

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Michael D Smith for the degree of Master of Art in Interdisciplinary Studies in Education, Sociology and Ethnic Studies presented on November 29, 2017.

Title: African American/Black Upward Mobility through Sports: A Critical Analysis

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Research has shown that African Americans/Blacks, especially those with low socioeconomic status, acknowledge athletics as an avenue for upward mobility (Coakley, 2011). Although the chances of becoming a professional athlete might seem unachievable through sports, athletes develop tangible and intangible abilities that transfer and are useful in the years following participation in athletics (Harper, Collin & Blackman 2013). The objective of this study is to explore the knowledge about African Americans/Black and the importance of sports through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. A critical analysis was developed from a positive and negative perspective that presents information from both perspectives on the subject. African Americans/Black develop skill sets through sports fulfilling their esteem needs from a

social and physiological standpoint (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). By comparing Maslow's theory and sports, a valuable correlation can be found and proven that upward mobility is possible through a participation in sports. Starting sports at a young age has positive and negative advantages that are explored from multiple vantage points throughout the analysis. Overall, this thesis provides a foundational understanding on the importance of athletics, its positive and negative impacts on an individual, its ability to provide support and guidance to youth, and its potential to promote and improve an individual's social and economic well-being.

For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to distinguish how my personal experiences, ancestral lineage, and family history describe me as a Black American individual. Although society tends to label Black people in America as "African-American", I refute this label as not all Black people trace their ancestral lineage back to Africa. Throughout this thesis, you will see both "Black" and "African-Americans" referenced as part of its research.

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African American/Black Upward Mobility through Sports: A Critical Analysis

By

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Michael D Smith, Author

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Thesis Premise	2
The Implications of Upward Mobility for African Americans/Blacks	4
Upward Mobility: Likelihood for African Americans/Blacks	6
Impediments to Participation	8
Race in Sports and Academic Achievement: Stereotypes about Intelligence	10
Positive Outcomes through Sports	12
Negative Outcomes through Sports.....	14
Motivating Factors	16
Micro Factors.....	17
Self-Esteem	17
Intrinsic Motivation	20
Self-Actualization	21
Self-Denial.....	22
Intrinsic Needs	22
Macro Factors.....	23
Perceptions of Upward Mobility	23
Extrinsic Motivation.....	24
Social Support	27
Empowerment	29
Extrinsic Needs	30
Policy Recommendations.....	30
Outreach.....	31
Funding of Sources	31
Profit and Nonprofit Organizations.....	31
Conclusion.....	33
Notes.....	37
Bibliography	38

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

	<u>Page</u>
Appendix A: The Geography of Upward Mobility in the United States	44
Appendix B: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Sports Correlation	45

“Athletics can be seen as the front porch of a university. It is not the most important room in the house but it is the most visible.” – Scott Barnes, OSU Athletic Director

Introduction

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The purpose of this thesis is influenced by my experience as a Black and former student-athlete. Growing up on the “wrong side of the tracks” diminished my opportunity for advancement due to the lack of educational support. Increased crime rates lingered in surrounding areas resulting in a plethora of incidents including property crime and more serious felonies. I had a choice to choose the light instead of the darkness, and I chose the light by grasping the opportunity that presented itself in front of me. Athletics created an aura for me to prosper. Sports uplifted me in so many ways—scholarships, degrees, and job opportunities that would be unlikely to achieve without a participation in athletics. Given the opportunity to play in the National Football League for a couple of years wouldn’t have presented itself without the involvement in sports or getting multiple degrees debt free. Head Football Coach Gary Andersen played a huge role in my growth of school and sports. He took a chance and honored me with a scholarship to Utah State University, where a dual degree was achieved; one in finance and the other in economics from the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business. As a young man, my knowledge about sports and upward mobility for African American/Black athletes was limited. Sports were not just an activity but something that uplifted me and created a positive goal and direction to walk towards. People dream about being a doctor, lawyer, or a scientist. I dreamt about being successful in everything starting with athletics.

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Although many African Americans/Blacks share a similar story to mine with comparable opportunities for advancement in sports, it is important to remember that each person or athlete will experience their own unforeseen hurdles or circumstances that will alter their path to success. There is significant controversy about the impact of collegiate and high school sports and its influence on the upward mobility for African American/Black athletes. Some research indicates a lack of correlation between sports and upward mobility for African American/Black athletes (Sage & Eitzen, 2015). However, other studies and my thesis for this research is that athletics provides African American/Black high school and/or collegiate students with an opportunity to elevate themselves physically, socially and economically, which ultimately increases their likelihood of achieving upward mobility. This topic is relevant because of popular dominant concepts about sports and education empowering athletes to grow mentally, physically and emotionally, and the opportunity it gives athletes to fight oppression and racism (Witz, 2016). Athletics is pivotal in our world today; it has given our society diversions during wars, brought different cultures together through competition, taught people different ways of doing things, and how to improve their countries and their talents (Gary & Rubin, 2012). For example, the Olympics is seen more than athletic achievement; it can be seen as a symbol of unity, peace, and belonging to a greater cause that is bigger than an individual or country (Gary & Rubin, 2012).

Thesis Premise

Society acknowledges the opportunities that sports presents for developing the mind and body of all ages, especially the youth, in a positive way. To have sports as a means of a positive outlet, society benefits not only from a character standpoint but also a health

standpoint (Warburton, Bredin, & Nicol, 2006). Upward mobility is evident when observing African Americans/Blacks who have been successful at sports, such as professional athletes; specifically, those athletes that had limited opportunities and resided in or were associated with “sacrifice zones.” A sacrifice zone is an area where there are limited resources presented to an individual to succeed due to environmental damage and/or economic disinvestment (Lerner, 2010). African Americans/Blacks and low economic status families tend to be highly populated among “sacrifice zone” regions, which are unequally protected (Lerner, 2010). As students actively participate in sports, they are given the opportunity to step outside these sacrifice zones and engage in activities that challenge their physical and mental capacities. They are often taught competition reminiscent of “survival of the fittest” (Spencer, 1864), which ultimately provides elite athletes with an avenue to promoting their social class and overall wellbeing. Maslow’s theory¹ will be used to explore an individual’s extrinsic and intrinsic needs, which are required to achieve an improvement of life.

The purpose of this thesis is to critically analyze the topic of African Americans/Blacks participation in athletics through participation in youth, high school, and/or collegiate athletics, African Americans/Black athletes are likely to develop upward mobility in relation to extrinsic and intrinsic needs ultimately reaching self-actualization. This thesis will address the following: (1) the implications of upward mobility for African Americans/Blacks, (2) motivating factors, and (3) policy recommendations.

The Implications of Upward Mobility for African Americans/Blacks

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Aspirations for my family and myself include obtaining upward mobility. As a Black man, I see upward mobility as an outstretched avenue rather than a narrow scope. The implications I come across being a Black man is that putting in the time, effort, and consistency only cultivates a positive outcome of anything you put your mind to. As a result, I strive to be successful in everything I do.

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There is a connection between sports and upward mobility within scholarly literature such as the role of race in sports, positive outcomes, negative outcomes, and probability of mobility (Cole & Omari, 2003; Lerner, 2010; Merkel, 2013). Across many of the journal articles, books, and readings, these themes are commonly used to illustrate the likelihood of upward mobility for individuals with low-economic statuses primarily for African Americans/Black individuals. These individuals are often times born into a low-economic status and lack the proper resources needed to support achievement to a higher economic status (Hedges, 2012). One resource that is commonly available throughout all levels of society and has the potential to help increase probability of upward mobility is athletics (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). By applying sports to the upward mobility equation, there is conflicting evidence over whether it can help to increase, decrease, or have a neutral effect on the economic status of an individual. By assessing the impact that sports has on an African Americans/Black individual, we can learn in finer detail how the athletic experience can help youth achieve better educational

outcomes, life skills, careers (in sports and non-sport careers), as well as influence positive personal and social behaviors.

Research has shown that African Americans/Black athletes start sports around age seven when their parents enroll them in a sport as a form of childcare. A study also showed that ninety-five percent of youth who participate in sports consider sports as a huge part of their identity (Kelley & Carchia, 2013). With the opportunity to succeed in a society where social status is often inhibited by cultural stereotypes, African Americans/Black students (especially when exposed to sports at a young age) are more likely to attend college, obtain a higher education, improve their socioeconomic status, experience an increase in self-esteem, and motivate younger generations to follow their example (Hainline, 2014; McCaffrey, 2017).

According to Kantrowitz (2011), African American/Black students are the second highest race to receive athletic scholarships, which promotes a higher education and improved social strata. The percentages of African Americans/Black athletic scholarship awards have drastically increased since 1995, while scholarships for other races have slowly declined (Kantrowitz, 2011).

Upward mobility can be defined as rising from a lower economic status to a higher economic status educationally, monetarily, and socially (Dictionary, 2017). Upward mobility goes beyond the idea of athletic success through professional sports. There are many obstacles that can have an effect on the outcome of an African Americans/Black athlete achieving upward mobility through sports; such as race, education, academic ability, economic status, community support, and participation. According to McCaffrey (2017), by involving themselves in sports, African Americans/Black students are also more likely to decrease their chances of being

surrounded by drugs and violence. Participation can be acknowledged as being associated with or involving oneself with something. Participating within something can be simple or complex meaning one can be involved by competing with a team, competing individually, and/or by being a part of something that can connect yourself with an organization.

Throughout the years, society has established profit and nonprofit organizations to help athletes participate and succeed. Some well-known organizations that empower African Americans/Black and provide an avenue for upward mobility are the Olympics or the ESPYS. These organizations promote growth amongst African American/Black individuals as well as other races and ethnicities through role models.

Upward Mobility: Likelihood for African Americans/Blacks

The most likely areas of the United States to show upward mobility are those that have available resources and the exposure to a proper education and/or other supporting factors that can help contribute to increasing an individual's economic status; these regions are areas that already have a higher economic status and can therefore provide these resources (Leonhardt, 2013). When looking at areas that are the least likely to support upward mobility in the U.S., there is a trend that shows more heavily populated areas that are already of low-income status, as less likely to promote upward mobility of poor people. The concentration of these low-economic, low-mobility areas is extremely similar to the locations of the African American/Black population in the United States; meaning the areas that show the most economic immobility are also the areas that have a dense African American/Black population (See Appendix A). This association does not necessarily mean that African American/Black are restricted to low income areas but there is a distinct correlation to the concentration of African

Americans/Blacks with a low-economic status residing in densely populated areas. Although these areas show a high population of African Americans/Blacks, upward mobility does not have a restriction to race or the lower working class; low-income children tend to grow up to be low-income adults across all races (Leonhardt, 2013).

African Americans/Blacks are as likely to move out of the lower-class as other racial minorities and poor whites. However, the ability to achieve upward mobility is more difficult for African Americans/Blacks and has been across history (Cole & Omari, 2003). Since the first movements of upward mobility (when slaves gained emancipation), African Americans/Blacks have seen upward mobility as something more than monetary or materialistic; they strived for upward mobility through freedom, citizenship, education, vocational training, social behavior, respect, culture, responsibility, and belonging (Cole & Omari, 2003). For whites, these privileges are often easily achieved because they are individuals who are/were born into privilege. For low-income African Americans/Blacks to achieve upward mobility, they must overcome more difficult challenges than their white counterparts. But what are the conditions in certain geographic areas that impede African American/Black people from upward mobility? Everyone is not created equal and evidence can show the disadvantages of low-economic status for African Americans/Blacks (Lerner, 2010).

Another disadvantage facing African Americans/Blacks is environmental racism as illustrated throughout these highly populated areas (Lerner, 2010). These areas are limited to resources due to the lack of opportunities not available for these geographic areas, (Hedges, 2012) such as limited jobs and poor educational systems.

Impediments to Participation

Upward mobility for some African American/Black athletes hinges on their ability to participate in sports. However, society has introduced various impediments that specifically affect the participation rates of African American/Black athletes in sports.

When individuals reach the age where athletic participation is primarily through organized school sports, participation becomes based on skill rather than on the desire to be active for an individual's health and wellbeing. This not only keeps individuals from being able to participate, but also can diminish an individual's motivation to be active (Merkel, 2013).

Some sports also require more fiscal resources and because of costs some sports are predominately white such as rowing, fencing, golf, and gymnastics (Hainline, 2014). Since 2008, youth sports participation has declined due to a lack of finances from the family and the increase of cost in programs (Laferney, 2016). Sport clubs and youth school sports programs are decreasing at an alarming rate because of the financial burden that it requires to participate (Holland, 2014). From the year 2011 and 2012 participation in team sports fell from 54 percent to 50 percent, for kids ages 6 to 17 stated by Sports & Fitness Industry Association data (Holland, 2014). The decline in the development of sports and activity is drawing concern.

Race can become an impediment to participation as African American/Black athletes find a separation gap with their white coaches and staff as they feel they cannot relate on a racial and cultural level (Lawrence, 2005). African American/Black athletes, many times, find that certain situations are handled differently because of their race, or are accused of certain behaviors that are regularly attributed to being African American/Black. With different cultural backgrounds, athletes can have different attitudes, beliefs and experiences that give them a

conflicting view(s) than those of their teammates. There is evidence and attitudes that reflect how “intercollegiate athletics has resulted in differential treatment from their athletic recruitment to their academic engagement” (Carter-Fracique, Hart, & Stewart, 2013, p. 232). Although their race is attributed to their athletic success, African American/Black athletes commonly find that their race plays a more complicated role than that of their racial counterparts.

With the popularity of sports in the United States (and the rest of the world) continuing to grow, it has become apparent that athletics holds a great significance in the American culture. “Seventy-five percent of American families with school-aged children have at least one child participating in organized sports” (Merkel, 2013, p. 155), showing that society has not only grown fond of sports from a spectator perspective but also in terms of active participation. However, problems arise when individuals are unable to participate due to a lack of availability in sport programs and this is the case in many urban population centers where African Americans/Blacks live. Local governments and nonprofit groups have diminished their investments and resources in urban youth sports programs due to issues surrounding budget, liability and a shortage in adult facilitators, which results in a decrease of youth participation in organized sports at a young age (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005).

The opportunity to participate in athletics all depends on location. Between the years 2010 to 2020, 3.5 million youth will lose sports at their schools due to funding and support from organizations that have an impact in decision making. In Washington, D.C., high schools could only provide 55 percent of athletes a position on a team. Athletic opportunities for African Americans/Blacks are especially decreasing in urban centers. For example, in inner city areas

often labeled as the projects (Kelley & Carchia, 2013). Because of the lack of funding and other resources, 15.1 percent of high schools will not have the opportunity to participate in sport activities (Kelley & Carchia, 2013). Athletes in these areas become vulnerable or powerless because they sacrifice everything leaving them with only a few options to living life in a Sacrifice Zone of which they were born in or relocated. In places like Camden, New Jersey athletes feel that the only way out is through sports (Hedges, 2012). If a person participates in sports, it is seen as an avenue to fame, glory and money.

Race in Sports and Academic Achievement: Stereotypes about Intelligence

There are many stereotypes that are attributed to being an African American/Black athlete, including “that Blacks are physically superior, but intellectually inferior to Whites” (Siegel, 2012); this implies that African Americans/Blacks are born with more physical ability but lack the intellectual aptitude to achieve upward mobility through non-athletic avenues such as academics, business, professional degrees, etc. In *Race and Sport* (2012), the authors illustrate that this stereotyping has stemmed from the lack of educational opportunities throughout history for African Americans/Blacks. Sports have become a significant part of modern society. It provides an avenue for growth and success while often intertwining with other types of developmental systems such as education. And contrary to popular belief, African Americans/Blacks often emphasize the importance of education as a main pathway for upward mobility with an individual held in the utmost regard. This type of achievement often challenges society’s ideology of race- and class-based oppression (Cole & Omari, 2003).

It is perceived that many African American/Black role models are athletes, which creates the desire for physical greatness rather than intellectual prowess. Their ability becomes

attributed to their race “rather than exploring the significance of motivation, intellect, discipline and hard work in accounting for athletic success” (Race and Sport, 2012).

Unfortunately most athletes lean upon and follow this perception and mindset about athletics vs. intellectual capacity, which can cripple their ability to plan for the long-term by causing them to place all of their effort and motivation in athletics. However, success in some sports, such as football and basketball, require athletes to continue their education after high school. This requirement has provided those individuals with an opportunity of pursuing a college degree and potentially broadening life opportunities beyond sports. Baseball, boxing, track, and soccer do not require an athlete to attend college out of high school to continue to engage in that type of sport (Lane, 2017). There is a continuing movement to further the position of African American/Black athletes in education and giving them the resources necessary for educational success and professional development.

Although sports are based on the idea that physical skill, rather than characteristics such as race, political stance, religion, culture, economic status, etc., determines an athlete’s success, these non-physical characteristics can still play a significant role in sports (Hainline, 2014). Attention has focus on intelligence and athleticism among athletes experiencing a stereotype. According to Stone (1999), evidence shows that African Americans/Blacks excel over whites when performing athleticism and the script was flipped when intelligence was the emphasis. These stereotypic beliefs still linger, which hurts the present and future race due to studies done in the nineteenth century (Hodge, Kozub, Dixon & Kambo, 2008). Sports over time have bridged the gap from a stereotypical standpoint and needless to say race-sport stereotypes can have a dramatic shift towards youth in a negative way in athletics, which can

impact their academic success (Harrison, Azzarito, & Burden, 2004). Lowering educational standards, teachers pass student athletes because they believe their economical and mental capacities are limited (Stone, 1999). African Americans/Blacks are at an educational standstill due to certain circumstances and sports are an avenue one can take (Burden, Harrison, & Hodge, 2004; Edwards, 1998; Harrison et al., 2002; Harrison et al., 2004; Harrison & Lawrence, 2004).

Positive Outcomes through Sports

The positive impact of sports on student-athletes will vary greatly depending on individuals and the level of their involvement in both arenas—school and sports. At a young age, participation in sports can play a significant role in an individual's development and their integration into social activities that can lead to many positive outcomes for youth to help them increase their quality of living (Merkel, 2013). Importantly, physical health is one of the biggest positive outcomes for youth. Athletics encourages physical activity that is not only good to control weight and promote healthy habits, but also “skill development, improved muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and bone structure are additional benefits” (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005, p. 19-40).

When an athlete has a coach or other support staff that encourage positive behaviors, display fairness, and promote positive teamwork, they are able to develop social skills, while also learning how to properly display respect for adult figures and their peers (Merkel, 2013). A strong, positive, supporting cast is crucial to a youth's participation in athletics, in order to create a safe environment that facilitates and supports positive development. Through sports and the proper coaching, athletes learn life skills such as a sense of teamwork, hard work,

responsibility, accountability, dependability, selflessness, sacrifice, commitment, etc. (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). Sports is also an activity that is known for its ability to keep youth away from negative influences and has been shown to decrease the likelihood of substance abuse and other negative behaviors (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005).

When an individual is an exceptional athlete, there is the possibility of continuing their athletic career past high school and into college. College sports have become an important and beneficial part to university systems, making athletes one of the most important employees a university can have (Harper, Collin, & Blackman, 2013). Scholarship athletes are given a college education in return for their athletic service and attribution to their team's success (or lack thereof). If and when an athlete uses resources properly, they will often walk away from their athletic college careers with a college degree; something that is extremely uncommon for African Americans/Blacks, especially of low-economic status (Carter-Francique, Hart, & Stewart, 2013).

Some athletes continue their athletic careers after college to a professional level taking on a position of responsibility that is more than just being an athlete; they become a student, advocate, employee, and a role model for others throughout all levels of society (Harper, Collin, & Blackman, 2013). LeBron James, who is a professional NBA player, obtained fame through his participation in sports, despite the odds of achieving success for an African American/Black athlete from Ohio. He created a platform for the African American/Black community, which allows him to use his voice and knowledge to inspire and encourage youth, especially African American/Black youth, to overcome their participation barriers to sports. LeBron James helps the youth overcome these injustices by using his earnings to host basketball clinics, support

youth organizations and provide mentor support to further athletes' education and careers; he is a great example of a positive outcome for African American/Black athletes in America.

Negative Outcomes through Sports

Negative impacts from sports can primarily come through physical and self-esteem issues but are also heavily related to the outcome of poor influences in a supporting cast (Coakley, 2011). Many times, a negative supporting cast is the main cause in creating a negative sports environment, which is extremely detrimental to an athlete's mental and physical self. By creating low self-esteem and unrealistic goals, an individual, especially at a young age, can suffer from an experience that is not promoting sports in a positive and healthy manner (Coakley, 2011).

With sports commonly known for being a major cause of injuries, there is much debate surrounding whether or not it is safe to let children participate in athletics, especially contact sports like football (Merkel, 2013). When starting at a young age, there is a high probability an athlete will experience multiple sports related injuries, which many times can cause life-long issues. If safety regulations and positive social skills are not followed, youth are more likely to be subjected to physical harm and negative social behavior.

Sports can also be seen as a negative activity due to the stress it can place on an individual (Merkel, 2013). This pressure may lead to the use of performance-enhancing drugs such as steroids to obtain physical success (Reardon & Creado, 2014). Overtime, this drug use can ultimately change the outcome of an individual and result in long-term detrimental physical issues such as damaged organs. In addition, psychological issues such as rage and lowered self-esteem exacerbate the issue leading athletes to think they need to rely on these alternative

substances to be able to succeed (Kirkwood, 2012). Along with compromising their physical well-being, when caught, substance use can ruin an athlete's career and credibility.

Also important to note is the likelihood of continuing an athletic career after high school. Athletic scholarships are extremely difficult to obtain, and obtaining a professional athletic career is almost impossible (Andrew & Panos, 2014). For example, research shows the following percentages for athletes to reach the professional level: 3 in 10,000 or 0.0003 percent of boys playing high school basketball will be drafted by the NBA team. 1 in 5,000 or 0.0002 percent of girls playing high school basketball will eventually be drafted by the WNBA. An NBA team will draft 1 in 75 or 1.3 percent of NCAA men's basketball players. The NFL will draft 8 in 10,000 or 0.008 percent of high school football players.

Sage and Eitzen (2015, p. 192-194) review the perception that some athletes have about participating in sports and how it has led to the following myths for some athletes: (1) Sports leads to a college degree, (2) sports provides a free college education and, (3) sports can lead to a professional career. These realities are often seen with the mindset *that won't be me*, but in reality, the majority of college athletes will not continue a professional career as an athlete, and a large number of African American/Black college athletes will not earn a degree by the time they leave (Harper, Collin & Blackman, 2013).

Even though the percentages are not in an athlete's favor, athletes should still believe in the possibility to achieve the unachievable. Long-term and short-term goals should be set but as the process continues and athletes work to achieve the unachievable, other goals will be accomplished along the way. This is due to the desire, willingness, and sacrifice that sports has required of athletes in order to be involved (Bredemeier & Shields, 1995); an athlete can obtain

a higher education and violence can be avoided because of their participation in sports (Harper, Collin, & Blackman, 2013).

Motivating Factors

A review and critical analysis of scholarly literature is used to explore how sports can play a positive and effective role in an African American/Black individual's basic extrinsic needs, intrinsic needs, and self-actualization (i.e., how this can help to improve their socioeconomic status). I use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory as a conceptual framework. The Hierarchy of Needs shows, in basic terms, the motivators behind a person's actions. From Maslow's theory, we can understand that a person is initially motivated to provide the basic physiological and safety (extrinsic) needs for themselves and their family such as: food, water, warmth, shelter, security, safety, etc. After these needs are met, they are motivated to satisfy their physiological belongingness and esteem (intrinsic) needs mostly for themselves such as: intimate relationships, friendships, prestige, feeling of accomplishment, etc. Finally, after an individual meets all of these needs, they are able to reach a point of self-fulfillment where they find themselves reaching their full potential and a point of content (Maslow, 1943). There are various factors that play a vital role in the upward mobility of athletes. The motivations behind these behaviors for the majority of African American/Black athletes, that grow up in low-socioeconomic status, is a higher incentive to provide the basic needs for themselves and for their family since their needs are rarely met throughout their life (Maslow, 1943).

Micro Factors

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Although I was not the tallest, strongest, or smartest athlete on or off the field, I found a talent in sports at a young age. That talent was hard work and dedication, which proved to me that dreams can be achieved through many avenues. My work ethic and determination carried over into the classroom and allowed me to take advantage of opportunities through an educational path. My self-esteem grew and I learned to step outside my comfort zone helping me widen my perspective and realize that the only person I was in competition with was myself.

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Self-Esteem

Sports provides a medium for physical activity, developing friendships, and learning developmental skills across all domains. According to Merkel (2013), athletes are less likely to be depressed, more likely to reach higher academic goals, and more likely to demonstrate an improved self-confidence and body image. Merkel's work also highlights that team sports are a key contributor to success and supports the theory that if a teenager is involved in sports, they are more likely to be happier and less nervous about numerous situations that may arise in the future.

According to Merkel (2013), participating in physical activities can decrease the risk of chronic diseases that are more likely to develop in less active lifestyles, such as heart diseases, obesity and diabetes. Sport involvement for youth also builds strong character, creates

independence, life skills, values, and upward mobility (Coakley, 2011) that can be used to transition into the real world. For example, Coakley (2011) maintained that teamwork is developed through sports. Teamwork helped develop a sense of safety among African American/Black athletes who may otherwise be at higher risk of danger due to their surroundings.

However, for many African Americans/Blacks who live in sacrifice zones, self-esteem can dramatically decline as external, environmental factors decrease or prohibit development of situations that might enhance motivation. (Hedges, 2012). A sacrifice zone is an area that has limited opportunities available because it does not have the proper community support or available resources to help guide youth to a healthy outlet of participation such as access to sports, community-building events or higher education in some instances. Sacrifice zones hinder the opportunities for African Americans/Blacks to advance because these areas are economically diminished leading to a decrease in job opportunity and general lack of hope. Through sport opportunities, athletes are able to change this mindset.

Another negative effect for athletes coming from a low-income background is that they find themselves putting too much faith in sports in order to advance them in society. This can become a problem when pursuing upward mobility through sports as a professional athlete because with African Americans/Blacks and other races trying to take this path, regardless of their economic status, the window of opportunity narrows for an individual as everyone clamors to succeed.

This increase in participation of sports also means a greater number of health problems, such as head injuries in football, and perhaps self-esteem. Recent focus on the impact of

concussions on an athlete's physical and mental health has resulted in society becoming more educated on the problem and has allowed a more in-depth examination of the long-term impacts of these injuries (Kelley & Carchia, 2013). The recent research on concussions removed society's blinders and has provided a greater understanding on the gravity of this issue. This must be addressed not only for the future of sports but for the well-being of future athlete's success in the world. Some injuries are unavoidable in many sports, as well as in life, but allowing these issues to grow is unacceptable. Sport experts must keep an eye on the situation and it is imperative that they get involved so the problem does not get out of control. Society will continually exacerbate the issue if they choose to ignore it. Most of the severity of concussions comes with how they affect the mental health of an athlete and how this can detriment their ability to succeed in life. But, ultimately, the athlete must live with the outcomes that are among the involvement of sports.

Intrinsic motivation develops many skills that cannot be measured. These skills are internal and African American/Black athletes use these skills to benefit and strengthen them or handicap them in life. Racism can be identified as an intrinsic motivation, which may have decreased over the years but there is still friction that represses African American/Black athletes in sports (Eitzen, 2015). The critical race theory—a framework from which to explore and examine the racism in society that privileges whiteness as it disadvantages others because of their blackness (Eitzen, 2015)—can also be applied to this scenario and seen as an additional negative effect. Although African Americans/Blacks live in a world where racism still exists, sports have played a vital role in an uplifting way. African American/Black athletes have the

opportunity to choose a path that either leads them to success or handicaps their potential; he or she must take action to pursue a positive outcome.

Sports are a microcosm creating an atmosphere that can build character, sound morals, and a positive attitude. Ralph Waldo Emerson explains character as, what you're doing speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you're saying (2017) . This symbolizes internal respect and honor that correlates to an individual's behavior. The devotion stems from a coach using sports as an avenue to instill values in their players so that the individual could benefit in the real world. Developing an action plan can improve the situation that athletes are surrounded by, such as drug use, criminal behaviors, and/or living conditions. Ethical teammates and counselors can play a crucial role toward the mentality of athletes by building their belonging and self-esteem.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is the motivation that comes from within, influenced by the rewards that benefit one's self. It can affect youth in a positive way by setting achievable short-term and long-term goals as well as motivating them to advance in the world on an internal level based on outcomes that reward their intrinsic self (Papaioannou, Bebetos, Theodorakis, Christodoulidis, & Kouli, 2006).

Three different studies involving adolescents in 2003 found that those who participated in extracurricular activities, including sports, demonstrated improved skills in goal setting, time management, emotional control, leadership, wisdom, social intelligence, cooperation, and self-exploration (Cole & Omari, 2003). These skills are identified in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, specifically esteem needs.

African American/Black athletes and the motivations behind their actions can thoroughly be illustrated by Maslow's theory. Because of their status and involvement in a high-profile sport, African American/Black athletes have high esteem as an incentive of prestige and accomplishment; they place a higher importance on reaching self-actualization than most other people. As their careers develop, and they become more focused on these needs, athletes use their wisdom and success to focus on the intrinsic needs that can bring upward mobility to themselves and their families.

Self-Actualization

Ultimately, if an athlete can use their resources in a positive manner and gain their extrinsic and intrinsic needs, they can reach a point of self-actualization where they gain a sense of their full potential and/or gain upward mobility. By reaching this state of fulfillment, an athlete can recognize what they have achieved through their athletic career and materialize their success proving the undeniable fact that they have made progress, gained skills, obtained an education, and make connections they did not have before.

Esteem, belongingness, and self-actualization from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are connected to intrinsic motivation. This is a motivation that is driven by internal rewards or outcomes; a feeling of accomplishment. An athlete's confidence can be increased through a participation in sports, which leads to a rise in education success rates and body image (Merkel, 2013), but decreases obesity—a disease on the rise. Sport involvement can increase the chances of a greater life for African American/Black athletes, which can be also considered self-actualization.

Self-Denial

An athlete must believe in himself/herself before success can be accomplished at a high level. Maslow's esteem needs has a connection with self-denial due to the emotional ties it can play through sports and life itself. Self-denial and Maslow's esteem needs are present throughout all aspects of life not only sports. The link between the two can build off each other leading to a cultivation and decline in confidence. The interests that an athlete pursues must not be accompanied by any self-denial. For many African American/Black student athletes, a high volume of students that are from a low-economic status and/or who experience racial discrimination often experience self-denial. The biggest limitation in sports is not your body; it is your mind. Self-denial can be influenced by uncontrollable factors such as injuries, which can occur when participating in sports and cause a hindrance to success. These injuries can lead to self-denial and can create a fear of reinjuring themselves (Braham, 2004). When an athlete experiences a physical and developmental setback, there is a decrease in the belief of oneself.

However, an athlete can overcome self-denial by setting long-term goals and building confidence in achieving them. The "American Dream" is often used as a goal by many generations in an effort to attain the idyllic state of self-actualization by pursuing a person's dream through hard work and determination. When they use these values, their chances of prospering will rise and the American Dream becomes obtainable.

Intrinsic Needs

Although many times a professional athletic career is the ultimate goal to achieving upward mobility and gaining financial wealth, African American/Black athletes can also use their sport careers as ways to form supportive relationships, improve their social skills, build

self-esteem, and intellectually challenge themselves in ways that promote upward mobility (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). By developing skills that promote and facilitate healthy relationships, athletes improve their self-esteem and gain a sense of accomplishment; they are able to meet their intrinsic needs that help facilitate a positive state of mind.

Macro Factors

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I defied the odds based on my circumstances that surrounded the area I grew up in. My cousin was killed, mother was killed, and drugs and violence surrounded my entire family. I have every excuse one can have to not make it in life. Sports gave me a choice. By consciously choosing right from wrong, I grasped the opportunity presented in front of me and sports prevailed. For me, upward mobility not only impacted me financially but academically. I obtained multiple degrees and socially connected with individuals from different races, social stratas, and beliefs. I attribute my success to role models such as my father and my sports community that gave me a chance to succeed.

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Perceptions of Upward Mobility

According to Cole and Omari (2003), upward mobility for African Americans/Blacks is not the simple idea of economic growth by increasing your financial status. Instead, upward mobility is related to the ability to obtain privileges, needs, and statuses that African Americans/Black have been deprived of throughout their racial history.

The ability to obtain upward mobility through sports is entirely dependent upon how each individual uses their experiences to further him or herself academically, socially, economically, and physically (Coakley, 2011). Depending factors can range from what an individual views as upward mobility, how they use their resources, and if they are able to develop or gain success using their athletic talent and status.

Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is an external factor that affects someone or something's behavior. The connection speaks directly towards Maslow's two themes of physiological and safety/needs because they are both an external factor that can affect an athlete's actions. These external factors influence athletes in many ways, for example grades, fame, and money. Coakley (2011) suggests that sports also creates health wellness, improvement of inner confidence, discipline, teamwork, responsibility and many other positive attributes that can be valued in life. African American/Black athletes use these extrinsic motivators as a beacon to advance in the world and grow as an individual.

In high school, athletes have a higher grade point average, a better outlook on education, and they want to advance their education after graduating from high school as compared to non-athletes (Sage & Eitzen, 2011). Leonhardt (2013) mentions upward mobility in metropolitan cities tends to be rare for African Americans/Blacks in low-mobility areas. The study mentions that a possible explanation may be that areas with large African American/Black populations are more likely to be financially separated and secluded from the higher financial class due to their environment.

Involvement in high school sports can lead to upward mobility (Sage and Eitzen, 2015). Those who had low socioeconomic backgrounds that become well-off due to the accomplishment of sports are a prime example of upward mobility. Advancement in education is required for some sports in order to continue playing at a high level, such as football. Putting this stipulation on the sport itself allows the success rate of an athlete surviving outside of the sport even greater than if that athlete hadn't attended school beyond a high school education.

In an effort to move up in their social strata, African American/Black athletes rely on their coaches as they play a vital role in upward mobility of youth. According to Merkel (2013), effective coaches can help young athletes in these low mobile areas with positive social constructs to increase player satisfaction, motivation, compliance, and graduation rates through positive reinforcement and teaching. Motivation can be one of the leading factors of an athlete's success rate, which comes in two forms: positive and negative. Each coach has his or her own unique style of motivating an athlete (Beyer, 2000). Coaches who engage all athletes from the less talented to the top-tier athlete can impact their team in a positive way. Coaches can establish a culture for the athletes to grasp, which shows care and commitment towards them (Beyer, 2000).

To achieve upward mobility through sports, some athletes will go to the extreme and do anything necessary to become successful. Illegal and non-illegal supplements are used as performance enhancers to gain a competitive edge on the millions of other participants that are trying to earn an academic scholarship. Athletes often find themselves compromising their health at any length to obtain fame and fortune. For example, athletes' parents are hiring personal trainers and investing thousands of dollars in their child because they believe their

child is the next Michael Jordan. In doing so, they put their athlete's health at risk as well as their personal parent-and-child relationship. Parents who have high expectations may verbally abuse the athlete causing the athlete to resent their relationship and resent the sport as well (Eitzen, 2015).

Social norms are being challenged and this affects many African American/Black athletes as it limits their resources for obtaining their goals. These new norms put athletes in a predicament because they can't afford certain products or the professional training needed to advance in their sport. Oftentimes, in order to obtain these resources, they may find themselves committing crimes to obtain what they need. This behavior is quite common and usually occurs when situations challenge the status quo. Should the athletes take the risk that may help them advance or should the athlete stay at a disadvantage and run the risk of not earning an athletic scholarship? These are the questions that African American/Black athletes are forced to ask themselves due to America's unofficial caste system. In this case, the athletes take it upon themselves to do or take whatever they deem necessary to keep up with the rest of society. Unfortunately, the values that structure the functionalist theory jeopardize an athlete's success because it provides them with a quixotic ultimatum.

Corporations have an enormous influence on athletes by promoting their products through multiple sources. Knowing that the majority of youth do not ask questions about the long-term side effects of these products, these companies use this ignorance as a marketing advantage when promoting or advertising only the positive effects of these products. Athletes are willing to win at any cost for a chance to earn a scholarship (Mosher & Akins, 2014; Eitzen, 2015). Capitalism has created a mindset to achieve victory at all cost. Videos, music,

advertisements and social media paint the picture that without countless of hours of working on your craft, you won't stand a chance in reaching your ultimate goals; this proves that you are not a failure but a winner (Eitzen, 2015) and now you can provide for yourself and family.

Athletes continually put their body at risk by experimenting with performance enhancement drugs like creatine or anabolic steroids and as a result, they end up being the targets of false advertisement and are left to suffer long-term ailments.

African American/Black athletes have been conditioned to think that obtaining success by any means, whether or not they are ethical methodologies, is the new social norm. This ideology prevents African American/Black athletes from advancing in sports (Eitzen, 2015) and they are at a disadvantage because they are not able to afford competing in sports like the rest. For those athletes that can afford the new techniques of competing, unfortunately, they do not understand the risks associated with such practices. These social norms are analyzed in the critical theory (Coakley, 2007). The critical theory highlights some of the assumptions that prevent minorities from advancing in society and represses them from having power. Until society can commit to reforming their ideas of social justice, African American/Black athletes will continue chasing an unrealistic idea of the American Dream.

Social Support

Social support can be the difference between athletes advancing to college or those getting lost within the system. Maslow's belongingness/love level shows the importance of connection and relationship that athletes need to ultimately achieve upward mobility. Relying on role models as an example of leadership can help them obtain a higher education and more advanced goals. Athletes may not think that role models can have such an impact on their lives

due to the lack of presence they have with a role model; on the contrary, role models are pivotal in their success. Young African American/Black athletes are strongly influenced by professional athletes of their race because they perceive these athletes as pioneers overcoming racism and oppression created by society proving there is an opportunity for them (Sailes, 1998). Some athletes may take a role model's help for granted and may not even recognize it so it is imperative to help them establish a support cast. A support cast is a group of people that the youth can rely on to be there when things aren't going the way they had planned. They focus on showing care and making the youth feel important (Carter-Francique, Hart, & Steward, 2013).

Due to the lack of education, awareness, and experience by some of the African American/Black role models, the likelihood for upward mobility for the athlete beyond sports is at a deficit compared to other races in the system but coaches can be this light of hope for athletes. In Singer and May's article, it illustrates that society hinders people of color from advancing from one position to another in comparison to white people (2010) because of a lack in educational resources available. Role models can assist in mentoring the importance of setting goals and a life beyond sports. In certain areas where African American/Black high school athletes grow up, a coach is the only light for success to advancing in society. Role models are essential in influencing the outcome of an athlete's future and when their actions are positive, the athlete has a higher chance of making better choices to obtain a better life beyond sports.

Empowerment

Empowerment: an athlete-centered approach, which promotes a sense of belonging as well as giving athletes a role in decision making and/or a shared approach to learning (Kidman, Thorpe, Jones, & Lewis 2001). This directly relates to Maslow's theories of belongingness/love and esteem needs because of the relationships they create through sports. Praise and encouragement may seem simple but hearing these messages can empower athletes to have confidence outside of sports. Self-confidence is an intangible skill that has the power to change the mindset and perceptions of you because of sport involvement (Blinde & Taub, 1999). Blinde and Taub also held a focus group and found that students unanimously agreed that they gained self-confidence through sport and physical fitness activity. Through their engagement of activity, nearly all respondents mentioned how their perceptions of the self were changed. These students mentioned that the confidence gained through sports attributed to their feeling of empowerment in other areas outside of sports. For example, respondents indicated that such participation "gives you a sense of self you don't get any other way", "lifts your attitude and really helps you feel more like a person that can walk", and "helps me feel better, makes me a better person within myself (Blinde and Taub, 1999, p. 1471)."

Creating an atmosphere that is encouraging allows one to be capable of self-empowerment. A sense of accomplishment, independence, and control are only a few achievements that athletes obtain. Empowered athletes hold themselves to a higher standard and are accountable to situations that they act upon willingly (Kidman, Thorpe, Jones, & Lewis, 2001). This creates leadership skills and promotes recognition.

Extrinsic Needs

Although increased economic status may not be directly related to sports, it can come from the developments and opportunities that were presented to an individual because of their athletic career. Importantly, when competing at the college level, that there is a strong focus on academics so that when/if a professional sports career does not work, an athlete is able to achieve upward mobility through the obtainment of a college degree, which in modern society, can be the most important and respected way an African American/Black can gain economic success (Cole & Omari, 2003). Through athletic success, education, and development of different skills, an athlete can provide the physiological and safety needs that may not have been steadily provided to them in their youth.

Policy Recommendations

African American/Black athlete's use skills, attitudes and dispositions from high school sports as resources for upward mobility not only in their collegiate and professional sports career but in their professional jobs beyond sports. It is essential to understand that these athletes cannot compete at a high level in sports their entire life. In order for upward mobility to be achievable, impactful recommendations must be created that will benefit not only the athlete but their parents and society directly and indirectly. In addition, programs must be developed that generate positive messaging and help cultivate tangible or intangible skills that benefit all athletes, not just African American/Black athletes. Below, I will discuss how outreach programs, profit and nonprofit organizations, and sources of funding that play a role in athletes' lives can create change for the greater good of society.

Outreach

Throughout this material, communities that need assistance must ask others for help despite their pride. A common quote used is, “A closed mouth doesn’t get fed”—this is a true statement. Outreach needs to occur not only in the community but throughout all levels of state and federal government to show the need for assistance. The state and federal government have the opportunity to provide a greater impact on many lives around the country.

Funding of Sources

Through the information observed, corporations, successful people, the state, and the government must be contacted for donations or funds to develop athletic programs and help sustain or expand them for growth. Programs such as student athlete development programs, United Nations sports programs, YMCA, and the Boys and Girls Club are examples of successful organizations that have had a positive impact on the success and upward mobility of student athletes. In order to impact the lives of present and future generations, these sources of funding are crucial to providing a platform for change. With any new program, there will be issues that arise but this is expected. Allowing a program to develop and take form takes time but these efforts will not be in vain as these funds will be used for the upbringing of our nation.

Profit and Nonprofit Organizations

Through the information examined, programs must be developed that support upward mobility not just for sports in high school but also for anyone that needs assistance. Everything costs money but we, as a society, must not ignore the youth in these sacrifice zones and ask

ourselves, do their lives matter? Are we above them? These African American/Black athletes were born into these situations and sports are the only path to success they see. One of the first steps in creating these programs is creating a policy from the state or government that does not allow corporations to take advantage of these programs for greed and power. Otherwise, they will keep these unfortunate citizens trapped in a downward spiral. Yes, funding is a key element in making these programs successful; however, it's the time invested with young athletes that will make the most difference. Creating programs that focus on educators, mentors, sports, and counselors can help benefit minorities and less privileged families and these programs can be separated into fields. For example, the counselor's program can be created to support careers beyond sports. Another program can be created to support educators dealing with athletes that may or may not be planning on advancing to college. This program could outline what to expect from the athlete and their parent as well as strategies for addressing their issues and concerns. Ultimately these programs should be utilized as a support system that educates, guides, and brings awareness to situations. They should highlight how to deal with or overcome many obstacles that arise when trying to improve the lives of others. In addition, these programs should illuminate the key ingredient to making a better life for one's self by advancing their education and choosing to take action for change. These programs are for the greater good. We must come together as one to overcome the problems that citizens have because of the many factors outlined above. Everyone may not have had a hand in the circumstances but we can all give a hand. Are you willing to help?

Conclusion

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As I reflect on my growth through sports starting at a young age, I believe sports was the right choice for me. Although a close family member was presented with the same athletic opportunities, supporting cast, and educational resources as me, he chose a path filled with gangs and dropping out of high school. I am not saying this path is wrong but it was different and unacceptable from what I had envisioned for myself. Who I am today is all attributed towards sports; I am a Black American man with multiple college degrees, zero debt, a respected contributor in my community, an opportunist, as well as a mentor and role model for higher education.

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It is important to note the repetition of the word achievement throughout literature. This is significant in the way it illustrates that upward mobility for African Americans/Blacks is something they achieve rather than being born-into or handed readily (Cole & Omari, 2003). By the application of athletics to individuals of low-economic status, there can be a positive correlation between upward mobility and the influence of sports in an individual's life. However, this correlation can vary depending on the way each individual uses their relationship to sports, and their (and/or society's) view of upward mobility. As stated in the first section of the Literature Review, African Americans/Blacks have seen upward mobility as something more than monetary or materialistic; they strive for upward mobility through freedom, citizenship, education, vocational training, social behavior, respect, culture, responsibility, and belonging (Cole & Omari, 2003; Hainline, 2014; McCaffrey, 2017). An individual can use sports to help

them obtain any of these features, as long as they are optimizing their experience, have a strong supporting cast, and use their resources in a positive manner.

Although the ability to achieve a professional level of athleticism is highly unlikely, African Americans/Blacks can still use sports as a way to help further their financial, academic, social, vocational, and overall self-achievement. In youth, sports can (with a proper support staff and mindset) instill positive values and characteristics that can be carried throughout life along with providing exposure to teamwork, respecting adults, listening habits, exercise habits, etc. When carried on past their youth and into high school and college, sports can continue to be a positive method to achieve personal goals and goals related to upward mobility, especially in terms of providing an education. In high school, along with what is gained in youth, sports require good grades and school attendance. Encouraging many African American/Black young adults to stay in school can give athletes a positive form of responsibility, respect, pride, and belonging.

In college, sports continue to provide what has been gained through an athlete's young life and can additionally provide a free college-education, resources to professional, social, and behavioral development. In addition, sports create life-long support connections with teammates, coaches, and other support staff as well as a greater sense of belonging, responsibility, and achievement. Whether their athletic careers continue from college or not, African American/Black athletes can use the experience and knowledge that sports has provided them to achieve various forms of upward mobility. In return, the personal experiences and knowledge of seasoned athletes can be utilized to help other younger generations of

African Americans/Blacks of low-economic status become adept to achieving upward mobility and relying on much needed role models for inspiration.

Intrinsic motivation, intrinsic needs, self-actualization, self-esteem, self-denial, empowerment, extrinsic motivation, extrinsic needs, upward mobility through sports, and social support are ten topics that were illustrated throughout the literature. Each theme has its own pros and cons such as intrinsic motivation, which can lead to a narrow-minded perception and self-denial can steer an individual to a negative mindset; however, extrinsic motivation can drive an individual to succeed beyond his expected outcome. Ultimately African American/Black youth in high school/college that surround themselves with athletics have distinct advantages. Being a student-athlete is a privilege (Osborne, 2014) that can advance you not only in education but physically, socially, and economically. African American/Black athletes use athletics as a way to create opportunities that may not come readily due to their circumstances. But without sports to help advance the youth of African American/Black athletes where does one turn due to the lack of resources and support provided in urban or sacrifice zones? Programs must be created to reach these African American/Black athletes and role models must help raise awareness. Using platforms in sports can spread the message. Sports can be the starting block but it cannot be the ending block. As a society we must come together and strive to permanently impair oppression and racism, which will increase the chances of succeeding beyond sports.

Maslow's theory, when applied to the literature and upward mobility of African American/Black athletes, has shown how the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators hold a strong significance in the motivations behind an athlete's actions. Through physiological needs, safety

needs, belonging needs, and esteem needs, we are able to understand why an individual, and in this case an athlete, is driven to reach self-actualization.

The support that these athletes have, beyond their coaches, is limited and sometimes non-existent due to the areas they grow up in. Many do not have the ability to separate themselves from certain situations that cultivate negative attention, develop negative habits, incur negative consequences and ultimately altar their future. The choice to change starts with the individual; a choice that must be made by African American/Black athletes to make a positive difference in their life and the lives of others. Everybody wants something greater but there are only a few who are willing to take action to make a better life for themselves no matter the situation or obstacles they may encounter. However, it is crucial for these athletes to have access to a mentor, advisor, or role model; a person that can uplift and provide leadership to African Americans/Blacks on obtaining a higher quality of life. This is a two-sided coin, which means that in order to create this upward mobility for African Americans/Blacks in high school or college, the athlete and supporting cast must be on the same page. This is a vital issue that needs to be addressed for the greater good of society as a whole. There are many positive outcomes that come from sports. One should not overlook the opportunity it presents. Participating in athletics benefits many so the programs need to be maintained and created throughout the world.

Notes

1. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (See Appendix B), it is essential for progress of humankind to place an emphasis on six basic needs: physiological, safety/security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (1943). As listed, Maslow explains how these needs appear sequentially as one moves up the phylogenetic scale, and as a human develops from birth to adulthood (Lester, 2013). This means that physiological and safety are the most basic extrinsic needs that hold the most significance, followed by the psychological intrinsic needs of belongingness and esteem, then ultimately reaching the self-fulfillment need of self-actualization. As these needs are satisfied, the implication is that an individual's psychological health will improve (Maslow, 1943).

Through sports you can develop skills and growth helping to improve yourself as an individual as well as a functioning member in society, which relates to Maslow's theory. It correlates the five themes to an individual's growth through sports. The diagram includes a description of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and its relationships to sports; the first column outlines each level in the pyramid, the second column provides a brief description of each level, and the third column describes the relationship between sports and a theory of human motivation.

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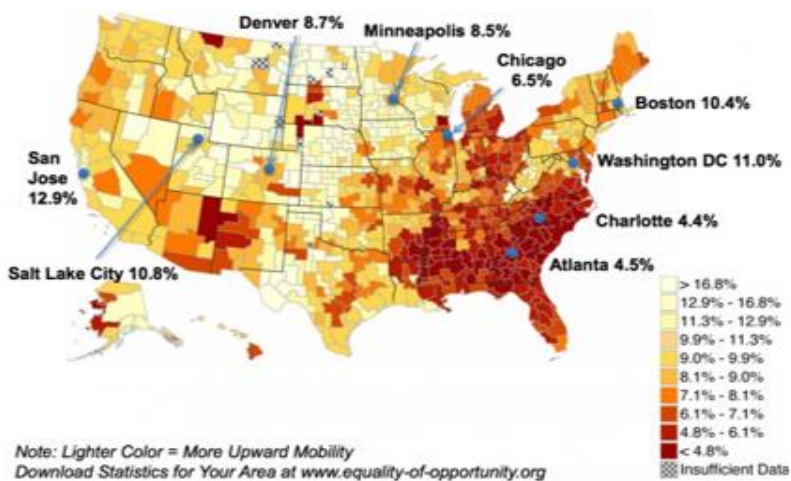
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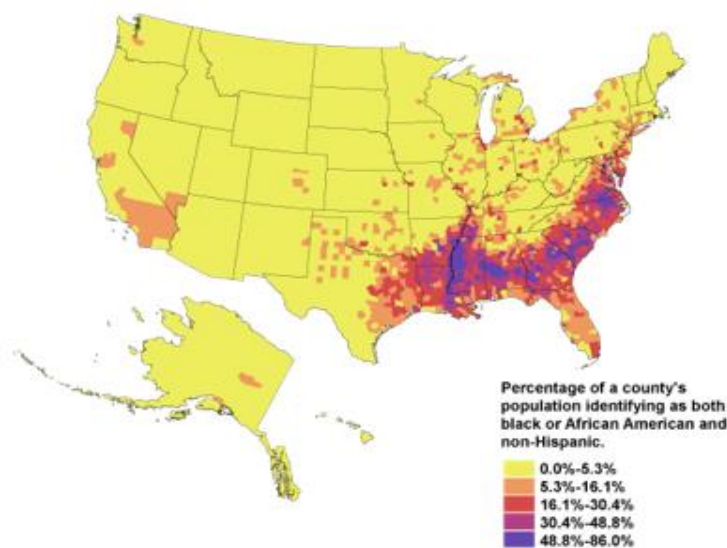
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Appendix A: The Geography of Upward Mobility in the United States



From <http://www.businessinsider.com/map-of-upward-mobility-in-the-us-2015-6>



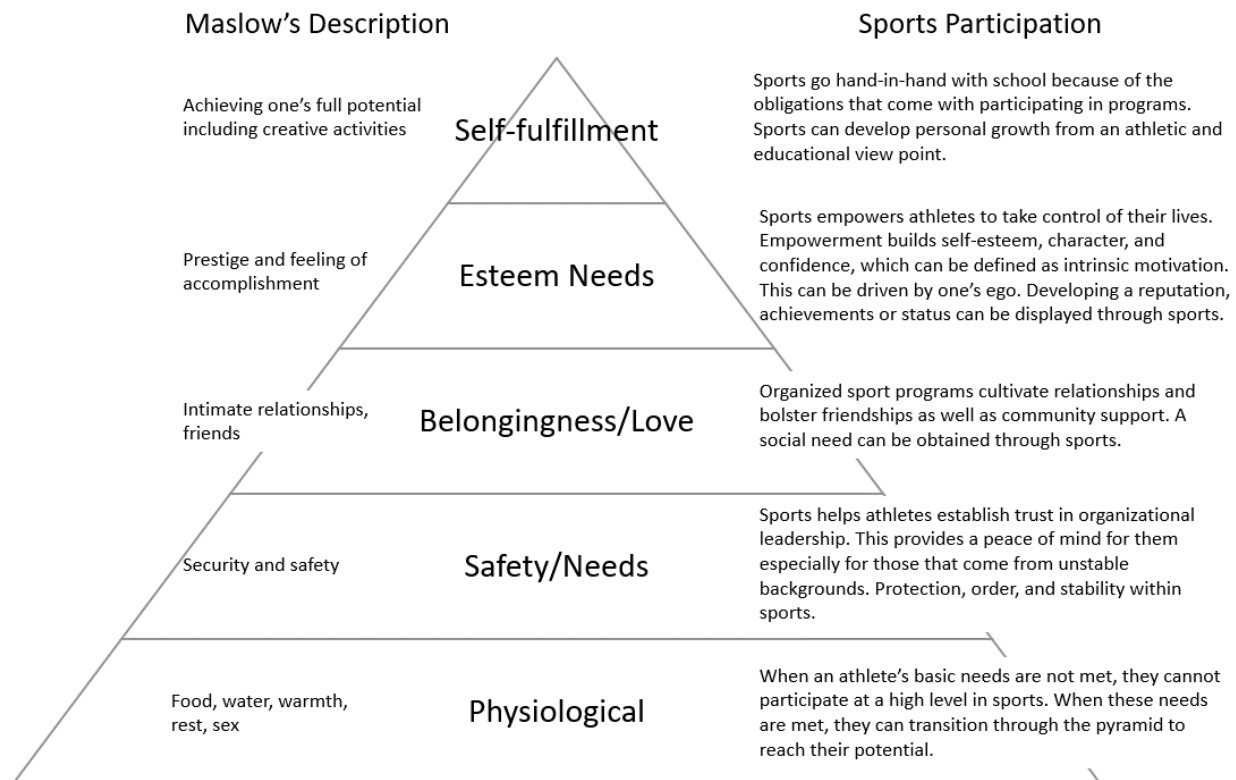
http://www.censusscope.org/us/map_nhblack.html

The top map illustrates the chances of an individual obtaining upward mobility based on area, according to Chetty R. (2015).

The bottom map illustrates the high concentration of African Americans/Blacks populating the U.S. (African-American Population, 2000).

The correlation between the two maps displays the dense percentage of African Americans/Blacks residing in areas with a low probability of upward mobility. This information shows evidence that African Americans/Blacks need assistance in achieving upward mobility.

Appendix B: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Sports Correlation



(Lester, 2013; Maslow, 1943)