming of age. The child will learn many things but is expected to follow a craftsman whose skill aligns with their own interests. The child is then expected to master their craft and contribute to the community by learning and then teaching. It is the child's kuleana (responsibility) to learn the 'ike (knowledge) of their kupuna (ancestors) through their kumu (teachers), and then to teach and share the mo'olelo of our kupuna with the next generation.

As researchers in the kauhale system, we are participating, learning and teaching. In the kauhale system, ways of knowledge are transmitted and absorbed in everything and everywhere, and in every structure. Education and knowledge are valued outside of the traditional classroom, and taught and absorbed by students and teachers who are defined in cultural ways. In the Kauhale system, researchers cannot gather all the knowledge in one house, they need to recognize who the cultural teachers are, and where the places of learning are taking place. Researchers need to talk to people across the kauhale for breath and depth, and be perceptive to the ways that knowledge is transmitted, adopted into value, and expressed. These ways of

knowing and learning do not align with western politics of knowledge, but can disrupt and contribute to dominant research paradigms.

This methodology also requires that researchers provide context to their investigations. What are the issues that drive the study? The investigative process cannot be a one-way relationship, where the research mines participants for information and provides the community with nothing in return. In these cases, the “objective” researcher is more often an exploitive opportunist. For social justice to be realized in activist research, full disclosure of the issues that concern the study, or the concepts by which it will be interpreted, should be disclosed, or taught. Thereby, enabling participants to politicize if they choose. In this way, everyone in the process are research participants that learn and teach. Research participants listen and learn from the mo‘olelo of elders and colleagues in sharing circles, and then teach through the telling and sharing of their own mo‘olelo. This activist research is participatory and empowers our collective mo‘olelo to transform contemporary circumstance to fit the true needs of our participants as individuals, family members, specific community members and the PI collective.

Data collection. Of the 120 PI college football players that agreed to participate in the college choice study, forty volunteered to participate in a survey and interviews on the impact of culture and race on their college experiences. The survey was meant to complement the qualitative focus of this study with a descriptive analysis, but also defined the seven symbols of cultural racism. This process allowed the participants to understand how the study defined those symbols, and self-select the relevance of each symbol to their college experiences. The complexities of these symbols were than unpacked during our interviews, which followed ‘awa ceremony protocol. The participants who agreed to participate were chosen based on diversity of island affiliation, college type, location, whether they had Pacific Island courses available at their

college or university, campus proximity to PI communities, and overall nuances in college experiences. The Kauhale method of data collection understands that all knowledge does not reside in one hale. To further extend the application of this methodology, this study required PI participants that had experienced college football from diverse perspectives. To accomplish that goal, eight participants were found that fit one of the following five classifications:

- 1) Former PI college football players
- 2) Former PI college football players that are now college football coaches
- 3) Former PI college football players that are now college athletic directors
- 4) Former PI college athletes that are now community activists working to improve opportunities for PIs in sport
- 5) PI scholars who have published on PI participation in sports, and the specific dynamics of PIs in US college football.

Limitations

Method limitations of Staying In. The number of interview participants in the Staying In study was purposeful to ensure a specific diversity of experiences (e.g. type of institution, geography, PI course offering, etc.). The number of participants that were interviewed, however, puts a constraint on the generalizability of the qualitative data. At the same time, the diverse perspectives of this study does not account for all the nuances of individual island identities and intersectionalities, and how those nuances influence college experiences. Because perspectives from various PI affiliations were absent (i.e., Fiji, Guam, etc.), I must acknowledge my part in the erasure of those communities from the research. It will also be important that as PI's continue to fill diverse roles at institutions of higher education, their perspectives on the issues brought up in this study should be considered for future research as well. This study also failed to include

the perspectives of the individual families of PI college football players, an important perspective to consider for future studies, since family (i.e., ‘ohana, aiga, etc.) is a fundamental cultural concept in PI communities, and represent a resource that enhances, or inhibits, transition and persistence. Lastly, the methodologies were crafted from Kanaka Maoli concepts of ritual, rite of passage, and community, because it is the cultural lens I am most familiar with. Future studies should integrate cultural concepts (i.e., rituals, rites of passage, and community) that are familiar to both the researchers and their participants.

Theoretical limitations of Staying In. PI-CRiT is meant to provide a framework for activist research on PIs in higher education. The theory suggests that 1) four directives of colonialism are fulfilled by US education systems, 2) the four directives of colonialism are enabled by educational policies, curriculum, programming and leadership that operationalize seven forms of cultural racism, 3) Indigenous methodologies are necessary to disrupt dominant research paradigms that maintain colonial politics of knowledge, and 4) activist research must enact critical praxis. While PI-CRiT takes research one step closer to becoming intracultural,³⁵ future research will have to be vigilant about acknowledging both the connections between individual Pacific Island affiliations, and the cultural nuances of each. Context is also important, and not just cultural context, but gender, sexuality, and various intersectionalities of identity. PI-CRiT is a framework of colonialism based on the agenda of settler colonial school systems, but experiences of colonialism within the Pacific were also dissimilar and extended beyond US colonization. Future research that uses the collective identity of Pacific Islanders should consider the nuances in colonial experiences, and be clear about what island communities are not

³⁵ *Intracultural* describes research conducted between at least two people who are from the same culture or have culturally similar backgrounds, while *Intercultural* describes research between at least two people who are different in significant ways culturally (Luster & Koester, 2003).

represented in the study, and whether the research is meant to improve the experiences of those island affiliations as well.

Findings

The findings herein are framed by the cultural components of its methodology. The qualitative data is presented in the manner of the ‘awa ceremony, with participants’ sharing their mo‘olelo in a forum that connects individual narratives to collective experiences. Kakau honors kaona, and allows for symbols of culture and race to be interpreted differently by individuals within the PI collective. The kauhale model enables participants’ narratives to inform one another and safeguard the mo‘olelo of diverse perspectives. These three cultural components of PI-CRiT’s methodology disrupt dominant research paradigms that value statistical significance, correlation and linear relationships, rather than the uniqueness of mo‘olelo, which reflect our participants’ individual realities. The findings herein do not calculate static, or standard, outcomes for fluid inputs (culture and race), but they do suggest that when PI student-athletes are exposed to institutions of higher education that fulfill the four directives of colonialism through its seven variations of cultural racism, there are experiences of self-hate, cultural dissonance (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Museus, 2008), liminal identities, psychophysical trauma, and perceptions of exploitation as athletic laborers. The findings in this section are presented in separate discussions based on the seven variations of cultural racism.

Objectification

Descriptive analysis. 82 percent of all participants believed that PI players are exploited for profit by college football. Interestingly, all participants that believed PI players are exploited, also experienced psychophysical trauma (mental stress and/or physical injuries) as a result of their participation in college football. Many open-ended survey and interview responses reveal

struggles in maintaining liminal identities, as students, athletic labor, and Pacific Islanders.

Discussion question. In what ways do you believe that PI student-athletes are objectified, or exploited? What physical injuries and mental stress have you endured that are specific to your experience as a college football player?

Samoan, played and recently graduated from a military academy on the East Coast:

College Football is a billion dollar industry in which athletic departments, coaches, and even [general] students are making out. Athletic departments are receiving free publicity, ticket sales, and merchandise sales... Coaches are putting in the hours; however, it is not for nothing. They are receiving six figure pay checks, housing, and clothing. And lastly [general] students are receiving the benefits of the athletics such as new workout facilities... All of this while athletes are struggling to take care of themselves on a daily basis. [Student-athletes] are also spending time and energy earning a college degree. Many of these remarks and statements are from my observations, conversations, and studies as an economics major.

Psychophysical trauma: *Concussions and torn knee ligaments; Stress of balancing football, college, and military.*

Tongan, plays for a Power 5 program on the Northwest coast of the US:

We work as many hours as a full time job yet don't receive the equal compensation. For example, jersey sales every year are one of the top consumer products yet the person who wears that jersey at the collegiate level will never see a cent.

Psychophysical trauma: *Torn ACL and broken scaphoid; The stress came from the irregular study habits while on the road. Having to play catch up in class only reinforced the stereotype that we didn't do our work or used football as an easy excuse to not do work.*

Samoan, former college football player at a Power 5 program in Oregon:

My first semester at OSU I had a .7 GPA. Dealing with early meetings, workouts, classes, practice, games, and more meetings was so draining and I had zero prep for it. Competing for a starting spot was also new. That year was the first year I didn't start on a football team. My first start didn't come until week 5 or 6 vs UCLA. It definitely was a grind.

Psychophysical trauma: *Both knees, left shoulder and multiple concussions; The stress I felt was from having to be the best on and off the field at a pace I was unprepared for, and failing at what I was supposed to be good at.*

Hawaiian, former college football player now a college football coach at a D1A program:

I injured my shoulder and it got so bad that the doctors medically disqualified me, not allowing

me to play. As I researched my injuries, seeking out doctors, I found out that my injury was not curable. I attempted to go home and attend a local JUCO but my parents wouldn't allow me to. With the support of my parents, family, friends and football coach, I stayed at [college] and joined the football staff as a student assistant. I fell in love with the coaching side of football and have not turned back. I just finished up my first season as a graduate assistant and cannot wait for what the future has in store for me.

Psychophysical trauma: Career ending shoulder injury; I struggled to find a balance between school and friends. I also lacked motivation due to my inability to play and compete in the game that I love. I did not feel that I was in the right place. I did not have any confidence based off the fact that I thought everyone else was smarter than me.

Tongan, played at Power 5 program on the Southwest coast of the US:

Most players aren't told that scholarships are one-year scholarships. Most of us just sign the scholarship paper, not knowing that it's only for a year... As a freshman you don't really care about things like this, but as you get older these things become important. Because if you're not performing, or not getting along with the coaches, that scholarship could be gone the next year. I believe that the money these big programs make off of us does not equal the compensation that we receive within our scholarship, or the physical abuse we are put through does not equal the money we receive.

Psychophysical trauma: 4 ACL tears each within a year of one another and 2 on each knee; Stress with injuries and recovery.

Member of the AIGA Foundation, Samoan, former college football player:

I think that the low graduation rates of PI players are also masked by "push out" factors. One player told a story about how his coaches made him push a 45-pound plate across the football field with his chin at 5:30am in the morning. These techniques are used to make certain kids quit, so they [football program] don't have to wait till they [players] graduate to recycle their scholarships.

Psychophysical trauma: Torn left PCL, dislocated finders, and separated shoulders; Stress of performing at a high level with challenging incoming QB's, while maintaining my academics.

Community Activist for PI's in sport, and co-author of *Performing Polynesian Masculinities in American Football: From 'Rainbows to Warriors'*:

The two things that quickly come to mind are the time commitments of these players in season and off season. The amount of time that they spend on football related activities leaves them substantially less free time to be a college student like non-student athletes. The second thing that comes to mind is apparel for our top tier college football players like Juju Smith-Schuster. USC sells his #9 jerseys from \$50 to \$100 and he receives nothing in return for marketing his likeness. Walk around the parking lot and inside the Coliseum or the Rose Bowl and his jersey is

everywhere alongside #2.

Hawaiian, Professor at UH Manoa:

I think they're primarily exploited because universities only really provide care when they're student athletes and not students. I've had about 12 student athletes over the last three years in my classes, men and women from a variety of sports, including football - and [four that were my graduate students]. After their eligibility is up, they're pretty much thrown away into the general student population without any assistance with making that transition. For me, this is a huge disservice to students especially those who are vulnerable from the start (e.g. low-income, first gen, students of color). At Mānoa, they don't get any formal graduate or professional school or career advising or support with the emotional baggage of being a former student athlete. Then I also think about my one student who suffered a few concussions in his college career now in his late 20s and the absence of any kind of support (health care or otherwise) should he become severely impacted down the line. A college degree ain't worth shit if you can't remember your name or feel like killing yourself. I guess my big statement is I feel student athletes are exploited because universities are not accountable once the student athlete has outlived her/his usefulness. When I think of exploitation, I also think of cases like O'Bannon. But since UH is not a prestigious collegiate sports program, I also believe they are exploited because of the way the university monopolizes their time in college. Yes, student athletes have said there are definite perks to being an athlete but there are also tremendous sacrifices. So, in short, the university benefits from this control on the student athletes' time. A side note, too, is the verbal abuse I hear about. For me, it exploits these kids' ability to access higher education because they are in no position to defend themselves lest they lose their spot and scholarship. So I feel like these students are unable to explore, define, and enact their fullest selves -- again, especially those who come into college vulnerable (e.g. low-income, first gen, students of color) because of these constraints.

Epistemicide

Descriptive analysis. 86 percent of the participants believed that their football programs' concepts of "team" were similar to their cultural concepts of family. 84% felt they were able to incorporate cultural perspectives in class discussions and academic writing. Many interview and open-ended survey responses, however, reveal statements of cultural dissonance by participants whose cultural knowledge was contested, refuted, or unacknowledged in their academic spaces. Also, all of the participants believe their individual definition and standards of success are very different than those of the football program, and the academic institutions where they attend classes.

Discussion question. What cultural knowledge, education, and ways of knowing are missing from the college experience of PI college football players? What experiences illustrate how PI cultural knowledge is different than “college” thinking, understanding, and/or teaching at your university?

Tongan, plays for a Power 5 program on the Southwest coast of the US:

The football program didn't show any type of interests in promoting the education of Pacific Islander cultures, at least when I was there, other than asking me to bring in more Polynesians to play football.

Hawaiian, recently played and graduated from the University of Hawa‘i:

Administration have very different values than Pacific Islanders simply because there are barely any locals in admin.

Samoan, plays at community college on the Southwest coast of the US:

Not sure if instructors are able to use an analogy that relates or connects to help us understand; all I know is that it's a different atmosphere in college to where I feel they believe I am dumb, or am never going to get it, so they give up?

Tongan, played at an NAIA school in the Midwest of the US:

Cultural values were taught to me every day of my life from my parents, aunts, etc. Sometimes I would have loved to use it in writing but the people and teachers that read my work wouldn't understand why my people's values are the way they are. For example, I wrote in a paper that because of respect, the boys in the family would not really "hang out" together like other American families do. Being around each other in a general sense is okay, but we wouldn't be allowed to watch movies together, or isolate ourselves from the rest of the family. During peer-review my classmates could not understand the logic behind it, and some criticized the gender roles we had growing up in my home.

Samoan, former college football player that is now an athletic director at a Power 5 university:

One way would be looking at the methodology in teaching. It's the complete opposite of how PI teach and develop individuals. By using the western methods of teaching, it could still be missing the mark on how PI's were taught. Another difference I see is in the voice of the students. There is a huge emphasis on students' contributions to discussion and critical debate that challenges both students and teachers, but this is not the case in Samoan culture where the emphasis is on listening, learning and respect. Silence is often misinterpreted by instructors as ignorance, apathy, or resistance.

Samoan, ex-NFL player that played college at the University of Utah, and now coaches college football:

I had an incident that one would think had no effect on the University or the football program. However, the individual whom I had an altercation with was the son of a booster to the University and so the parents wanted me reprimanded. Within the Samoan culture, elders would have found a way to appease both sides without including the law, where at "the U," money talks and so the booster was much louder than I was in 2001. However, I don't think the University normalized American culture as the standard when I was at "the U." With the influence of coach Mac and the surrounding Pacific Islander communities near campus, we were often looked at to set the norm for the next group of student athletes. Fortunate for me, coach Ron McBride, loves the Polynesian culture and it's people. There really wasn't much difference in values with coach Mac and the veteran Polynesian players that came before me. Within various Sociology courses, I would often have to refer to where I grew up and how it affected who I was as a person.

Hawaiian, Professor at UH Manoa:

UH Manoa is supposed to be a "place of Hawaiian learning" but this has yet to be really conceptualized and institutionalized. I don't think Pasifika folks anything is really acknowledged in any normalized way aside, perhaps, from performance value. Brah, this is every day, all day at pretty much every university lol You can take any piece of this institution - general education requirements (though they do have an "Asian or Pacific" requirement) or the names of the buildings - American hegemony is always evident.

Erasure

Descriptive analysis. 75 percent of the participants have a PI community near campus, but only 50 percent said that their universities help them to connect to those communities while enrolled. Given that this is a small research population and that some participants were chosen specifically because of their university's proximity to PI communities, these percentages are most likely not representative of US higher education as a whole. Many participants' expressed feelings of cultural dissonance in response to the erasure of their home culture during their transition to college.

Discussion questions. By attending universities, what cultural experiences are removed from the lives of PI college football players? In what ways do you recognize the omission of PI culture from the college environment? How are their college experiences impacted by a

misrepresentation of facts, hidden agendas, lack of cultural understanding, or manipulation of data?

Samoan, college football player in PA:

I missed being away from my family. Family couldn't afford to visit me, and I couldn't afford to get home. There are no polys in Pennsylvania.

Hawaiian, plays at a division 2 school in the Midwest of the US:

I have mostly missed my family bond. The kanikapilas that I missed out on and the love and laughter that I knew was present.

Samoan, plays for a Power 5 program on the East coast of the US:

One thing that I missed most about my culture is the feeling that you're always a part of something bigger. With me living in North Carolina I don't have many opportunities to interact with people of my culture. When I was at the Polynesian All American Bowl that was one thing that I enjoyed the most.

Tongan, plays for community college on the Southwest Coast of the US:

They have a Black Student Union here yet there's no help or outreach for the Polynesian students.

Samoan, former college football in the Midwest now coaching college football:

Too often we are grouped under "Asian-Pacific Islander" and resources are directed towards our Asian counterparts. Polynesian college football players like myself need more support than just a football scholarship, because if that's the only thing helping us then too often we rely on football too much to meet your needs. The NFL career is a rarity, and to compromise your college education is to give away the opportunity to better yourself off the field and ultimately put yourself in a better position to support your family.

Tongan, played at Power 5 program on the Southwest coast of the US:

I have had countless interactions with people who ask my ethnicity, and when I answer Tongan they are unfamiliar with my culture. Most people assume that there are only Samoans. If there were Polynesian ethnic studies courses we could educate people on the cultural differences, and why those differences matter. If they don't know we exist, they won't care. If they don't care, they won't help us.

Hawaiian, Professor at UH Manoa:

Student athletes have told me about "voluntary practice," which all team members know is not

really voluntary but the coaches need to call it that because of NCAA policies. Every single athlete said they would have to attend regardless of classes (like I would let one student leave my class 15-30 minutes early so she could make it to voluntary practice at 7pm) or assignments, otherwise they could be cut or benched; thereby, jeopardizing their scholarships. Another would be the inability to choose a major of their interest - they have to "choose" majors which fit into their travel and practice schedules. So between athletics and academic departments, there are no compromises with time and structure for these kids.

Samoan, ex-NFL player that played college in the Northwest, businessman and community activist.

When I entered college football in 1974, I didn't know I was on a one-year scholarship. When I was recruited they told me I would be receiving a full scholarship, and I assumed that meant for the duration of the 4 to 5 years needed for me to get my degree. Given the low graduation rates of our PI college football players, it is a crime that these are sold to our communities as full scholarships. It's fraud and outright exploitation.

Samoan, former college football player and member of the AIGA Foundation:

We had one of our high school football players from American Samoa committed to [a Northwestern University], but a coach from [a Southwestern University] told the family that [the Northwestern University] was not a sanctuary campus, and that [the Southwestern University] was. He told the family that their son could be deported if he went to [the Northwestern University]. Neither of the statements were true, but the coach was able to flip the kid right before signing day. In the current political environment, it will be important that our organization helps Polynesian families make informed decisions that enable our kids to fulfill and complete their college dreams.

Elitism

Descriptive analysis. Only 25 percent of the participants reported that they had college experiences where they were made to feel inferior to others because of their race, culture, wealth, religion, etc. However, a majority of the participants shared that they had experiences where they believed their culture and race created different sets of expectations by faculty and staff. These narratives also reflect cultural dissonance, perceptions of exploitation, and psychophysical trauma from negotiating their liminal identities, as students, athletes and racialized beings.

Discussion question. In what ways do you believe that PI student-athletes are treated

differently, or that staff and faculty have different expectations for them? What college experiences illustrate how some form of elitism impacts PI college football players' ability to transition and/or persist?

Samoaan, recently played and graduated from the University of Hawa'i:

It's hard to come up with a specific example and hard to explain, but I know that many folks become surprised that I am able to hold an intelligent conversation with them.

Hawaiian, recently played and graduated from the University of Hawa'i:

Being told we were lazy and probably going to take the easiest way through college just to play.

Samoaan, plays for a Power 5 program on the Northwest coast of the US:

I was expected to be better at the athletic challenges that were thrown at me while in football, which I succeeded in doing so because I felt that I had to for the pride of being Tongan.

Tongan, plays for community college on the Southwest Coast of the US:

They think I can play the ukulele and know how to dance hula. They expect me to play like a fierce warrior but on a different level than everyone else and to have more passion for the game.

Samoaan, played college football and is now an athletic director at a Power 5 university:

Going to school on the east coast lacks large Polynesian communities. Professors, peers, and staff have preconceived notions about me based off media or personal experiences (Good or bad).

Samoaan, college football player at a Power 5 program in Oregon:

Being a minority in Oregon pretty much announced to everyone that I was an athlete. I just remember wherever I went people would ask me what sport I played.

Hawaiian, Professor at UH Manoa:

Again, American hegemony IS the university. So the physical and intellectual structures in the university are all American. I think student success for different groups (and different people) are more complex and specific.

Samoaan, ex-NFL player that played college in the Northwest, businessman and community activist:

After practice during my freshman year, my position coach came after me. He had played

quarterback three years before me, a tough guy from [place omitted] and I looked up to him, respected him. One day he abruptly stopped me in the tunnel and asked me, "Why do you wear that number?" He singled me out and told me I was an embarrassment, and that he didn't believe I had the right to wear my number. He pointed at a white teammate that was competing for the QB position, and said, "He should be wearing that number." I almost left college that day, but my Dad wouldn't let me. Ironically, the university ended up retiring my number. When I look back at the fact that I was the only Samoan on the football team, and that my jersey number was reserved for Quarterbacks, a white position, I see it for what it was... It was racism.

Tongan, played at Power 5 program on the Southwest coast of the US:

I was an early admit, so I started college in January of my senior year in high school. My plan was to earn my Master's degree while I played football, but now that I am ready to graduate in my redshirt sophomore year, the academic support staff told me not to enroll in my final political science class. They said graduate school and football would be too hard for me, even though other guys [non-PIs] on the team were doing it. They expect me to take 2 more years of undergraduate courses that will not count towards my degree. My family and I decided that I am going to graduate and play somewhere else next year.

Colorblindness

Descriptive analysis. 50 percent of the participants believed that their universities operate on the notion that race and culture has no impact on individual success, or future opportunities. Participant narratives reflect cultural dissonance and struggles to maintain their liminal identities due to the absence of culture and race from educational policies (i.e., admissions), programming (i.e., academic support, student organizations, etc.), and classroom pedagogies.

Discussion question. How do color and culture-blind educational policies, programing and pedagogies impact PI college football players? How can race and culture inform educational policies, programing and pedagogies for PI college football players?

Tongan, plays at community college on Northwest coast of the US:

At the college level, the teachers' teaching style does not help grasp concepts well; they assume most students grew up the same way and teach as if everyone knows everything about most public topics or issues.

Tongan, plays for a Power 5 program on the Southwest coast of the US:

There are really little to no Polynesians on campus here at CAL which to me is hard to relate with the university and its values towards our Islander communities.

Tongan, plays for a Power 5 program on the Northwest coast of the US:

The lack of diversity. At lunch, when I'm in the cafeteria, the whole place is full and the minorities can fill up maybe two of the tables out of the 50 plus there.

Hawaiian, Professor at UH Manoa:

Unrealistic perspectives of expectations - what balancing school and sport will be like, what will happen when your eligibility is done, no culturally responsive support in athletics (and no time to access those programs which may be available on campus), isolation of student athletes from other students...

Samoaan, played college football and is now an athletic director at a Power 5 university:

A program interested in helping Poly student-athletes adapt to college life will create a family atmosphere, recruit more than just one Poly student-athlete – must have a good concentration of them – and must have at least one Poly coach on staff... If there are more than one or two Poly students, than they will support each other as aiga does, but we had just one when I got here to [university name omitted] and without the aiga atmosphere, he eventually dropped out of school.

Samoaan, ex-NFL player that played college at the University of Utah, and now coaches college football:

I received a Pacific Islanders Student Association (PISA) grant for Utah residence even though I moved from Hawaii. That's typical Polynesian hook up, but it's what the culture does to help those in need. PISA worked closely with the football program when I was in school to allow for the Pacific Islander student athletes to have a community on campus.

Deculturalization

Descriptive analysis. Only 25 percent of the participants attended universities that offered Pacific studies courses, but 94% reported that they would have taken the courses if they were offered. Participant responses suggest that the absence of Pacific studies courses, or the apathy of the university to provide these courses, have caused cultural dissonance and the internalization of self-hate in some participants.

Discussion question. What would Pacific Studies courses mean to PI college football players, or to their university? How does the absence of Pacific studies impact the college experience of PI college football players?

Hawaiian, plays at a division 2 school in the Midwest of the US:

You don't know where you're going if first you don't have an understanding of where you came from, and I feel it's very important for PIs to know the sacrifices that their ancestors made for our future.

Samoaan, plays for a Power 5 program on the East coast of the US:

It is very important to me. My sister was able to take Pacific Islander studies courses at UCLA but unfortunately many schools on the east coast don't offer the same opportunities.

Samoaan, ex-NFL player that played college at the University of Utah, and now coaches college football:

I believe there was a Pacific Islander awareness week that included talks by Pacific Islander professors and concerts. Honestly, [Pacific Studies] was an easy A for me knowing it was a course I should be familiar with. However, for Pacific Islanders that did not grow up in the islands, it is a chance for them to learn about the culture that they may not have had the chance to learn while growing up.

Tongan, plays for community college on the Southwest Coast of the US:

I'd value it a lot because I want to learn more about my culture.

Samoaan, recently played and graduated from the University of Hawa'i:

Takes your knowledge of your culture to the next level and beyond what you have learned from your family. Shows you how to apply your cultural values in the classroom.

Hawaiian, recently played and graduated from the University of Hawa'i:

We are listed as a Hawaiian place of learning and have Hawai'inuiakea. However, I don't feel as if the university and its admin have taken it upon themselves to actually promote the education of PI cultures to the rest of the campus community.

Tongan, plays on the Southwest coast of the US:

To me I would like language courses being that my dad struggled to learn English, so he didn't take time to teach us Tongan.

Samoan, plays at community college on Northwest coast of the US:

I value it but we're a small percentage of the population and the majority vote wins; my close friends and families help me understand the history of the Samoan people as well as reading about it in available textbooks or online; it's plenty for a small group of people; besides, I don't think our record keeping doesn't date back too far as the American culture; on a personal level, it is useful; in the real world, not at all; just like the Samoan language, it only benefits the Samoans if it is used often; if not, then there's no use learning it.

Tongan, plays for a Power 5 program on the Southwest coast of the US:

It would provide us with an opportunity to know that our community is being acknowledged the same way other ethnic courses are being studied and it would also offer a space for the PI students on campus. When your education doesn't reflect your history or culture, it reminds us that we can only truly be understood, or belong, amongst our own, or that we are only here to play football. I think that without an understanding of your culture and history it is hard to help our community with the challenges we face today.

Hawaiian, Professor at UH Manoa:

Hegemony and objectification (and monetization) of the body. PI football players should have access to culturally-responsive student programming which attends to identity and student success. For Hawaiians, building stronger sense of self and kuleana in relationship to family, community, lahui; exploring "Hawaiianness" and connecting it to the college experience and vocational aspirations; supports conventional measures of success like retention, persistence, and matriculation. Not just for PI football players but for everyone. Same like anything else, the histories, experiences, knowledges, and ways of knowing should be included. For PIs, I think it would be helpful for them to gain a stronger sense of self, again, in relationship to broader socio-historical, socio-political contexts.

Symbolism

Descriptive analysis. 63% of the participants reported that they had experienced being stereotyped because of their Pacific Islander heritage while in college. Participant responses reveal that experiences of symbolism and stereotyping can create cultural dissonance, perceptions of exploitation, and having to negotiate liminal identities.

Discussion questions. What symbols of culture are attributed to PI college football players? What symbols of culture are they allowed to exercise and present publicly? What symbols reinforce the presence of a dominant culture, and/or PI as other? What symbols of

culture are used to recruit PI football players, and help them to transition and persist in college?

Samoaan, played and recently graduated from a military academy on the East Coast:

They allow us to share our cultural dances, the Haka for example, or gather around and sing, and speaking with one another in our language.

Tongan, plays for a Power 5 program on the Southwest coast of the US:

We are given time for us polys to get together and pray.

Hawaiian, recently played and graduated from the University of Hawa‘i:

Most of the polys or PIs that I see are only the ones playing sports.

Hawaiian, recently played and graduated from the University of Hawa‘i:

They let us perform the Haka.

Tongan, plays on the Southwest coast of the US:

Everyone thinks that all polys are related.

Samoaan, recently played and graduated from the University of Hawa‘i:

All the academic buildings are named after White Folks except for William S. Richardson and Hawai‘inuiākea.

Hawaiian, Professor at UH Manoa:

Brown bodies all over the field; again, the mascot and "haka" reeking of cultural appropriation at UH.

Samoaan, ex-NFL player that played college at the University of Utah, and now coaches college football:

I believe being a Pacific Islander is the huge reason we were recruited to play at the University of Utah. Our football team was well represented, and we had a lot of support as Pacific Islander players by the coaches, faculty and staff. I did recognize that none of that support was really institutionalized though. PISA was a student organization, certain coaches provided support in addition to coaching, and there were Pacific Islander staff that would host events and support us unofficially, but not as their primary role at the university. I heard that they are now starting a Pacific Studies department that is not attached to some other ethnic studies program, so I think that's an improvement.

Community Activist and historian of PI's in sport, and co-author of Performing Polynesian Masculinities in American Football: From 'Rainbows to Warriors':

There are schools like UH-Manoa, BYU, Utah, and Oregon State who have consistently recruited Polynesians since the 1960s. I'd say these schools do not see Polynesians so much as a commodity or novelty. However, in the last five years, I've seen more and more coaches or coaching staffs say they want Polynesian football players but not necessarily understanding the nuances between the groups within the community. I'd also add that Polynesian college football coaches are often tokenized for their ethnicity to recruit PI players to a particular school and too often leave for better coaching opportunities and thus leaving those kids at the school. That's the nature of the college football coaching business but these coaches also know how important culture is in landing a kid but often disregard that bond when they jump to their next better opportunity.

Samoan, former college football player and member of the AIGA Foundation:

PI coaches symbolize the home culture for PI players, and this familiarity is used to lure high school recruits to college football programs, but when PI coaches are fired, or leave for better paying jobs, the kids are left without cultural advocates. I don't blame the coaches for taking higher paying jobs elsewhere, the policies that prohibit players from following those coaches to other colleges is the problem. The coaches that recruit our kids, the ones that sit down with our families, are often the reasons our kids commit to their schools. Our community believes in relationships, not promises. As parents we look to these college coaches to be the surrogate family for our sons, nephews and grandsons while they are in their care. As it is, the rules only protect the institutions, not the athletic laborers, or the players and coaches.

Significance and Implications

Future Research

The professional matriculation of PIs into US higher education is of the utmost importance if we are to see long-term improvements in college participation and graduation rates. Improving college aspiration, sense of belonging, transition, and persistence for PIs in higher education is fundamentally connected to this goal, and are enhanced by “visible pipelines” (i.e., PI scholars, administrators, staff, and coaches) for PI communities (Teranishi, 2009; Wright, 2003). This means that while “getting in” (college access) and “staying in” (persistence) are important aspects of this research, the “moving on” study that investigates the professional trajectories is crucial to correcting the institutional cultural racism that isolates and alienates PIs within US higher education. Furthermore, some scholars suggest that participation and

persistence in higher education can bridge the socioeconomic gap between colonized communities, and positions of influence within the academy, legislation and governance (Alfred, 2009). For this reason, professional matriculation of PIs from higher education is paramount to the long-term improvement of their community.

Conclusion

An analysis of the data has established that PI college football players believe they must be resilient to persevere the demands of being student-athletes, and that too few institutional agents, support programs, activities, policies, and curriculum that reinforce their cultural identity development, or make their education responsive to the specific needs of their communities. The qualitative data also reflects a critical awareness about issues of cultural racism, their exploitation as athletic labor, and a desire for praxis to create transformative change on campus, and in the PI communities. Participants name specific types of institutional agents, support programs, curriculum and policies they believe would improve the academic and professional return on the athletic investments of PI college football players. The framework of colonialism provided a critical lens to understand PI college football players' otherwise disconnected narratives as a manifesto to institutions of higher education, demanding that their athletic labor be compensated with an education that is culturally and racially informed, enacted upon, and supported by policy that allows for sustainable and fluid programs meant to adapt to the needs of this population's many intersectionalities.

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Moving On: Racial Diversity Deficit in College Football: Fixing the Pipeline

A growing amount of research is being conducted on racial diversity in college football head coaching positions in the United States. However, very little has been conducted on the entry-level positions in college coaching: Graduate Assistants (GAs), Quality Control assistants (QCs) and restricted earnings coaches. These positions represent natural professional trajectories for student-athletes who constitute the future pool of applicants for college coaching positions. In the United States, the majority of student athletes are nonwhite, but white coaches still dominate the world of college athletics. This research investigates the ‘pipeline issues’ that obstruct the matriculation of nonwhite student-athletes and produce what I call the ‘diversity deficit’ in college football coaching. Existing analyses of empirical data from member institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) demonstrate the existence of racial inequality in the profession of coaching. This paper will explain the perpetuation of the diversity deficit by employing Critical Race Theory (CRT) to explain how whiteness, color-blindness and tokenism structure college football coaching. The paper then presents new research data that illuminate how power shapes NCAA member institutions and that can aid participants in addressing pipeline issues and the diversity deficit.

College football has established itself as a major contributor to the institutional prestige and revenue of institutions of higher education (Anderson, 2012). Within the profession of college football coaching, white people historically have held exclusionary rights to the hiring of head coaching positions and, subsequently, of all subordinate levels of college coaches. A growing amount of research is being conducted on the diversity of head coaches in college football (Singer, Harrison, & Buckstein, 2010; Pike, 2011). Yet existing research tends to account for the diversity of coaches in college football from the top down, by focusing on the

head coaching position. The major policy impact of such research has been the establishment of affirmative action programs that seek to mandate interviews of nonwhite candidates for head coaching positions. However, interview mandates have created a turnstile for a short list of nonwhite college coaches (27 candidates in 2012) who often are called in for pro-forma interviews by organizations that only intend to score well on ‘diversity report cards’ (Gaither, 2012). Affirmative action policies in college football coaching take a top-down approach that only addresses access at the head coaching level. Such policies ignore pipeline issues: namely, the need to develop and mentor nonwhite coaching assistants who can contribute to the future applicant pool. Given that over half of football student-athletes in the United States are of color, how can hopeful candidates become full-time college football coaches? Researchers need to examine the GA and QC positions to better understand pipeline issues that restrict or enable access for minorities into college football coaching.

The following research questions guide this study:

- 3) What are the experiences of GAs and QCs of color, and how are their entry-level roles and positions interpreted within the professional pipeline of college coaching?
- 4) What do administrators, staff, full-time college coaches, GAs, QCs and restricted earnings coaches believe is limiting the ability for coaches of color (in entry-level positions) to be promoted to full-time staff positions?

Citing the experiences of people who work in the GA, QC and restricted earnings positions, this paper examines their varied levels of perception of the importance of racism, stereotyping or tokenism in shaping the coaching profession, and offers suggestions for making entry-level positions points of access for the advancement of coaches of color.

Background

Within the NCAA, football coaching is organized hierarchally around the head coach, who bears responsibility for the entire operation and delegates responsibility across numerous subordinate positions. Under the head coach are nine full-time coaching positions with salaries that vary depending on the financial strength of the athletic program. These coaches are responsible for the recruitment and core position development of the players. Two such coaching roles are the Offensive and Defensive coordinators, which manage the team's offensive/defensive strategies and performance and supervise the offensive/defensive position coaches. The position coaches are generally responsible for developing and recruiting position-specific players and responsibilities. NCAA Division I college football programs are limited to ten full-time coaching positions and four graduate assistant (GA) positions. The limitations are set to maintain a 'level playing field,' so that lower-revenue programs can maintain a competitive status with programs that otherwise could hire more resources. The staff, or administrative support positions include Player Development, Football Operations, Football Relations, Player Personnel and Recruiting Coordinator positions. Other actors include sponsors, alumni and support personnel (e.g., trainers and academic support). My research examined issues that restrict or enable the diversification of college football coaches by reviewing the head coach, full-time coaches, staff/administrative support positions, athletic directors, and the QC, GA and Restricted Earning positions. These positions occupy the football offices at NCAA member universities and are responsible for recruiting and coaching student-athletes. They represent the 'pipeline.'

Football players and football enthusiasts long have sought entry into college coaching. These dreamers vary in their years and levels of experience, but most come with hopes of coaching at a four-year university. A rite of passage for a majority of these hopeful applicants

has become the de facto prerequisite of becoming a GA (Levesque, 2009), a QC (Birkett, 2010) or a restricted earnings coach. Assuming one of these roles has become a hiring standard that precedes promotion to full-time coaching positions. GAs are similar to student-athletes, in that they receive athletic aid for academic programs and receive stipends for living expenses (Daughters, 2012). Their work often is exhausting, with a workload sometimes accruing 100 hours a week (Leonard, 2012). Individuals are limited by the NCAA to three years of participation in the GA program. In August of 2012, the NCAA increased the number of GAs permitted per college football program from two to four, in an attempt to increase the number of minority coaches (FootballScoop, 2012) as I discuss below.

The Quality Control (QC) position plays de jure and de facto roles in college football. The job description for QCs often includes video editing, statistical and video analyses and administrative paperwork. The NCAA has not regulated the numbers of these positions. In practice, the QC has been predominantly a coaching role, and the position has been used by a number of programs to ‘pack’ as many coaches into the organization as possible. Perhaps in an attempt to untangle itself from the regulatory process of this position, the NCAA has deregulated the recruiting roles this position held in the past. This policy change now allows the QC to participate in the recruiting of high school and junior college student-athletes. This change has the potential to create a pipeline for nonwhites aspiring to become legitimate staff members of college football programs.

The restricted earnings coaches are similar to a GA, but they are not responsible for graduate coursework. They have the same coaching responsibilities as a GA, and they receive pay similar to the financial aid afforded to GAs. At present, the earnings of these types of coaches are limited to \$12,000 during the academic year and \$4,000 during the summer months,

(CBS, 1999). Coach 13, a participant in this study who is a nonwhite full-time coach at a Division I-A football program, reported that “restricted earnings coaches are full-time coaches that get paid less, about the same as GAs, and like QCs are only limited by the budget of the football program.” The NCAA was sued for antitrust violations by restricted earnings coaches from multiple sports within its membership institutions, which the NCAA settled in mediation for \$54.5 million in 1999 (CBS, 1999). Now, restricted earnings coaches are only used in the FCS (D1AA) and count towards the 10 coaches per team cap.

Literature Review

Diversity Deficit

The diversity deficit in college football is evident in the significant gap between the percentage of student-athletes of color and that of coaches of color. According to the NCAA, as of March 2010, 11 percent of head football coaches at Division I-A schools were nonwhite (Pike, 2011) contrasted with the 55 percent of nonwhite student-athletes who compete in these top programs. At the NCAA Division I-AA level -- and excluding historically black colleges and universities -- 7 percent of head coaches were of color. In 2012, at both the DI-A and DI-AA levels, coaches of color accounted for 16 percent of the offensive and defensive coordinator positions, and 23 percent of the assistant coach positions (Lapchick, 2012). These numbers suggest a pipeline issue, given that nonwhite coordinators (16 percent) and assistant coaches (23 percent) fall significantly short of the percentage of nonwhite student-athletes (55 percent).

While the NCAA allows institutional autonomy in the governance of hiring policies in its member universities, several affirmative action agendas have surfaced in an effort to close the gap between the number of white head coaches and head coaches of color. The Black Coaches

and Administrators (BCA) organization developed a Football Hiring Report Card (HRC) that grades organizations on their inclusion of nonwhite candidates in their interview processes for head coaching positions in college football (Harrison, Lapchick and Jansen, 2009; Singer, Harrison, & Buckstein, 2010). Programs identified as having advertised head coaching positions are given letter grades from A-F based on five criteria: 1) Communication; 2) Hiring/Search Committee; 3) Candidates Interviewed; 4) Reasonable Time Frame; and 5) Affirmative Action. Singer, Harrison and Bukstein (2010) offer an important critical race analysis of these five aspects of the hiring process of college football head coaches. The same critical framework also could be applied to the entry-level position pipeline and the matriculation of nonwhite coaches within college coaching.

Gaither (2012) reports that thirty-nine head coaching positions came available during the 2010-2011 season. In 2011 the HRC assigned to Football Bowl Series (FBS) and Football Championship Series (FCS) schools twenty-one A grades, seven Bs, seven Cs, one D and three Fs. The data suggests that the HRC has had a significant impact: Lapchick (2012) reported a 61 percent increase in all coaches of color hired since the first HRC in 2004, with 54 percent of all coaches of color in the history of college football having been hired in the last three years of the study. The 2003 to 2012 seasons saw a 600 percent increase in FBS head coaches of color (from three to eighteen). However, in 2012, college football was the only collegiate sport to increase its percentage of white head coaches and to decrease the total number of nonwhite coaches. Lapchick examines this disparity by addressing what I refer to as the white hegemony in college athletics:

The fact is that 90 percent of our [college or university] presidents are white, 87.5 percent of our athletics directors are white, and 100 percent of our conference commissioners are

white. In those positions, 76, 84.2, and 100 percent are white men, respectively. Overall, whites hold 332 (90.7 percent) of the 366 campus leadership positions reported in this study, which is no change in quantity from last year although the percentage dropped due to an increase of reportable leadership positions. The stagnant nature of diversity in campus leadership does not reflect the America that we know. (Lapchick 2012: 1)

Lapchick also notes that the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR), a position that is responsible for student-athletes' transition, retention and social welfare, was 94.4 percent white in the Football Bowl Series division, and that 79 percent of faculty in that division were white. Furthermore, in the 2011-12 season -- before the NCAA increased the number of GAs from two to four -- 219 out of 302, or 73 percent of GAs were white (NCAA, 2012).

What do these data mean for the future applicant pool of college coaches? Will the recent increase in the number of GAs improve opportunities for nonwhite college coaches, or will it simply double the number of white coaches and escalate the diversity deficit? The demographic information on GAs is currently unavailable on the NCAA website, and no statistics are available on QC or restricted earnings positions. The demographic information the NCAA is willing to share remains a moving target.

I argue that the diversity deficit is perpetuated in college football by a white hegemony and its dominant narrative: that we exist in a post-racial era in which race does not matter and meritocracy is a virtuous mechanism of social selection. The next section introduces Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a framework for critically evaluating this dominant narrative and its myths of meritocracy and individualism. I also examine the dominant narrative with respect to whiteness and color-blindness, tokenism, and the question of whether the Contact Hypothesis or Class Conflict Theory are appropriate models for affirmative action efforts in the hiring of

college football coaches. Taken together, these theories provide frameworks for identifying structures and mechanisms that perpetuate the diversity deficit, such as the denial of racism, and for considering and evaluating solutions to the diversity deficit in college football.

Critical Race Theory

The histories of slavery, colonization, economic imperialism and militarization have given dominant racial groups a ‘head start’ in the accumulation of wealth and have segregated U.S. society by race and class. These histories of oppression resulted in ‘non-traditional’ pathways to higher education for many people of color, such as through military service and college athletics. Within college football, the pipeline of student-athletes to college coaching positions should be reinforced to transition and retain student-athletes of color. Visualizing this pipeline offers student-athletes of color physical and psychological support for imagining and pursuing their place in higher education. The causal relationships between histories of oppression and the academic and professional trajectories of student-athletes of color can best be framed and understood through the application of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Among the many CRT scholars who make invaluable contributions to the literature, Kohli and Solorzano (2012) suggest five tenets of CRT that provide appropriate guidelines for this research: 1) Centrality of Race and Racism; 2) Challenging the Dominant Perspective; 3) Commitment to Social Justice; 4) Valuing Experiential Knowledge; and 5) Being Interdisciplinary. I will highlight the relevance of all five tenets in considering the diversity deficit among college football coaches.

Centrality of race and racism. This tenet recognizes that race remains central and relevant, and that racism is endemic in U.S. society. The tenet allows this research to provide historical context for empirical data without apologizing for racial disparities that are obvious and apparent. A racial chasm exists between the current ratio of college football coaches of color

at 25%, to college football players of color at 55%, and the ratio of white college football coaches at 75%, to white college football players at 45% (NCAA, 2012). The same histories of structural oppression that created adverse consequences for communities of color in the United States also granted whites the power to define rules for admission at elite universities where the diversity deficit in college football exists. Racism is a contemporary and everyday occurrence that perpetuates inequity between the dominant racial group and people of color.

Challenging the dominant perspective. The current dominant perspective is one of color blindness: it ignores that whites have privilege, maintaining that racism and discrimination no longer exist (Ullucci & Battey, 2011). This dominant perspective has been only mildly challenged by affirmative action efforts, which embrace the idea that the inclusion of nonwhite candidates in the interview process will result in more nonwhite head football coaches, or that increasing the number of GAs and QCs (without requiring that any be of color) will increase the pool of nonwhite candidates. College football governing organizations have acquiesced to affirmative action efforts as a benign and diplomatic concession. Yet such efforts burden social justice advocates with the work of bargaining for equitable hiring practices. The dominant perspective is quick to applaud the impact of affirmative action efforts, but a slight shift in numbers does not constitute a paradigm shift, nor does it reflect “fundamental improvements in traditional practices and approaches” (Chang, 2002, p. 131) or what Smith et al. (1997) calls “institutional transformation.” This research is designed to further illuminate the white dominant narrative within college football coaching and to challenge it by re-centering the marginalized voices of nonwhite college football coaches.

Commitment to social justice. Without a commitment to social justice, parties that influence and benefit from the financial success of college football will simply pay ‘lip-service’

to diversity efforts. The transference of knowledge about the diversity deficit is critical to creating empathy. Ladson-Billings (2006) defined moral debt as the disparity between what we know to be right and what we actually do. Building from this claim, only social justice will repay our moral debt to coaches of color in college football. While in 2012, the NCAA increased the permitted number of GAs from two to four, some football programs (like the primary site of my study) have filled all such positions with white candidates, thereby nullifying the policy intent of racial diversification (FootballScoop, 2012). Without a commitment to social justice, college football and its constituents will never realize the full benefits of diversity among college football staff members, student-athletes, the general student body, the community at large or the institution of higher education. This research was implemented so that social justice agents can refer to it when creating policy solutions that will decrease the diversity deficit in college football.

Valuing experiential knowledge. Looking past the guidelines and hiring rules that establish what is ‘allowed’ within college football by the NCAA, this research used interviews and surveys to gather information from coaches, players, staff and administrators who occupy different levels within football organizations. Their narratives are important because their perceptions of reality produce the reality of college football. Job descriptions, employee handbooks, rules, regulations and hiring standards mean nothing if they are not followed. The only way to uncover what is perceived to be the reality of college football is to record the narratives and counter-narratives of participants. Counter-narratives attempt to problematize concepts that are considered to be common sense, and help recalibrate ideas of right / wrong or truth / libel based on experiential knowledge. We cannot hope to achieve an ‘objective’ account of college football coaching without considering all perspectives, and most especially those of

marginalized participants.

Being interdisciplinary. History, sociology, psychology, law, education, economics, gender and ethnic studies are just some of the disciplines that have contributed to the scholarly literature on diversity. The multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches among these fields provide frameworks for identifying the existence of racism and its modifications within power structures and social processes. Within this research, examining history allows us to see how specific groups that participate in college football have been excluded from higher education. The study of law helps us understand what processes and structures formed to maintain this exclusion, and how they are reinvented so that they persist in today's putatively post-racial and colorblind society. Psychology helps us to understand the impact of exclusion on the well-being of nonwhite participants, while sociology suggests how this exclusion might impact our social behavior within communities, organizations or institutions. Within the discipline of education we can examine what is required to increase participation in higher education among historically-excluded communities of color. Doing so may pay our country's moral debt: not simply to include nonwhite groups within the current education system, but also to allow their histories, cultures and ways of knowing to recreate that system. This research draws from literatures within and interlinking these and more disciplines to understand root problems and to consider diverse solutions to correcting the diversity deficit in college football.

Whiteness and Colorblindness

Ullucci and Battey (2011), citing the work of Gillborn (2009) define whiteness as having three objectives, which include three "key components": 1) "downplaying" white privilege and being unwilling "to name the contours of racism"; 2) avoiding "identifying with a racial experience or group (making Whiteness 'normal' and ethnically identified groups 'other'"; 3)

minimizing racist legacies by “seeking to place racism in a historical, rather than contemporary context” (Ulluci & Battey, 2011, p. 1199). Colorblindness is a concept that has been championed by the dominant culture. Colorblindness asserts that merit and individualism are objective criteria for professional assessment, and that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s catapulted U.S. society into a post-racial era where race no longer matters. Examining whiteness and colorblindness within college football will reveal how these components act together to produce and reproduce racism. Even if color-blind racism is not overt, loud, angry or a violent demonstration of discrimination, it still perpetuates the same outcome: a “White-topped racial hierarchy” that maintains the hegemonic status quo (Ulluci & Battey, 2011, p. 1204). This is exemplified by the predominantly white search and hiring committees that hire college head football coaches (Singer, Harrison & Bukstein, 2010).

The dominant narrative maintains that meritocracy is the mechanism of social selection. This ‘common sense’ paradigm within college football is a form of colorblindness: it argues that by solely considering merit and individual experience, the best candidate will get the job regardless of race. However, in the U.S., the perspective that merit and individual experience exist independently of race, class, gender or other privileges exclusively defines the cultural experience of white groups (Ullucci & Battey, 2011; Tusnstall, 2011). The colorblind view of merit or individual experience in the hiring process ignores the socio-historical factors that influence them. For example, access to relationships that influence the hiring process -- ‘hiring trees’ (Harrison & Yee, 2009; Brooks, 2002), which are examined below as ‘good ‘ol boy networks’ -- are a type of social capital that is traditionally enjoyed by white coaches. A colorblind lens ignores the history of institutional racism that has excluded nonwhites from college athletics as student-athletes and as coaches (Singer, Harrison & Bukstein, 2010). White

privilege has given white coaches near-exclusive access to the professional experiences that are required of head coaches by hiring committees. Colorblindness ignores the trickle-down effect of these processes on the perpetuation of a white hegemony within college football coaching, at administrative and faculty levels. It also ignores how whiteness affects campus climate and the sense of belonging and well-being among people of color within institutions of higher education.

Colorblindness imagines a ‘racially assimilated society’ where race is irrelevant. Yet Ullucci and Battey (2011) state:

While a “raceless” society may be sold as utopian, such a society requires the obliteration of cultural differences. The end product would surely not be a society based on African American norms or Latino cultural norms. (p. 10)

The inaction of NCAA member universities to correct the diversity deficit in their athletic departments is an act of neutrality that is neither innocuous nor innocent. This neutrality is unmoved by an obvious diversity deficit between student-athletes and the coaches that recruit and manage them. This neutrality is undaunted by the racial microaggressions (Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000) that people of color have endured in college athletics, and the harmful effects that racism-related stress (Crocker, 2007; Reynolds, Sneva & Beehler, 2010) has on the members of their institutions. This neutrality fails to recognize that neutrality is racism.

Ullucci and Battey’s (2011) framework should be used to challenge members of the NCAA in four specific ways:

- 1) Challenge the whiteness of Hiring Search Committees for head football coaches;
- 2) Validate the experiences and perspectives of college football coaches of color, and understand how these factors affect merit and individual criteria in the hiring process;
- 3) Name racist hiring practices, and develop race-conscious hiring policies;

- 4) Challenge neutrality in NCAA member university policies and identify institutional racism.

Tokenism and Symbolic Boundaries

Nonwhite college coaches who work in environments dominated by whiteness and colorblindness often are 'pigeon-holed' into certain types of coaching positions that are considered appropriate for minorities. Lower level coaches of color often are given less mission-critical responsibilities, and more relational player personnel roles. In this hiring context, tokenism has become a popular method for the use of nonwhite coaches to recruit nonwhite student-athletes. The organizational outcome of physical diversity without psychological, social, cultural and financial validation is tokenism. Hurtado et al. (1998) state that tokenism can contribute to the hyper-visibility of underrepresented groups, an exaggeration of group differences, and the distortion of images and situations to fit existing stereotypes.

To understand tokenism in college football, we can consider the coaches of color who occupy non full-time or entry-level positions. Many of these nonwhite coaches are hired onto football programs to help recruit and retain nonwhite student-athletes. In this study, Coach 11 stated, "More often than not minorities are hired merely for the fact that most kids that play the game of football are minorities, so it is used as a selling point to recruits and their families." Symptoms of tokenism are apparent when predominantly white coaching staffs hire nonwhite coaches without meaningful roles and without salaries that are commensurate with those of their peers. GAs, QCs and restricted earnings positions in these types of environments make the exploitation of brown bodies more obvious. In college football programs where tokenism exists, the true benefit of racial diversity is lost.

In this type of environment, the diversity deficit also can be affecting the pipeline of

student-athletes into the profession of college coaching. Nonwhite student-athletes may perceive that college coaching is not a 'realistic' professional goal if cues indicate to them that only whites can become college football coaches, or that nonwhite coaches are tokenized. Prudence Carter (2012) called these cues "symbolic boundaries." Student-athletes may be dissuaded from pursuing this profession if cues or boundaries indicate to them that only white heterosexual men become college football coaches, that only white coaches occupy positions with meaningful roles, or that nonwhite college coaches do not receive the same financial reward as their white counterparts. Given the media coverage of college football games, perhaps we also must be concerned that these symbolic boundaries are being conveyed not only among student-athletes but also to the national and international community.

Contact Hypothesis and Class Conflict Theory

Within social-scientific theories of conflict and prejudice, the contact hypothesis suggests that positive contacts between in-groups and out-groups will reduce prejudice. However, Nkomo (1992) criticizes this theory by arguing that it underscores the need to structure social environments around cooperation rather than competition. With respect to college football, the contact hypothesis would suggest that players and lower-level coaches of color, on the one hand, and white players and coaches on the other will come to understand and accept each other by interacting, and that racism subsequently will disappear. However, within college football, the power dynamics between those who produce the labor and those who manage it remain racialized and perpetuate racism. Organizations have looked to correct the diversity deficit by creating affirmative action policies that focus on creating 'contact' during interviews for head coaching positions. However, these policies only mandate that coaches of color be included in the hiring process, not that they actually be hired.

One such national diversity effort is the Oregon State Legislature's implementation of the NFL's Rooney Rule. Named after Dan Rooney, the Pittsburgh Steelers owner who also was the chairman of the NFL's diversity committee, the Rooney Rule mandates minority interviews for every available head coaching position in the NFL. The initiative for a college version of the Rooney Rule has been called the Robinson Rule, named after the legendary Eddie Robinson who coached at Grambling State University for 55 years and became the most winning coach in college football history. The Oregon Legislature enacted the Robinson Rule into law, mandating that Oregon college football programs must interview minority candidates for all college head coaching positions (Pike, 2011). Nigel Burton was hired as the head coach of Portland State University the same year that the Oregon State Legislature enacted the Robinson Rule. Unfortunately, in January of 2013, eight NFL head coaches were hired, but none were coaches of color despite the availability of qualified minority candidates (Hanzus, 2013).

Affirmative action initiatives to integrate coaches of color into the interview process have created a turnstile for a short list of minority candidates (27 qualified minority candidates, in 2012) who are called in for pro-forma or 'token interviews' by organizations that only intend to score well on 'diversity report cards' (Singer, Harrison & Bukstein, 2010; Gaither, 2012). These policies, however, take a top down approach that only addresses access at the head coaching level. They ignore pipeline issues that deal with the development and mentorship of nonwhites in entry-level positions. Considering that over half of football student-athletes are persons of color, clearly a significant applicant pool is available.

Nkomo (1992) points out that power conflict theories identify causal relationships between the rise of capitalism and nationalism, and the rise of racial exploitation and racial prejudice. This concept could be supplanted by the idea that racial exploitation and race

prejudice in college football began with the rise of academic capitalism: the trend of neoliberalism in higher education and in the maintenance of institutional prestige. These forces have transformed student-athletes into sites of profit, and brown bodies into natural resources. In light of this reading, NCAA member institutions must collectively address their duality: they cannot serve their mission statements of diversity and democratization while submitting to the demands of athletic neoliberalism in college football. No longer can they continue their “laissez-faire approach to diversity” (Hurtado, Milem, Pedersen, & Allen, 1998, (p 279) If Nkomo (1992) is correct in her critique of the contact hypothesis, diversity initiatives in college football may continue on their leisurely path and maintain the diversity deficit.

Methodology

The aforementioned theoretical frameworks provide the basis for the research methodology. CRT directs this research project to center marginalized voices, to use narratives and lived experiences to contextualize quantitative data and to provide a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse on diversity in higher education. These methodological strategies intend to reach beyond cursory survey responses and to ask participants what different perspectives mean to them. This methodology places ‘meaning making’ in the domain of the participants, not the researcher.

The study incorporates the narratives of seventeen football coaches who were navigating, or who have navigated the pipeline to coaching college football. The narratives were collected in 2014. Western University, the pseudonym for my primary site of research, is a public institution of higher education with a football program within the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS). The 2013 football team boasted a diverse coaching staff (44% of the full-time coaches were

nonwhite): three of four QCs were nonwhite, and one of four staff members were nonwhite, but all four GAs were white. While 47% of the total football staff was nonwhite, nonwhite student-athletes still made up 72% of the football roster. 72% of the general student body was nonwhite as well, but only 3.8% were Black; in contrast to the football team, where Blacks represented 55% of the entire team roster.

I attended practices and games, observed office activity and team meetings at Western University, as well as many college football programs across the country. On my first official site visit to Western University's football program, I took fieldnotes with my iPad and had the opportunity to informally interview one staff member. During my observation, I was able to identify the racial diversity of coaches (GAs, QCs and staff) and to supplement my online research of the racial make-up of the football players on this particular team. I also was able to observe the roles and responsibilities of these different coaching and administrative positions. During my interaction, I identified three of my seventeen research participants from this athletic staff, and after explaining my research agenda, they were willing to share their narratives with me.

In addition to the data gathered at Western University, I identified fourteen other participants from college football programs across the U.S. In all, I interviewed fourteen coaches (full-time, GAs, QCs and restricted earnings), two staff/administrative support positions and one athletic director. Six of these participants were white, including three head coaches, two coordinators and one director of football operations. The remaining eleven nonwhite coaches included two coordinators, two full-time coaches, three QCs, one GA, one restricted earnings coach, one Player Personnel staff member and one athletic director/administrator. Of the total participants, six had once been a QC or Restricted Earnings coach. I took notes, because video or

audio taping would have been too intrusive and threatening for the casual tone of conversation I planned to have with them.

Research participants were selected because they had once been GAs, QCs, restricted earnings coaches, or had matriculated to full time staff/athletic administrators. These participants are people with whom I have had varying degrees of contact during my work with student-athletes. I have attended practices and games and I have observed office activity and team meetings at many college football programs across the United States, in my capacity as a strength/conditioning, speed/agility, and football coach. Each participant was asked to respond to three specific prompts: (1) What is hindering the development of coaches of color to full-time coaching positions? (2) Is the GA or QC position an appropriate mechanism for creating a to full-time positions? (3) Describe your coaching experience, position and racial identity. The responses to those questions were coded and I provide an analyses of those narratives in the Findings section.

In addition to gathering these seventeen narratives, I also surveyed forty high school student-athletes at a Western University Pacific Islander Student Association (PISA) outreach conference in 2013 about the importance of diversity in their college choice. This survey was done after a stereotypes workshop, and administered to the participants. These forty student-athletes were asked five open-ended questions about the importance of physical diversity (racial representation) on the college coaching staff. Was it important to their college choice if the head coach was of Color, or same race/ethnicity? Was it important that their position coach was of Color, or same race/ethnicity? Would this impact their college choice? If so, why? What was the most important thing in their college choice?

From this original construct I then developed a more comprehensive survey and administered this to seventy high school football players at the 2014 AIGA Foundation's Polynesian All American All Star game. The revised survey asked student-athletes to address the effect of diversity within college coaching positions on their college choice, their perception of their place in higher education, and their potential matriculation into the coaching pipeline by ranking the level of importance on a scale from 1-5. I then identified twenty of these high school All Stars as student-athletes who were being recruited actively by college football programs with scholarship offers. These respondents were asked to respond to questions regarding diversity and the impact of diversity on their college choice, to share written accounts of their experience and to participate in focus groups of 2-5 people for thirty minutes in a private room. They had prior knowledge of the topics of the focus groups, which had been introduced in the preliminary survey so that they would be familiar with the questions. These surveys confirm that coaches of color are important in the recruitment, to sense of belonging, and ultimately college choice for student-athletes of color.

Positionality

It is critical that scholars recognize the inherent bias of researchers who investigate social issues around communities of color in the U.S. That is why my positionality statement is fundamentally imperative here. As Kanaka Maoli (Indigenous people of Hawai'i), our names are important because they reflect our epistemology handed down by our kupuna (ancestors) through mo'olelo (stories). These mo'olelo contain not only our history and the information to maintain our culture and epistemology, but also our kupuna's hopes for the future of lahui (the Hawaiian nation). It is important that those who read my research to understand that my identity as a

member of the lahui frames my analyses of contemporary issues that impact communities of color in the US.

I have trained and mentored hundreds of student-athletes and placed them into college athletic programs all around the world. Throughout this process I have experienced the opportunities that athletics provide in creating ‘untraditional’ pathways to education. I have also seen the exploitation that has occurred as a result of neoliberalism in college sports, which emphasizes the student-athletes as profit-centers and deemphasizes their roles as students in the academy. I believe that the histories of slavery, colonization, economic imperialism and militarization (specifically in the Pacific) have hindered access to higher education in communities of color, especially where economic specialization supports industries that nullify the utility of college degrees. These forces have created ‘untraditional’ pathways to higher education for these communities through military service and college athletics. To transition and retain student-athletes of color, the pipeline of these student-athletes to college coaching positions should be reinforced. This pipeline is a visual representation of their place in higher education, and provides physical and psychological support to student-athletes of color.

Limitations

Most likely the greatest limitation of this research project is its sample size. The depth and diversity of participants in this study are significant to considering the sensitive nature of this critical topic. A larger sample size of nonwhite full-time coaches might help us to understand their professional trajectories. By investigating trends and experiences that lead to successful promotion, we might be able to identify roadmaps that can better define policies and programs for linking aspiring coaches of color to the experiences and knowledge development that they need for advancement.

The other major limitation of this study is timing. At this moment three significant court cases are being adjudicated that could potentially impact the environment and experiences of these entry-level positions. The first is the Ed O'Bannon case that claims that the NCAA and their membership institutions have exploited student-athletes and have been allowed to profit from their likeness in perpetuity. The pending court decision will determine whether college student-athletes will remain unpaid amateurs, or become professionalized (Holthaus, 2011; McCann, 2012; PBS, 2011). The second is the court case that currently represents 1900 restricted earnings coaches against the NCAA and its membership institutions for antitrust violations (CBS, 2014). If the courts rule in favor of the plaintiffs, it is likely that the restricted earnings position will disappear. The last case involves the Northwestern University football team's effort to gain membership in the labor union. If this happens, entry-level college football coaches could benefit from labor representation, and the hiring (or promotion) of candidates to full-time college coaching positions may be held to more equitable hiring standards in the future. Specifically, labor unions could mandate that all full-time coaching positions be posted publicly and that interviews must include candidates of color; therefore, disrupting the perpetuation of hiring trees and the good ol' boy network.

Findings

High school recruits

Using interviews and surveys of forty high school football recruits at one event, I found that 78% responded affirmatively that having a coach of color was an important factor in choosing a collegiate program. That is, thirty-one of the forty athletes surveyed at one event answered that it was important that there be at least one coach of color at the college they choose

to attend. One important finding was that none of the recruits thought race was the most important factor in either their position coach or the head coach. Simply the presence of diversity somewhere on the coaching staff was of importance to these students. Of those that believed diversity was important, most said that they believed having a coach that represented their ethnicity would make them feel more comfortable. Others thought it meant that they would have someone that understood them, and some thought that it would eliminate the possibility of being ‘the only one.’ Eight respondents thought it was important but not necessary, and only one high school football recruit thought that ‘diversity’ was unimportant.

Of the 70 players surveyed and interviewed at the high school All Star game, the percentage that said having a coach of Color was important to their college choice was significantly higher at 87%. Of the 20 top recruits that were interviewed, 95% said they would not commit to a football program that did not have a coach of Color. It should be noted, however, that this event was hosted by a Polynesian community organization, and 69 out of 70 players were student-athletes of Color. Also, top recruits generally have multiple offers, and less recruited high school football players might attend any college football program that offered a scholarship, regardless of coaching diversity.

Graduate Assistants

As mentioned, becoming a GA or QC has become a hiring standard that precedes promotions to full-time coaching positions. GAs are similar to the student-athletes, in that they receive athletic aid for academic programs, and receive stipends for living expenses (Daughters, 2012). However, GAs are not included in the Annual Progress Report (APR) that holds college football programs accountable for their student-athletes graduation rates. The work is often exhaustive with a workload sometimes accruing 100 hours a week (Leonard, 2012). Individuals

are limited by the NCAA to three years of participation in the GA program. In August of 2012, the NCAA increased the number of GAs from two to four in an attempt to increase minority coaches (FootballScoop, 2012), but the increase of GAs without a diversity plan could potentially increase the diversity deficit. Coach 13 (a nonwhite coach at a major FBS football program) stated:

Without actual hiring requirements attached to this policy, it will not accomplish its goal. Head coaches bring on who they know. The NCAA may say it increased GAs to increase the number of minority coaches, but that is not the agenda of college football programs.

Quality Control Assistants and Restricted Earnings Coaches

Lower revenue programs concerned about maintaining a ‘level playing field’ with high revenue programs have scrutinized the QC position, because the position was meant to be a non-coaching position (Birkett, 2010). Division I college football programs are limited to ten full-time coaching positions, and now four GA positions. The limitations are set to maintain a level playing field, so that college football programs with more money cannot secure an unfair advantage by hiring more coaches than smaller programs. The job description for QCs often includes video editing, statistic and video analysis, and administrative paperwork. The de facto role, however, has predominantly been a coaching role, and this position has been used by a number of programs to circumvent the coaching limitations set by the NCAA (Birkett, 2010). Perhaps in an attempt to untangle itself from the regulatory process of this position, the NCAA has not only allowed for the unlimited number of QCs per program, it has deregulated the recruiting roles this position has been restricted to in the past. That is, GA and QC positions can

now participate in the recruiting of high school and junior college student-athletes. This policy has the opportunity to create a pipeline for nonwhites aspiring to become full-time coaches in college football programs.

QC positions have been used to staff more coaches at one-fifth the salary of the lowest paid assistant coaches. Coach 11 (a nonwhite QC at another major FBS school) said, “The trend is to move as many low cost coaches into the QC positions to provide more coaches and larger recruiting staffs ... a trend that will create un-level playing fields and benefit schools that can afford hiring more QCs and restricted earnings coaches.” This particular coach had personally benefited from the increase in QC positions, since he had just been hired onto a Division I program from a Division II program. This move from a lower-level football program to the FBS division represents a significant increase in future earning potential. Coach 14 (nonwhite QC from a separate FBS football program) explained that:

The benefit of the QC position over a GA position is that you get paid more, and you do not have to go to school. Otherwise the positions only vary by what the head coach thinks you can handle. QCs are not supposed to coach, but they are all coaching positions. The deregulation has allowed for GAs and QCs to take on more recruiting responsibility. I have not seen how either position is being used to increase the number of minority coaches.

The fact that the NCAA has deregulated recruiting restrictions for GAs and QCs is significant because it indicates that they have acknowledged the role of these positions as coaches and recruiters. Since the number of college coaching positions is limited to twelve per

program, and the number of GAs is limited to four, many college football programs pack as many QCs and restricted earnings coaches as it can afford to help offset its coaching limitations. In this way, the QC position could provide more opportunities for nonwhite coaches because their numbers are not limited. To understand the impact of the QC and restricted earnings position on the diversity deficit, the NCAA and other reporting agencies must report the demographic data of these entry-level positions. If not, these potential pipelines will only widen the diversity deficit, and college gyms and gridirons will continue to characterize players as non-paid alienated labor who enrich the highly paid slave masters depicted by white college coaches.

College football coaches/participants

Of the seventeen participants, three were head coaches, seven were full-time position coaches, one was a GA, three were QCs, two were staff/administrators, one was an athletic director, and all of the full-time coaches have previously served as either a GA, QC or restricted earnings coach. All but one were male, six were white, and the other eleven participants were nonwhite. Due to the small number of nonwhite college coaches who did not identify as either black or white, disaggregating the racial identifiers in any more detail would place these coaches at risk of losing anonymity.

The following synoptic table represents the data collected from the college coaches. The original data had eleven identifying markers and independent control variables (e.g., gender, years of experience, etc.). Identifying markers that might jeopardize the anonymity of the participants were excluded from the synoptic table. The other variables are themes that I found within the transcriptions. In general, the white coaches and the coaches of color talked very differently about race and the coaching pipeline. The white coaches spoke in terms of a colorblind world and meritocracy, whereas most of the coaches of color commented on ‘good ol’

boy’ networks (or hiring trees), lack of coaches of color in leadership positions, racism/ stereotypes, tokenism and failure of the GA position to diversify college football.

Table 1: *Synoptic Table of interviews with college coaches.*

Pseudonym	Position	White	Non-white	Colorblind	Meritocracy	Good Ol’ Boy Networks	Racism/ Stereotypes	Tokenism	Not enough coaches of color in leadership positions	GA is not diversifying college football
Coach 3	HC	x		x	x					
Coach 5	HC	x		x	x					
Coach 7	HC	x		x	x					
Coach 2	Assistant HC	x							x	x
Coach 8	DC	x		x						
Coach 1	DFO	x		x						
Coach 17	AD		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 13	DB		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 4	DC		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 6	GA		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 16	LB		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 15	Player Personnel		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 10	OC		x	x	x					
Coach 9	QC		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 11	QC		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 12	Restricted Earnings		x			x	x	x	x	x
Coach 14	QC		x			x	x	x	x	x

Analysis of Findings

Colorblindness and ‘Good ol’ boy’ Networks

Five of the six white participants made comments that suggest a colorblind perspective. Many of these comments were in response to the question, “What is hindering the development of coaches of color to full-time coaching positions?” The most basic response was not one of denial, but of complete naivety. Coach 1 illustrates this unawareness with a short and simple statement, “I was not aware that this was an issue.”

Colorblindness refuses to acknowledge the well-known use of ‘good ol’ boy’ networks. Head coaches and coordinators hire whom they know, and whom they trust. This hiring practice does not require interviews and/or evaluations of lower level coaches for full-time positions, nor does it require the head coach to integrate other candidates into the interview process. Coach 9 spent seven years in the QC position and talks about favoritism:

There is a ‘good ol’ boy’ system in place that consists mostly of white Anglo-Saxon males. It is a system that is hard to crack; especially for the position I coach. There are certain positions that are quote ‘colored coach’ positions, if a colored coach is needed to fill a spot. Those football positions are running backs, wide receivers on offense, and defensive line and defensive backs on defense. The offensive line position... and quarterbacks on offense are ‘good ol’ boy’ positions. Linebackers on defense is usually a ‘good ol’ boy’ position. The ‘good ol’ boy’ system is the main factor.

Meritocracy. A more basic colorblind perspective insists that meritocracy rules, and that race does not matter. Coach 5, a white head coach in college football, believes that a good coach needs only knowledge and experience, but he does not acknowledge the obstacles that exist barring nonwhite coaches from that knowledge and experience:

Good coaches come in all sizes, colors, genders and ages. The only thing hindering any coach, in any sport, is lack of knowledge and/or experience. I’ve never felt that color, age or gender has had anything to do with anything as far as being able to learn and then teach what you’ve learned to any athlete.

Although variables of colorblindness and meritocracy are related, I believe one must be differentiated from the other. While colorblindness is the inability or willingness to see race, meritocracy seems to ignore the role it plays in the ‘selection’ process. Meritocracy ignores the structures and systems in place that prohibit people of color from gaining the same necessary credentials (e.g. knowledge and experience), developing the same resumes, and accumulating the same social capital that provides access to hiring trees. Within the sample population of this research, all four participants who mentioned meritocracy also mentioned qualities of colorblindness. Of the six white participants, five expressed comments that reflect colorblindness, while among the coaches of color, only one (Coach 10) seemed to internalize colorblindness and adopt meritocracy and individualism:

I do not think there is anything hindering the development of coaches of color to full-time coaching positions. I think there are coaches of color who think because they are minority [they] should be the next guy in line for a full time position coach. In my experience, and this is my experience only, coaches are coaches. If you are a good teacher and are passionate about your job, you will be hired.

Not enough coaches of color in leadership positions

From the perspective of all nonwhite college coaches that participated, and one white college coach, hiring head coaches of color could have a significant impact on increasing diversity in college coaching. Coach 2, a white assistant head coach stated, “Lack of people of color in enough leadership roles with enough hiring power could be a potential hindrance [to

advancing coaches of color to full-time coaching positions].” Coach 4, a nonwhite defensive coordinator at a major D1A program, believed that the whiteness of hiring committees maintains the diversity deficit: “The people making the hiring decisions are mostly Caucasian. [We] need more minority representation in athletic administration & head coaching positions.”

Coach 13, the Director of Player Personnel at a major D1A program, believes more black people need to be in administration and on the academic support staff. This staff member said, “There are always going to be black coaches that have played and can relate to the players, but black student-athletes need to see and have interaction with black administrators and black staff members in academic support.” Coach 13 expressed that while the current full-time staff is diverse, his view is that the system is not, and that the GA program does not act towards fulfilling diversity agendas. All four of the GA positions at his university are white.

Racism and Stereotypes

Ten of the eleven coaches of color believed that racism and stereotypes are obstacles to the promotion of nonwhite coaches to full-time coaching positions. None of the six white participants communicated they believed that racism or stereotypes were obstacles to these full-time coaching positions. Coach 9 has been a QC for a major program at a D1A football university for the last seven years, and during our interview reflected on several anecdotes that illustrate how racism and stereotypes hinder Polynesian coaches from being promoted to full-time coaching positions:

Recently, a Polynesian coach got a DUI. Unfortunately, now other Polynesian coaches who are trying to advance get tagged with the stigma of being a drunk wild Polynesian. Whether it’s fair or not is irrelevant because it’s the truth. Now head coaches have to

explain to their AD's when they hire a Polynesian coach how he's different from others. There's also a stereotype that colored coaches are lazy. I think this is only going to change with time.

Tokenism

Ten of the eleven coaches of color believe that tokenism plays a part in the hiring of nonwhite coaches, and at the same time, hinders their promotion. None of the white coaches mentioned tokenism during their interviews. Coach 11, a nonwhite QC at a major D1A football program, believes that many coaches of color are simply hired to improve the football program's recruiting of nonwhite student athletes:

I think one of the biggest obstacles of hindering the development of coaches of color is society as a whole. In greater terms this business is still considered a white man's business. More often than not minorities are hired merely for the fact that most kids that play the game of football are minorities, so it is used as a selling point to recruit them and their families.

Summary

The findings of this study directly addressed the two research questions: 1) What are the experiences of GAs and QCs of color, and how are their entry-level roles and positions interpreted within the professional 'pipeline' of college coaching? 2) What do administrators, staff, full-time college coaches, GAs, QCs and restricted earnings coaches believe is limiting the ability for coaches of color (in entry-level positions) to be promoted to full-time staff positions?

The findings indicate that whites generally perceive the diversity deficit from a colorblind perspective and value meritocracy, while nonwhites fault the good ol' boy network, racism and stereotypes. Investigating these research questions allows me to explain some of the issues preventing the matriculation and promotion of coaches of color in the pipeline to full-time coaching positions. Of the white participants that volunteered for the study, three were head coaches, two were coordinators, and one was a staff/administrator.

All but the staff/administrator have carte blanche in the hiring and selection process for full-time coaching positions, and all but one made statements that reflect colorblindness. In contrast, ten of the eleven nonwhite college coaches believe that 1) good ol' boy networks are the major influence within the hiring and selection process, 2) there are not enough head coaches and coordinators of color, 3) coaches of color experience racism and stereotyping that hinder their promotion from entry-level positions, 4) coaches of color experience tokenism and are often used for recruiting student-athletes of color, 5) the GA position is not diversifying college football, but 6) the GA and QC positions are appropriate mechanisms for developing coaches of color for full-time positions. In fact, every participant but Coach 2 believed that the GA and QC position are good mechanisms for promoting 'young' coaches to full-time coaching positions. Coach 2 did not say, however, that either the GA or QC position was bad, but simply stated, "The GA or QC [position] is always iffy for anyone regardless if they are persons of color. No guarantees."

The high school student-athletes in this study affirm the importance that if competitive programs wish to recruit student-athletes of color, they should hire college football coaches of color. High school student-athletes and their families, however, will have to decide whether the coaches of color that are recruiting them are given roles that have meaningful responsibilities and

decision-making power, or whether those coaching positions are being tokenized. Lastly, these families will have to decide whether that reality is important to their college choice.

Conclusion

This research establishes that a disconnection exists between white coaches and coaches of color on issues of individualism and meritocracy, and on the challenges of fixing pipeline issues (aka the ‘diversity deficit’). First, if whites make up 75% of college coaches, and their views reflect those of this study population, then a majority of this ‘fraternity’ adopts the colorblind perspective, and refuses to acknowledge that there is a ‘problem.’ Second, if a majority of the coaches of color believe that racism, stereotyping and tokenism are indisputable certainties of college football, but their white colleagues are oblivious to it, then this duality of reality within work environments suggests that coaches of color maintain their silence around these issues. Future research should investigate the impact that this liminality has on the well-being of coaches of color. What does it mean to make it into the fraternity of coaching college football, and what are the costs to staying there? How does their silence impact their ability to mentor and lead student-athletes towards self-advocacy, community-advocacy, or a commitment towards social justice?

Tracking the experiences of entry-level positions could provide data for a number of significant studies. For example, reporting agencies currently do not collect information on the graduation rate of GAs. Since these positions are allocated financial resources by the host institution to pay for education, tracking the academic outcomes of GAs simply becomes an obligation of financially-responsible stewards. The Academic Progress Rate (APR) allows the NCAA to issue sanctions against member universities in which athletic programs fall below a

50% graduation rate. The NCAA and its member universities should consider including GAs in the APR: in this way, these entry-level positions will have a graduate degree to fall back on if they do not receive promotion to full-time college coaching positions. Another possible line of research could study professional or graduate coaching programs and inform institutions regarding whether these programs are more relevant and beneficial to GA coaches and, therefore, a better return on institutional investment. Graduate coaching programs that purposefully expose GAs to the experiences necessary to achieve parity with better-connected applicants could improve the promotion of nonwhite coaches that participate.

Social justice groups and reporting agencies should employ a mixed methods approach of short surveys, in-person interviews, and empirical data gathered by The Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sports (TIDES). Such an approach to research would collect qualitative and quantitative information regarding the actual experiences of white and nonwhite coaches in college football, while providing a more holistic perspective of diversity. This is important because the TIDES' Hiring Report Card (HRC) does not release diversity data on individual FBS and FCS schools. This information could promote diversity in faculty and administrative positions, deter good ol' boy networks in lower-level coaching positions, give high school and community college transfer students diversity information that influences college choice, and apply pressure to institutions that currently contribute to the diversity deficit. Harrison et al. (2009) suggested a Diversity Progress Rate that would measure diversity in athletic leadership positions, and hold individual programs to a standard analogous to the Academic Progress Rate (APR).

Currently the NCAA and the HRC does not measure the demographics of QCs in college football. The reporting and documentation of this information will be important if NCAA

member universities are going to continue to use the QC as a coaching and recruiting position. Accordingly, the NCAA and its member universities' participation in collecting this data would recognize and legitimize the position as a pipeline position for nonwhite college football coaches. Collecting this data could indicate whether restrictions are placed on the number of QCs permitted per college football program, and whether the addition of two GA positions this season simply increases the number of white coaches, or whether it contributes to the diversity of college football coaches. It may also be helpful to track the tenure of GA and QC positions to understand if there are any differences within the 'life cycle' of these positions and how they impact promotion to full-time staff positions. This study suggests interesting patterns, but my sample is small, and it also relied mainly on interviews. Therefore, more systematic tracking of coaches' actual experiences would check and expand on my findings and could lead to appropriate interventions.

By examining who is in the GA and QC positions, and what their experiences are, this paper offers suggestions for how these entry-level positions may be used as a point of access for coaches of color. The NCAA and its members have thus far allowed private and state sectors to lead the diversity efforts in college football. If the NCAA and its members can agree that diversity is beneficial to the organization as a whole, and if they participate in the gathering and publication of diversity data membership wide, than paradigmatic change may transform what has become a racial hierarchy in the coaching profession of college football (Huber, Johnson & Kohli, 2006). A membership-wide collaboration must address its member universities on the four specific areas aforementioned: 1) challenge the neutrality of the NCAA member universities, and the whiteness of the Hiring Search Committees for its college football coaches; 2) validate the experiences and perspectives of college football coaches of color, and understand how these

factors affect merit and individual criteria in the hiring process; 3) name racist hiring practices, and develop race-conscious hiring policies; and 4) challenge neutrality in policy and identify institutional racism.

The members of the NCAA are aware that there are three times as many white football coaches as coaches of color, and that these numbers are nearly identical to the percent of white GAs coming through the pipeline, while more than half of their players are nonwhite student-athletes. The NCAA member universities must be challenged to recognize their moral debt, which “reflects the disparity between what we know is right and what we actually do” (Gloria Ladson-Billings, 2006). In this case, the disparity exists between the diversity-laden mission statements of the NCAA member universities and the hiring practices of their athletic coaches, staff and administrators. The NCAA member universities are not innocent bystanders, nor is the organization impotent in its influence over its members. Paolo Freire (1970) put it best when he said, “Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

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Reflective Chapter

This Reflective chapter is a synthesis of all three studies in this dissertation by compilation: Getting In, Staying In, and Moving On. This chapter allows me to critique each study, since I am unable to modify or revise two of the three papers because they have either been published, or accepted for publication. During the research of each topic, my focus was compartmentalized within the parameters of space and time, and in the specificity of the research questions, but this reflective chapter allows me to consider the longitudinal aspect of the entire college process for Pacific Islander college football players. This chapter synthesizes the findings of each study, and discusses their overall contributions to the existing knowledge base, as well as, identifying the shortcomings, limitations and evolution of theoretical and methodological frameworks. The research process reflects my own critical consciousness development, with each study informing the next.

Findings and Limitations

When I began my research into PI college football players, several questions guided my investigation: Are the covenants between the institutions of higher education and their athletic labor being fulfilled? Are PI college football players receiving a college degree in return for their athletic labor, and are those degrees empowering them to secure employment that align with their professional aspirations? The Moving On study was my first attempt to understand whether PI college football players were matriculating into the profession of college football, and if not, what factors were complicating this pipeline. The Moving On study made me realize the limitations of traditional, even critical, theoretical and methodological frameworks in studying this particular research population. The Getting In study on college choice was meant to challenge the study of PIs in US higher education within dominant research paradigms. The

investigation of the Moving On and Getting In studies indicated a need to develop a “toolset” that could not only account for the many layers and nuances of this particular demographic, or research population, but also one that problematizes the hegemonic politics of knowledge within settler colonial education systems, while deconstructing its dominant research paradigms. PI-CRiT was the product (and the process) of this academic journey, and it is the framework that guides the Staying In study.

Moving On

Moving On findings. The findings of the Moving On study addressed the two research questions: 1) What are the experiences of GAs and QCs of color, and how are their entry-level roles and positions interpreted within the professional ‘pipeline’ of college coaching? 2) What do administrators, staff, full-time college coaches, GAs, QCs and restricted earnings coaches believe is limiting the ability for coaches of color (in entry-level positions) to be promoted to full-time staff positions? The findings indicate that white college football coaches, administrators and staff generally perceive the diversity deficit from a colorblind perspective and value meritocracy, while nonwhites fault the good ol’ boy network, racism and stereotypes. Investigating these research questions allowed me to explain some of the issues preventing the matriculation and promotion of coaches of color in the pipeline to full-time coaching positions.

Of the white participants that volunteered for the study, three were head coaches, two were coordinators, and one was a staff/administrator. All but the staff/administrator have carte blanche in the hiring and selection process for full-time coaching positions, and all but one made statements that reflect colorblindness. In contrast, ten of the eleven nonwhite college football coaches believe that 1) good ol’ boy networks are the major influence within the hiring and selection process, 2) there are not enough head coaches and coordinators of color, 3) coaches of

color experience racism and stereotyping that hinder their promotion from entry-level positions, 4) coaches of color experience tokenism and are often used for recruiting student-athletes of color, 5) the GA position is not diversifying college football, but 6) the GA and QC positions are appropriate mechanisms for developing coaches of color for full-time positions. In fact, every participant but one believed that the GA and QC position are good mechanisms for promoting ‘young’ coaches to full-time coaching positions. The single descending opinion did not say, however, that either the GA or QC position was bad, but simply stated, “The GA or QC [position] is always iffy for anyone regardless if they are persons of color. No guarantees.”

Method limitations of Moving on. Most likely the greatest method’s limitation of the Moving on study was its sample size. The depth and diversity of participants in this study are significant to considering the sensitive nature of this critical topic. A larger sample size of nonwhite full-time coaches might help us to understand their professional trajectories. By investigating trends and experiences that lead to successful promotion, we might be able to identify roadmaps that can better define policies and programs for linking aspiring coaches of color to the experiences and knowledge development that they need for advancement. While Critical Race Theory (CRT) allowed me to connect various individual narratives to concepts of structural oppression as collective experiences, the diversity of participants was lost within the black and white binary of traditional CRT research.

Theoretical limitations of Moving On. Much of the existing literature around the diversity of coaches in US college and professional sports has been framed using a traditional CRT approach, which produce analyses restricted within a black and white binary: the contrast of outcomes between blacks (nonwhites) and whites. The Moving On study used the Hiring Report Card (HRC) and the Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC) published by The Institute

of Diversity and Ethics in Sports (TIDES) to contextualize its problem statement. These reports are severely limited in scope with regard to racial diversity; for example, the RGRC's player personnel report for the NFL designated only two racial affiliations: White and African-American. The Moving On study fell into the same CRT binary "trap" of whites and nonwhites. This happened because there are so few coaches, administrators and staff from specific ethnic groups in college football that providing more racial detail would have jeopardized participants' anonymity. As a result, much of the rich cultural and racial context within the narratives of my diverse participant group were lost in the binary analysis, which also left the descriptive analyses bland and two dimensional.

Getting In

Findings of Getting In. The analysis of the data from the Getting In study uncovered three significant findings. First, there were three distinct *research* experiences based on the athletic capital within the *predisposition* stage of the participants. Second, while academic capital either extended, or limited, the number of athletic scholarships available to participants, scholarship opportunities remained dependent on the presence of significant athletic capital. This dynamic allowed highly ranked PI high school football recruits (high external athletic capital) with low GPA and standardized test scores (low external academic capital), to develop choice sets that prioritized elite universities with high academic standards, and thus, made college choices that aligned with their academic values (high internal academic capital). This finding highlights the importance of both external and internal values of academic capital, at least for highly recruited PI high school football recruits, and should therefore, modify and expand current college choice models for this particular research population. Third, while all other forms of Community Cultural Wealth were reported to be meaningful pieces of the participants'

identities, and intrinsic to their college values, only participants that had accumulated enough athletic capital within their *predisposition* stage had the opportunity to use the full range of values and determinants to develop a “choice set,” and then act upon that choice set in making their college *choice*. This finding is especially important because the NCAA’s GOALS study aggregated the data from 611 Division IA, Division IAA, Division II and Division III member institutions on college choice, transition and persistence factors. If the analyses of PI high school football recruits are relevant to the larger population of college student-athletes, however, the findings herein suggest that the highly ranked “outliers” attending the most competitive college sports programs will corrupt the generalizability of the college choice data collected in the NCAA’s GOALS study.

Method limitations of Getting In. One benefit of doing focus groups for this study was the efficiency of interviewing 25 participants at an event that had very little free-time in the schedule. The reflective interviews with current college football players and college coaches were much more nuanced and contextual, and therefore, provided the most substantive narratives in the findings section. The data collected during the focus groups and surveys, on the other hand, was most helpful in the descriptive analysis. Scholars that are interested in studying college choice for this demographic should consider taking the findings from the Getting in study, identifying their participants’ athletic capital and national ranking early, and interview them throughout the recruiting process all the way to National Signing Day. This would better capture the longitudinal aspect of college choice, the fluidity of each stage of college choice, and the value of their Community Cultural Wealth over time and throughout the college choice process. A study conducted in this way would better capture the unique and complex pathway to higher education for PI student-athletes.

Theoretical limitations of Getting In. The major critique of my theoretical section is the use of Hossler & Gallagher's (1987) college choice model. It has been contested and critiqued by other scholars, and so its criticism here offers no contribution to the existing literature. An argument could also be made that creating a new model of college choice for the Getting In study was unnecessary, since other more contemporary and critical models are now available. However, my critique of Hossler & Gallagher (1987) aligns with the premise that the existing research paradigms maintain a colonial agenda that reifies white supremacy and the hegemonic nature of US higher education. Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model was used to complement Hossler & Gallagher's (1987) conceptualization of college choice to reimagine a more culturally responsive model, while de-constructing dominant research paradigms. The combination of these two models highlight the aspects and characteristics of participants' identity that have both internal and external value, and influence them throughout their college "choice" process. A convincing counter argument, from a decolonial perspective, is that "college choice" is exclusively tied to privilege, and that revising "college choice" models only reify the colonial hegemonic system, which should instead be dismantled.

Staying In

Findings of Staying In. The Staying In findings answer its two research questions (How do PI college football players experience culture and race? What experiences of culture and race enhance, or discourage, the transition and persistence of PI college football players?), and support PI-CRiT's assertion that when PI student-athletes are exposed to institutions of higher education that fulfill the four directives of colonialism through its seven forms of cultural racism, there are experiences of self-hate, cultural dissonance (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Museus, 2008), liminal identities, psychophysical trauma, and perceptions of exploitation as athletic

laborers. The Indigenous methodologies used for the Staying In study follow Wilson's (2008) description of Indigenous methodologies in *Research is Ceremony*, which calls for researchers to present data in a way that does not muddle the narratives of its participants. This methodological concept allows mo'olelo to dictate the nuances and similarities within the Pacific Islander collective from participants' meaning making perspectives, while limiting the "validation" effect of the researchers' synthesis and interpretation. Accordingly, I instead offer a descriptive analysis here:

1. 82 percent of all the participants believed that PI players are exploited for profit by college football. Interestingly, all participants that believed PI players are exploited, also experienced psychophysical trauma (mental stress and/or physical injuries) as a result of their participation in college football. Many open-ended survey and interview responses reveal struggles in maintaining liminal identities, as students, athletic labor, and Pacific Islanders.
2. 86 percent of the participants believed that their football programs' concepts of "team" were similar to their cultural concepts of family. 84% felt they were able to incorporate cultural perspectives in class discussions and academic writing. Many interview and open-ended survey responses, however, reveal statements of cultural dissonance by participants whose cultural knowledge was contested, refuted, or unacknowledged in their academic spaces. Also, all of the participants believe their individual definition and standards of success are very different than those of the football program, and the academic institutions where they attend classes.
3. 75 percent of the participants have a PI community near campus, but only 50 percent said that their universities help them to connect to those communities while enrolled. Given

that this is a small research population and that some participants were chosen specifically because of their university's proximity to PI communities, these percentages are most likely not representative of US higher education as a whole. Many participants' expressed feelings of cultural dissonance in response to the erasure of their home culture during their transition to college.

4. Only 25 percent of the participants reported that they had college experiences where they were made to feel inferior to others because of their race, culture, wealth, religion, etc. However, a majority of the participants shared that they had experiences where they believed their culture and race created different sets of expectations by faculty and staff. These narratives also reflect cultural dissonance, perceptions of exploitation, and psychophysical trauma from negotiating their liminal identities, as students, athletes and racialized beings.
5. 50 percent of the participants believed that their universities operate on the notion that race and culture has no impact on individual success, or future opportunities. Participant narratives reflect cultural dissonance and struggles to maintain their liminal identities due to the absence of culture and race from educational policies (i.e., admissions), programming (i.e., academic support, student organizations, etc.), and classroom pedagogies.
6. Only 25 percent of the participants attended universities that offered Pacific studies courses, but 94% reported that they would have taken the courses if they were offered. Participant responses suggest that the absence of Pacific studies courses, or the apathy of the university to provide these courses, have caused cultural dissonance and the internalization of self-hate in some participants.

7. 63% of the participants reported that they had experienced being stereotyped because of their Pacific Islander heritage while in college. Participant responses reveal that experiences of symbolism and stereotyping can create cultural dissonance, perceptions of exploitation, and having to negotiate liminal identities.

Method limitations of Staying In. The number of interview participants in the Staying In study was purposeful to ensure a specific diversity of experiences (e.g. type of institution, geography, PI course offering, etc.). The number of participants that were interviewed, however, puts a constraint on the generalizability of the qualitative data. At the same time, the diverse perspectives of this study does not account for all the nuances of individual island identities and intersectionalities, and how those nuances influence college experiences. Because perspectives from various PI affiliations were absent (i.e., Fiji, Guam, etc.), I must acknowledge my part in the erasure of those communities from the research. It will also be important that as PI's continue to fill diverse roles at institutions of higher education, their perspectives on the issues brought up in this study should be considered for future research as well. This study also failed to include the perspectives of the individual families of PI college football players, an important perspective to consider for future studies, since family (i.e., 'ohana, aiga, etc.) is a fundamental cultural concept in PI communities, and represent a resource that enhances, or inhibits, transition and persistence. Lastly, the methodologies were crafted from Kanaka Maoli concepts of ritual, rite of passage, and community, because it is the cultural lens I am most familiar with. Future studies should integrate cultural concepts (i.e., rituals, rites of passage, and community) that are familiar to both the researchers and their participants.

Theoretical limitations of Staying In. PI-CRiT is meant to provide a framework for activist research on PIs in higher education. The theory suggests that 1) four directives of

colonialism are fulfilled by US education systems, 2) the four directives of colonialism are enabled by educational policies, curriculum, programming and leadership that operationalize seven forms of cultural racism, 3) Indigenous methodologies are necessary to disrupt dominant research paradigms that maintain colonial politics of knowledge, and 4) activist research must enact critical praxis. While PI-CRiT takes research one step closer to becoming intracultural,³⁶ future research will have to be vigilant about acknowledging both the connections between individual Pacific Island affiliations, and the cultural nuances of each. Context is also important, and not just cultural context, but gender, sexuality, and various intersectionalities of identity. PI-CRiT is a framework of colonialism based on the agenda of settler colonial school systems, but experiences of colonialism within the Pacific were also dissimilar and extended beyond US colonization. Future research that uses the collective identity of Pacific Islanders should consider the nuances in colonial experiences, and be clear about what island communities are not represented in the study, and whether the research is meant to improve the experiences of those island affiliations as well.

Moving On Findings and Limitations

Findings of Moving On. The findings indicate that whites generally perceive the diversity deficit from a colorblind perspective and value meritocracy, while nonwhites fault the good ol' boy network, racism and stereotypes. Of the white participants that volunteered for the study, three were head coaches, two were coordinators, and one was a staff/administrator. All but the staff/administrator have carte blanche in the hiring and selection process for full-time coaching positions, and all but one made statements that reflect colorblindness. In contrast, ten of

³⁶ *Intracultural* describes research conducted between at least two people who are from the same culture or have culturally similar backgrounds, while *Intercultural* describes research between at least two people who are different in significant ways culturally (Luster & Koester, 2003).

the eleven nonwhite college coaches believe that 1) good ol' boy networks are the major influence within the hiring and selection process, 2) there are not enough head coaches and coordinators of color, 3) coaches of color experience racism and stereotyping that hinder their promotion from entry-level positions, 4) coaches of color experience tokenism and are often used for recruiting student-athletes of color, 5) the GA position is not diversifying college football, but 6) the GA and QC positions are appropriate mechanisms for developing coaches of color for full-time positions. In fact, every participant but one believed that the GA and QC position are good mechanisms for promoting young coaches to full-time coaching positions. The one dissenting coach did not say, however, that either the GA or QC position was bad, but simply stated, "The GA or QC [position] is always iffy for anyone regardless if they are persons of color. No guarantees." The high school student-athletes in this study overwhelmingly affirm the importance of having coaches of color on the staff of their college choice. More specifically, a coach of color does not need to be their position coach, only that one is available on staff to support them.

Method limitations of Moving On. The limited number of participants that were interviewed put a constraint on the generalizability of the qualitative data. Since college coaches' unions do not exist to aggregate nationwide data, national membership organizations like the American Football Coaches' Association (AFCA) should be partnered with to conduct research that improves the pipeline for college football coaches of color. The Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA) association had once led this charge by funding the Diversity Report: an annual study that challenged NCAA members to increase the number of college coaches of color. The BCA, however, has since been integrated into the NCAA.

Theoretical limitations of Moving On. The major limitation of Critical Race Theory

(CRT) is its tendency to follow the black and white binary. While this study acknowledges that limitation, it was unable to escape this reality within the presentation of the study's findings. Due to the limited number of coaches of color and women in positions of influence in college football, the rich qualitative data was devoid of racial, cultural and gendered context (participants were labeled white or non-white). Whereas the absence of this contextual information protected the identities of the participants, its absence stripped the qualitative data of the unique experiences and challenges that each participant faced, the relevance of those experiences to their representative communities, and the victories the participants should have been able to celebrate with those communities.

Conclusion

In conducting the collective studies, this researcher has participated in his own critical consciousness development. There were six phases of critical consciousness development (Freire, 1970) that I identified during the process of completing this dissertation by compilation. First, each study was an introduction to new vocabulary in each literature review, each theoretical and methodological conceptualization, data collection, etc. Second, in the meaning making stage I had to reflect and synthesize the literature, discussions with my professors and peers, and apply this understanding during data coding. Third, the research process forced me to disrupt my circles of certainty and problematize many of my own personal assumptions, which included hypotheses and accepting actual outcomes regardless of "expected" outcomes. Fourth, I was forced to reconceptualize the ways I had been conditioned to see the world, which not only made me question dominant research paradigms, but to think critically about how my own cultural knowledge should frame the studies. Fifth, each study made me envision and articulate alternative futures for myself, my family and my community, and how those alternative futures

might be realized through my participation as an agent of change. Sixth, my kuleana requires that my research have praxis. Without praxis, I will not have honored the gift of mo‘olelo, the mana‘o and ike that my participants, my professors, and my kupuna have entrusted to me.

Going Forward

The Going Forward chapter uses the same holistic and longitudinal perspective as the Reflective chapter in considering the significance and implications of this research on future research, policy and practice. The first question this chapter answers is, “How do these collective studies enact praxis through activist research?” The second question is, “Why should individual island affiliations participate in research within the collective Pacific Islander identity?” The answer to those questions will be followed by a domestic and international discussion around the following guiding questions: What questions have these studies collectively raised? What questions remain unanswered, and how might US college athletics be reimagined? Given the collective analyses of all three studies, what future research should be conducted to fill in the gaps? What international examples are there that provide college athletics with a more equitable model for PI communities?

Praxis of this Activist Research

During my tenure as a graduate student, I have found critical pedagogy pleasing to my scholarly palette because each new lens seems to expand the development of my own critical consciousness. I am wary, however, that my pursuit of political action is equally vigilant as my pursuit of knowledge; otherwise, critical praxis is just jargon that has been regurgitated in an irrelevant dissertation, on a community that has been used for the personal gain of another researcher. How then has the investigation of PI college football players created action that has improved the circumstance of its participants? How has this activist research created action on multiple levels: individuals, structures and processes?

My praxis began with acknowledging protocol, and approaching elders in the PI community to ask permission to conduct research. By asking permission, and sharing my

Statement of Research Imperative, the studies were conducted as a collaboration in creating knowledge and action for the PI community. By partnering with the AIGA Foundation, the PI community has been able to participate in defining the “issues,” informing policies and practice to remediate those issues, while holding institutions accountable for the responsible guardianship of our PI student-athletes. My hope is that this research will justify future funding of the AIGA foundation, its outreach programs and events. Most importantly, these outreach programs and events have become outlets for praxis created with, and by, the community organization.

Critical praxis was enacted in ways that were not always within the scope of the individual studies, but relevant to the overall improvement of circumstances for my participants. For example, the researcher and the affiliated PI community organizations have made hiring recommendations to college football programs. We have advocated for candidates who have access to top recruits in the PI community through their servant leadership. One participant from the Moving On study has since been promoted from QC to a full-time position coach who was awarded a prestigious accolade for recruiting; another was promoted from GA to QC, and then to a full-time position coach who was also awarded a prestigious accolade for recruiting; another was promoted from position coach to coordinator; and another was promoted from coordinator to head coach. By supporting these coaches in the recruiting and hiring process, the researcher and affiliated community organizations have taken action to 1) diversify the profession of coaching college football, 2) inform PI high school football recruits during the college choice process, and 3) support institutional agents who share the cultural experiences of PI student-athletes. As these coaches continue to be promoted, improving their professional capital, and earn coaching accolades, it will become increasingly important that they advocate for culturally specific and responsive programs for the PI players they recruit.

During the survey and interview process of the Getting In and Staying In studies, the PI organizations and I sought to understand how many of the high school football recruits were offered 4-year scholarships. During the process all but one of the participants that had scholarship offers did not know whether they had been offered a one-year renewable scholarship, or a 4-year scholarship offer. We asked the recruits to find out by calling the recruiting coaches that offered them, and for PI high school recruits that had multiple scholarship offers, they were able to leverage other offers to secure 4-year scholarship offers. By informing these community organizations, and the families of the PI high school football recruits, about the differences between 1-year renewable scholarships and 4-year scholarships, PI high school football recruits are able to make informed decisions with regard to their college choice. Now that communities are more informed about scholarships, college football programs in more competitive conferences are beginning to make 4-year scholarships the standard to win higher ranked recruits. Finally, the critical praxis of this research has challenged institutions of higher education, and held college football programs accountable for the stewardship of PI student-athletes, by reporting the experiences of their PI college football players to the PI community. This is best explained by the following mo‘olelo.

My research and work within a network of PI community organizations has allowed me access to many of the top recruited high school and college football players. Consequently, college coaches contact me to find recruits that might best fit their program. In one case, I had found a scholarship opportunity for a student-athlete at a Midwest D1A college football program, and he thrived there his freshman season; earned a 3.5 GPA and started at his position as a true freshman. After his freshman year, however, the defensive staff was fired, and I soon got a call from one of the new defensive position coaches. He asked me if I had some players for him, but I

responded by asking how my athlete was doing. The coach said that my player was one of the guys he needed to replace, and despite starting as a freshman, he did not fit the defensive scheme of the new staff. I simply reminded the coach that the next time we sat down with a family during a home visit, it would be hard for me to advocate for a college football program that would take a scholarship away from a kid that did his part in the classroom and on the field. The coach responded by finding my player a scholarship position on offense.

Pacific Islander Collective Identity

Why should individual Pacific Island communities participate in a pan-ethnic affiliation of Pacific Islanders? This topic was identified in the potential shortcoming and limitations of PI-CRiT, but deserves further discussion here as we look toward the future research of PIs in higher education. Identity constructs can both empower and hinder social justice movements. When issues of disaggregation are politicized, one group often problematizes the erasure of their unique experiences within Federally imposed identity constructs. Critical mass is a common argument for aggregation, an argument that claims certain communities are too small to record specific data on. This erasure, or invisibility, can impact resource allocation and funding that requires data justification. The US federal government once used the term “Mongolians” to identify peoples racially affiliated to Asia,³⁷ and over time, this construct has evolved to the pan-ethnicity of Asian Pacific Islanders (API). The API identity construct, however, hides the low PI educational outcomes within the high educational outcomes of “the model minority.” When aggregation does occur, it should be self-defined and provide political benefit to those being conjoined by the pan-ethnic affiliation. Individual island communities, for example, can be connected by culture, and common experiences of colonialism, which has the potential to

³⁷ This term was also used in California to legitimize racial segregation in California schools.

mobilize their combined political power within the Pacific Islander collective affiliation; not only in the US, but globally.

Grainger (2006) suggests that the shared experience of colonialism by Pasifika communities has created Tagata Pasifika (or Pacific Islander identity) as a transnational affiliation that provides a means for contestation over local discourses of power and race and "provide a source of identification with a diasporic Black Pacific culture: an inclusive postcolonial identity and subjecthood that transcends the boundaries of nation" (p.55). While this political potential has not yet been fully realized, the continued persistence of the PI community and PI scholars to collaborate and enact critical praxis disrupts hegemonic politics of knowledge. That is, as PI communities, scholars and activists coalesce in political spaces creating praxis (knowledge and action) informed by individual and collective experiences, Tagata Pasifika will finally know ourselves, and we are then empowered to enact a future of our own making.

Domestic Discussion

High School football programs. The Getting In study suggests that institutions' *search* for high school football players are dictated by the amount of athletic capital potential recruits have accrued within their *predisposition* stage, and therefore, reduce recruits to a singular dimension of athletic laborers. The reader is left to ponder whether an over emphasis on sport is an inherent trait within the *predisposition* of this study's participants, or whether it is a learned response to the expectations of youth, high school and college football coaches. A youth or high school coach can "say" they want their players to have good grades and high-test scores, but what have they done to facilitate that academic success? What messages have been communicated to football players that are successful on the football field, but unsuccessful in the classroom? The qualitative data suggests that PI high school football players are often provided

the support and resources to become athletically college competitive, but often do not have the support or resources to become academically college competitive (Morita, 2103; Uperesa, 2014, Uperesa et al, 2015). High school football programs, especially ones that intentionally target PI communities for recruits, should provide academic support programs for their athletes similar to the support they will receive once they matriculate to college.

Expansion of community college athletic scholarship programs. Given the findings of Getting In illustrated that a majority of PI high school football recruits are either non ranked or 0-2 star recruits, policies expanding the community college pathway to the university will become an important endeavor if we are to increase the pipeline for this population. Community colleges expand academic and athletic opportunities for PI high school football recruits, thus college choice, even as an alternative to scholarship offers that do not align with individual college choice values/determinants. Preliminary research shows that some non-qualifiers, those whose high school GPA and/or test scores made them ineligible for athletic aid, were able to attend community colleges and generate interest from high profile college football programs that were not interested in them out of high school. Some community college programs in the US are able to provide athletic aid up to the full cost of attendance, or full athletic scholarships. An expansion of these programs in community colleges nationwide could help the PI community increase academic returns on their athletic investments.

Sanctuary Schools. During the interview process of Staying In, one of the participants shared how one college coach had successfully “flipped” a PI high school football recruit’s commitment from another football program, by telling the family that the other university was not a sanctuary campus, and that his football program was at a sanctuary campus. The election of President Trump, and his consequent policies regarding immigrants, has made several

institutions of higher education declare whether they will shelter undocumented workers from deportation. Since American Samoa is the only US territory where citizens are not granted US citizenship, this becomes especially problematic for high school football recruits of PI descent. PI families need to be aware that institutions that have not declared themselves as sanctuary campuses, could expose PI players to increased scrutiny, higher levels of cultural racism, or potential deportation.

Labor Unions for college football coaches. The Getting In study cited the football players at Northwestern University who had made huge legal strides towards becoming unionized, and since then Grambling players made national news by protesting the dilapidated conditions of their “work environment,” or facilities. In the research of Moving On, participants and national archival data revealed coaches’ grievances and several court cases that illustrate the exploitive nature of college football towards, not only the athletes, but their coaches. National organizations like the Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA) organization, championed the cause of diversity in college sports, but the profession has lacked the presence of a college coaches’ union. The American Football Coaches’ Association has a strong membership for professional networking, but does not represent those members when it comes to employment grievances, benefits, or advocacy. Further research is needed to understand: Why a union does not exist for college coaches? What impact one might have on the experiences of college coaches? What needs a college coaches’ union might serve?

Cultural Impact Reports. The findings from the Getting In and Staying In studies – as well as, the example of the National Rugby League’s (NRL) Cultural Impact Reporting tool in the international discussion – suggests that future research should create Cultural Impact Reports to evaluate institutions how universities “rank” in serving the psychological, social, and cultural

needs of specific student groups and intersectionalities. Within the Pacific Islander pan-ethnicity the intersectionalities include, but are not limited to, Samoans, Tongans, Hawaiians, Fijians, Chamorros, as well as, more nuanced identities based on gender, sexuality, etc. Cultural Impact Reports would not only inform families on college matches that are psychologically safer, socially more inclusive, and culturally more engaged, but these reports could help to re-envision institutional “prestige,” and in doing so, motivate institutions to score high on Cultural Impact Reports; not just standardized tests and athletic scoreboards. Institutions that take on the challenge of responding to Cultural Impact Reports will also protect their financial investment in their college football players by improving conditions that contribute to positive experiences, healthy transition, retention and graduation. This assumes that 1) mentally healthier athletes will perform better athletically and academically, 2) institutions that graduate higher percentages of student-athletes will avoid NCAA sanctions that cost college football programs wins and revenue, and 3) graduating student-athletes with positive college experiences will enjoy financial returns from strong alumni groups and professional athletes that give financially to their alma maters.

PI student-athlete advocacy organizations. Organizations like the AIGA Foundation provide resources and events to create access for PI high school athletes, but the organization also holds college football programs accountable for the treatment and retention of those athletes. The AIGA Foundation informs the PI community about college football programs that have 1) failed in graduating PI college football players, 2) created campus environments non-conducive to the development of PI athletes, or 3) failed to hire PI college football coaches. This information is shared with PI high school football recruits that participate at AIGA’s events in the hopes that families can make more informed decisions in their college choice. A coalition

between these organizations and the universities could provide more informed data, improved campus and community programming (i.e., academic, social, cultural), and policies that improve not only access, but retention and professional matriculation. Creating these coalitions could improve policy responses to issues such as sanctuary campuses, or the ability for recruits to change their college choice when their recruiting coaches' are fired, or accept positions at other college football programs.

Reimagining US College Athletics

Until I began participating in international discussions on PIs in sport, I had only thought about changes to research, policy, and practice within the US domestic context. I was unaware of my own inability to reimagine the possibilities outside of our existing system, or paradigm, of college athletics. I was locked within a colonial perspective that students must surrender their own political, cultural, academic and corporal sovereignty, in exchange for their college education. The next stage in my critical consciousness development would not take place until I changed the questions from which my investigation was founded. Will the praxis of my research create equitable resources within inequitable institutions? Can we continue to define US college athletics as amateur, when billions of dollars are generated annually? These questions force me to envision a model of college athletics where 1) the governing body (NCAA) is not also the most prominent business partner of its member institutions, and 2) programs, policies and research address root issues, rather than cosmetic ones. For example, some student advocates believe in the professionalization of college sports, or making universities pay for their athletic labor. While the professionalization of college athletics may dispel some guilt surrounding the

exploitation of our student-athletes, this solution by itself could compound the problem.³⁸ Instead, I challenge social justice leaders to consider how free higher education might disrupt inequitable power dynamics in US college sports. How might this change student-athletes' college experiences? How might this reimagining be more equitable, or liberating? Decolonizing the current system of college athletics requires the dismantling of power structures that perpetuate US colonization of the Pacific by exploiting brown bodies as natural resources, and provide an inequitable return on investment to PI communities. The following discussion looks to the example of the National Rugby League in Australia and New Zealand for alternative models.

International Discussion

In 2015, I was invited as a visiting scholar to Australian National University and Auckland University. This experience opened my eyes to what might be possible if we could dismantle the entire college football system and start over. At many of the universities there, Athletic departments and centers are run by private organizations, separate from its academic component. I was asked to participate in a discussion with several CEO's of these Athletic Centers on the topic of college athletics. While intramural athletics are popular, athletic competition amongst the various universities are not competitive by NCAA standards.

College athletics in Australia and New Zealand. The CEO's of these various universities saw value in college athletics from several perspectives: 1) attracting students to their campuses; 2) create university identities and affiliations; 3) strengthen alumni participation; 4) increase university revenue streams. The biggest hurdle that presented itself, specifically with the most popular sport, was that rugby is a club sport from which professional teams sign their

³⁸ The National Football League (NFL) is under constant scrutiny regarding the ongoing circumstances of its professional athletes.

players as early as 15 years old. The professional pathway for rugby in Australia and New Zealand would reroute a majority of the top tier recruits away from college athletics. Baseball has the same dynamic in the US, but baseball players must graduate high school before playing professionally. This conversation, however, highlights the significance of this research to the International community, and its relevance to the US by answering the question, “If we could start over and redefine college athletics, what would a socially just, student-centered model look like?” The National Rugby League (NRL) provided an incredible example of what is possible.

PI’s in the National Rugby League (NRL). During the Pacific Tests in Australia in April 2015, I realized what was fundamentally missing for Pacific Islander (PI) student-athletes in the US. I was about to watch my first Rugby League international test match ever. These particular international test matches included two test matches between four Pacific nations; Papua New Guinea versus Fiji, and Tonga versus Samoa. As I walked into the stadium and wandered around the booths, all the merchandise was adorned with Polynesian print, each representing the Pacific Island nations of Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. It was within this context I was informed that nearly half of the National Rugby League (NRL) was of PI descent, and as we were escorted to our seats, I couldn’t help but notice the overwhelming number of PIs wearing their national colors and waiving the national flags of their island affiliation.

The Tongan and Samoan pregame show included Tofiga Fepulea’i, a Samoan comedian from the Laughing Samoans, and a cultural celebration of Samoan and Tongan dance. The performers walked out onto the field together, representing both nations, and as they began their dances the fans of both cultures screamed in support with echoes of the fa’aumu reverberating in the stadium. The crowd response continued to get louder for the introduction of the Pasifika

players (whose names were all pronounced correctly), even louder for their respective national anthems, and reached a climatic crescendo during the face-off, when each team performed their own war dance. These war dances were a paradigm shift from the displays of masculinity performed by many US high school and college football teams, this was a celebration of cultural sovereignty, a Pasifika collective culture, and the cultural nuances of individual island nations.

The sport itself had become empowering, healing and an extension of cultural identity. 45% of the professional athletes in the NRL are PIs. Add the Indigenous population of Australia, and these groups make up a majority of the NRL's professional players. Uperesa and Mountjoy (2014) have suggested that sport in the Pacific had become a "counterrepresentation to persistent stereotypes, as a proud representation of a nation, as an alternative pathway toward a promised future, and as a site of cultural resurgence" (p. 265). This, however, is not the natural progression of sport in the US, as illustrated in this study. In the case of the NRL, the cultural empowerment of sport was intentional, specific in its design, and executed by delivering culturally responsive programs through the NRL Welfare and Education Office. These efforts were led by ex-Pasifika players and scholars committed to empowering PI rugby league players – partly in response to a rise in playing numbers, no culturally specific wellbeing programs, and the challenges around cultural disconnection, which led to a number of risks including mental health support, loss of cultural identity and values and professional and social integration amongst Pasifika players – and their communities. Instrumental to the development and realization of these programs was one of the NRL's all-time scoring leaders Nigel Vagana, and Dr. Roannie Ng-Shiu of the Australian National University (ANU).

During my stay in Australia, Vagana explained to me how his collaboration with Dr. Roannie Ng-Shiu, and scholars from the University of Western Sydney, had created cultural

processes, programming and education standards for what has become the NRL Wellbeing and Education programs. Some Pasifika and Indigenous NRL players felt empowered by these programs, and in one case, the player was not only able to heal from physical and psychological trauma, but became an NRL spokesman for mental health issues within Pasifika communities. Indigenous players, specifically, believed that the NRL's community outreach programs allowed them to help their communities heal from histories of colonization. In the NRL, elite pathways players are mandated to spend 24 hours a week in vocational training or university coursework to improve their transition into and out of professional sport. Also, a relocation policy that uses a Cultural Impact Reporting tool and synchronised database was developed to assess what the players would need to transition from one team to another if they were traded. This tool takes into account their background and cultural heritage to enhance transition to new geographic locations (i.e., church, academic support, family support, etc.). Culture was purposeful and collaborative even in marketing, as illustrated by the player-initiated calendar that celebrates each of the Pasifika players' island heritage, and empowered the players to participate in how their cultural identities were constructed and shared by the media.

During a tour of the Warriors' facilities, Jerome Ropati (an ex-player and current team ambassador) took us into the team meeting room where the teleprompter rotated through team profiles that explained each player's career pursuit outside of rugby. This was not a public space, but a private space where only the team was allowed, and was positioned to direct its message to the players. This is part of the NRL's Career Wise program that is focused on developing each player's transition out of rugby. This program was also designed to educate rugby fans to the multiple roles and identities of the NRL players. To accomplish this, the Career Wise program marketed playing cards that showed each player in action, but as carpenters,

athletic trainers, students, cultural warriors, or fathers. This program sends a message to young aspiring players that rugby does not define the entirety of their beings, and it deconstructs the dominant axiology that attributes more value to the athletic components of their identities. Young fans can now aspire to be businessmen, cultural scholars, parents, etc. (see Illustration 1 below).



Figure 1. Career Wise is a program that places value on other aspects of players' identities.

Again, many of these programs have been implemented by the NRL in response to incidents and environments considered potentially high risk to athlete wellbeing amongst young Polynesian rugby league players. Due to the early recruitment of players into the professional rugby league system (as young as 15 years old), there is often a lot of pressure put on these young athletes to provide for the livelihood of their families. As NCAA member institutions and the Power 5 consider the professionalization of college football, the example of the NRL and sport in Australia and New Zealand become more imperative. The NRL's holistic approach to the cultural empowerment of sport is in direct contrast to the neoliberalism of US college

football that profits from its student-athletes as alienated labor, and subjects them to the deculturalization model of its universities (Tinto, 1988).

Conclusion

This Going Forward chapter suggests that this dissertation by compilation has perhaps raised more questions than it has answered. The pursuit of critical praxis in response to these questions provide future PI student-athletes, advocates and practitioners opportunities to continue and expand on the research and discussions herein. The issues identified in my Statement of Research Imperative, and their corrective policies, have the potential to remediate colonial processes that alienate and isolate students from oppressed communities at institutions of US higher education. Most importantly, these studies provide PI communities a seat at the table to 1) define social issues in our own community through lived experiences, and to provide historical context to that discussion, 2) participate in the design and implementation of social change in our own communities, and 3) to resist, reframe and dismantle dominant research paradigms that reject our axiology, ontology, epistemology and methodology as legitimate ways of knowing.