

HEY STUD: RACE, SEX, AND SPORTS

Earl Smith and Angela J. Hattery

Department of Sociology

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC 27109

This article is an examination of how the intersection of sport and race plays out in the sexualization of the sporting role of African American male athletes. Further, the article is an examination of the multiple roles the media, sport, and race play as these impact the public persona of African American male athletes in high-profile sports. The article concludes with a number of recommendations for ending the negative images of African American male athletes.

To the white public, we are athletes, rappers, preachers, singers—and precious little else. We are also robbers, rapists, mentally deficient and sexually well endowed.

—Ellis Cose, *The Envy of the World: On Being a Black Man in America* (2002; New York: Washington Square Press, 3–4)

First of all, let me say good after . . . good late afternoon. Because of the HIV virus I have attained, I will have to announce my retirement from the Lakers today. I just want to make clear, first of all, that I do not have the AIDS disease, because I know a lot of you want to know that, but the HIV virus. My wife is fine, she's negative, so no problem with her. I plan on going on, living for a long time, bugging you guys like I always have. So you'll see me around. I plan on being with the Lakers and the league—hopefully [Commissioner] David [Stern] will have me for a while—and going on with my life. I guess now I get to enjoy some of the other sides of living—that [were missed] because of the season and the long practices and so on. I just want to say that I'm going to miss playing. And I will now become a spokesman for the HIV virus because I want people, young people, to realize they can practice safe sex. And, you know, sometimes you're a little naive about it and you think it could never happen to you. You only thought it could happen to, you know, other people and so on and on. And it has happened.

—*Magic Johnson—Press Conference at L.A. Lakers Compound*
Washington Post, November 9, 1991

Introduction

This paper is an examination of how the intersection of sport and race plays out in the sexualization of the sporting role of African American Male Athletes. In particular we focus on three specific issues at this intersection: (1) black-white relationships, (2) uncommitted sexual behavior and consequent paternity issues, and (3) sexual violence.

Who can doubt that the intersection of sport and society and the high visibility of sport have taken place, not in spite of, but because of the athletic abilities and exceptional athletic feats performed by the African American male athlete, from Satchel Paige to Bo Jackson? The African American male athlete has not only significantly shaped the trajectory of certain sports (namely football, basketball, baseball, and boxing) but indeed individual athletes, especially when they confronted the system of social segregation under which they live(d), challenged our social system in more basic ways. And, though many individual acts have challenged the social system, the high-profile nature of the African American male athlete means that his actions, whether designed to be challenges to societal norms or not, were perceived as such.

For example, Jack Johnson, pugilist, himself a sport and sex symbol, was so defiant and bold that he openly dated and married white women long before the resting of cultural mores about interracial dating among whites and blacks.

As sociologists we are also concerned with the reluctance to study unflattering or stigmatizing behavior on the part of minority communities, in this instance African Americans—as the charge of blaming the victim or worse, racism, on the part of the researchers is rampant.¹

Who can doubt the image of another pugilist, Joe Louis, also known as the “Brown Bomber” who was given center stage far away from the dirt and grime of the military kitchen, as an enlistee in the United States Army? In the print media Louis was portrayed as a good guy, always smiling, happy, a family man,

and a “credit to his race.” This image is the exact opposite of the image given to Jack Johnson and later Muhammad Ali.

Spurred from desolate beginnings, many of these African American athletes cannot separate themselves from these beginnings (e.g., Jim Brown, Wilt Chamberlain, Alan Iverson). We feel the secret for understanding the athletes’ behavior was provided many, many years ago by the African American sociologist E. Franklin Frazier.

In his 1932 Masters Thesis,² Frazier spelled out the now classic theory about social disorganization that he learned while studying sociology at the University of Chicago. In it, Frazier set the limits for and drew the boundaries around the consequences of poverty living conditions and a poorly organized African American family structure that blocked African American life chances.³ This disorganization, said Frazier, was embedded within African American culture.

The fusing of the African America culture with sport culture produces the explicit *hypersexualization* found in the stud image so sought after and glorified by high-profile male African American athletes. This is the problem.

So that our intentions in this research paper are not misinterpreted, let us start by saying we are not arguing in this paper that African American men perpetrate more violence, sexual assaults, or engage in more sexually promiscuous behavior than their white male athlete counterparts. To do so would be problematic for at least two reasons: (1) differences in reporting and treatment in the criminal justice system and (2) differences in perceptions and media attention.

First, there is ample evidence to support the contention that sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes.⁴ Yet, in writing this paper, based on empirical data, we are limited to a discussion of cases that are reported. Many scholars have substantiated the fact that both reporting and the consequent actions in the criminal justice system (being charged, tried, and convicted) are shaped by race, beliefs about the racial identity of rapists, and racists institutions.⁵ As a result, because African American men

are disproportionately likely to be reported, arrested, charged, convicted, and imprisoned thus, they are in the system more frequently. With sociologist Mike Messner (2002: 29) we argue that these athletes are “at the center of athletics” and hence it appears that they are more likely to be offenders. Angela Davis puts this nicely:

The myth of the Black rapist continues to carry out the insidious work of racist ideology. It must bear a good portion of the responsibility for the failure of most anti-rape theorists to seek the identity of the enormous numbers of anonymous rapists who remain unreported, untried, and unconvicted. As long as their analyses focus on accused rapists who are reported and arrested, thus on only a fraction of the rapes actually committed, Black men—and other men of color—will inevitably be viewed as the villains responsible for the current epidemic of sexual violence. The anonymity surrounding the vast majority of rapes is consequently treated as a statistical detail—or else as a mystery whose meaning is inaccessible. Might not this anonymity be a privilege enjoyed by men whose status protects them from prosecution? Although white men who are employers, executives, politicians, doctors, professors, etc., have been known to “take advantage” of women they consider their social inferiors, their sexual misdeeds seldom come to light in court. Is it not therefore quite probable that these men of the capitalist and middle classes account for a significant proportion of the unreported rapes? . . . It seems, in fact, that men of the capitalist class and their middle-class partners are immune to prosecution because they commit their sexual assaults with the same unchallenged authority that legitimizes their daily assaults on the labor and dignity of working people (Davis, 1983: 199).

Second, the myths of black male sexuality infiltrate not only individual perceptions of “who” is a rapist or “who” is promiscuous, but also appears in the institution of the media (all formats). The media continues to build and perpetuate these myths when those who control the media choose which stories to air and how much attention to give to each story. Barry Glassner (2000) notes that the media disproportionately shows black men as criminals and this artificially distorts public perception. This perception is so widespread that several high-profile murder cases involved white perpetrators initially blaming anonymous black men. For example, both Susan Smith who drowned her children in South Carolina and Charles Stuart who murdered his pregnant wife in

Boston initially blamed anonymous black men for these heinous crimes.⁶ Their choices over who to blame for the crimes cannot be seen as random. Both Smith and Stuart made the choices they made based on the images that pass across our media pages and TV screens daily.

In reverse, we note, for example, that the Kobe Bryant sexual assault case drew far more media attention and appeared far more often on TV than the murder of Baylor University basketball player Patrick Dennehy who died at the hands of his teammate Carlton Dotson. White male athletes are both insulated from the criminal justice system (as Angela Davis argues above) but also from the hyper-media attention. Why? We argue, based on attribution theory, that when African American men perpetuate these crimes and behavior it confirms all of white America's worst fears about the black man and thus it receives attention (Glassner, 2000). When white men perpetuate these same crimes and behaviors it is unusual and thus not reported as much for in the end it is considered inconsequential. (Using an innocuous illustration, the weather forecaster doesn't report on a drizzle that will cause no widespread harm, but he or she floods our televisions with images of hurricanes and blizzards, which can cause widespread devastation.) When a white man perpetuates a crime or behavior it is like the drizzle, a small drop here and there, not likely to cause much trouble. On the other hand, when all of the negative behaviors of African American men are added up together it is like a hurricane, which can cause serious problems.⁷

We note a related phenomenon with regards to gender. When women commit violent crime it draws significant attention because it is so contradictory to our perception of women. For example, when Tonya Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly attacked Nancy Kerrigan it was on our televisions 24 hours a day! Yet, when NHL player Mike Danton was involved in a murder-for-hire scheme it barely registered except on ESPN. This is also true of white athletes involved in domestic abuse and assault cases like Patrick Roy (Colorado Avalanche), Mark Chmura (Green Bay Packers), or Wally Beckman (Arizona Diamondbacks). Similarly, when men kill their children it makes the news for a day or two,

but when women such as Susan Smith or Andrea Yates do, it is covered extensively. Why? Women are supposed to be more nurturing, caring, and motherly.

The Sexualization of African American Men: The African American Male Athlete

The sexualization of African American men goes all the way back to the earliest days of slavery. White Americans developed an ideology of black male sexuality as “hypersexual,” animalistic, and African American men were described as having no self-control of their sex drive.⁸ Furthermore, a significant part of this ideology was the development of a belief that black men’s sexual organs were larger and more powerful than those of whites. The primary conclusion, according to Angela Davis (1983) is that black men were a serious threat to white women. These hypersexualized men with large penises would have an uncontrollable desire for white women whom they would “take” through rape. Thus, the movement of black men must be highly controlled and constrained. Hill-Collins (2004: 153) notes the following:

The potential threat caused by African American men’s bodies across the spectrum of admiration and fear, the bodies of black men are what matters. In this context, the contested images of black male athletes, especially “bad boy” black athletes who mark the boundary between admiration and fear, speak to the tensions linking western efforts to control black men, and black men’s resistance to this same process. Athletics constitutes a modern version of historical practices that saw black men’s bodies as needing taming and training for practical use.

As many scholars, including Angela Davis, (1983) have noted, these myths about black male sexuality were not held in a vacuum. Rather, they existed and continue to exist, we argue, in a social context of racial domination. Throughout all of modern American history, one constant has been the presence of a racial system of social stratification, superiority, and consequent oppression. There are several key components to the ideology of racial superiority, including the belief that (1) African Americans are less than fully human⁹ and (2) the strongly held belief that there should be no

race mixing. Thus, one of the key components of our various systems of social segregation (from the time of southern slavery up through the period of Jim Crow) has been a strict separation of the races codified in antimiscegenation laws. As Davis (1983) notes, antimiscegenation laws served at least two purposes: (1) the strict separation of the races (eliminating, *in theory*, the possibility of race-mixing) and (2) the protection of white women from the hypersexual black man.¹⁰

African American Men as Male Athletes

Black men are however, also men. They are socialized by and receive benefits from a system of patriarchy that results in gender oppression. Women earn less than men. Women have limited access to political power (we've never had a woman President and women make up only 10% of the United States Senate). Women have limited access to economic power (they run only 5% of all *Fortune 500* companies). And, women live under a system of social control enforced by rape and intimate partner violence. African American male athletes are, also, male athletes and thus, we argue in this paper, these athletes also gain access to privileges (e.g., money, power) as a result of their venerated status as athletes. This is particularly true for high-profile athletes, and it is their behavior that we will examine here.

The natural symbiosis is found in all male unions where boys are taught and learn at an early age how the demeaning of girls and women helps to establish their own status within all male groups (e.g., the Boy Scouts of America; see also M. Messner, 2002). Sociologist Edwin Schur notes in his text *Labeling Women Deviant* (1984) that this behavior "is closely tied to our society's scenarios of approved male behavior." He continues:

The persistence and the relative tolerance of such victimization represents, therefore, a price we pay for maintaining a dehumanizing and exploitative gender system.¹¹

Anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday examines the ways in which homoerotic male bonding occurs in all male groups, using

fraternities as a “case study” (Sanday, 1991). She argues, in short, that in the context of all male groups, men learn at least two important lessons. First, male qualities are to be valued and feminine qualities are to be denigrated. Thus, men need to create and display a hypermasculine identity (they are not *feminine*). And, second, that within the context of a rape culture men are entitled to degrade women and use violence against women and come to see these behaviors as logical outgrowths of a misogynistic ideology and a system of sexual domination.

Other scholars have explored these ideas of sex-segregated groups (like fraternities and the military) and their role in creating a rape culture with specific application to the realm of sport.¹²

In an ethnographic study of Little League baseball the social scientist Gary Alan Fine¹³ reports that in the language used to depict women, these boys have all grasped the nature of this learning experience.

At a later age, but still within the male group structure, males continue to use derogatory language to depict women. Ohio State University sociologist Tim Curry captured these conversations as they unfolded in “locker rooms.” According to Curry¹⁴ the language is actually boasting of heterosexual conquest. In his study of the male locker room, through “talk fragments” Curry has provided us with a portrait of the main themes in these conversations that are almost always about sex and aggression. He puts it this way:

The men’s locker room is enshrined in sports mythology as a bastion of privilege and a center of fraternal bonding . . . There is evidence that years of participating in such a culture desensitizes athletes to women’s . . . rights and supports male supremacy rather than egalitarian relationships with women.

One of the most brazen acts of this disrespect is the case of *Boston Herald* reporter Lisa Olson. While reporting on a game played by the New England Patriots, Olson set out to interview players in the locker room after the game. Olson was surrounded by Patriot players, many of whom were not wearing clothes and many of whom taunted her as to the strength and size of their penises. Here is what reporter Randi Druzin says about the incident:

No one learned that lesson better than Lisa Olson, a reporter for the *Boston Herald*. While conducting interviews in the New England Patriots' locker room following an NFL game in 1990, a group of Patriots surrounded the reporter and made aggressive, vulgar comments. The players (Zeke Mowatt, Michael Timpson, and Robert Perryman) were later fined and the team's general manager was fired for trying to cover up the incident. When the incident sparked a national debate, Olson began receiving death threats. Vandals burglarized her apartment and painted an ominous message on a wall in her home: "Leave Boston or die." She received another note when the tires of her car were slashed: "Next time it will be your throat." Olson later recalled that she received mail that "would make you physically ill—depictions of rape scenes and horrible, horrible things." Olson fled to Australia, where she covered cricket and rugby for five years. She returned to take a writing job at *The New York Daily News* hoping to put the past behind her. Nonetheless, she started receiving threatening phone calls and letters again, when two famous athletes spoke out against female reporters in the locker room.

In a 1999 *Wall Street Journal* article, retired NFL defensive end Reggie White wrote that he couldn't see a legitimate reason "for forcing male athletes to walk around naked in front of women who aren't their wives." White claimed to have seen female reporters "ogling guys in the locker room," and encouraged players to fight against equal access for female reporters. Within a few days, New York Knicks guard Charlie Ward was distributing copies of the article to his teammates. The basketball player claimed having women in the locker room violated the sanctity of marriage. Madison Square Garden president and chief executive officer Dave Checketts condemned Ward's actions and warned him not to use the locker room as a pulpit.¹⁵

Professor Curry sees this behavior as an integral part of male culture that is learned as an outgrowth of playing sports.

Thus, we argue in this paper that African American male athletes participate in sexual behavior that is attention-getting and sometimes dangerous and criminal. In order to explore the sexualization of the African American male athlete we will focus on three specific examples: (1) black-white relationships (what we call boundary crossing); (2) uncommitted, sometimes anonymous sex (the "who's your daddy" phenomenon) and finally, (3) sexual violence. We will argue that each of these forms of behavior is structured by a specific racial historical context, by the rules of patriarchy, and finally by the unique status afforded high-profile athletes.

The Problem in Context I

[Boundary Challenging: The Problem is Black and White Relationships]

Ever since slavery was the leading mode of production in America there has been a prohibition against blacks and whites maintaining intimate relationships. This prohibition was more carefully (and at times violently) upheld in the cases of African American male and white female relationships moreso than the other way around, white male and African American female relationships.

James Hugo Johnston (1970) argued that despite strong, and often legal, prohibitions against sexual liaisons between black men and white women these relationships continued to exist.^{16,17} And, while the debates ensue, the liaisons between African Americans and Whites persist and based on census data we argue that these relationships will continue as we move deeper into the new millennium.¹⁸

Yet, it is also *less well known* in the general population (as opposed to researchers who pay attention to these matters) that interracial relationships and marriage is less than significant in the United States. African American and white marriage was illegal up until 1967.¹⁹ Public opinion surveys indicate weak support for African American—White marriages (see Steeh et al., 1998). And, though interracial marriages have consistently been on the rise since the *Loving v. Virginia* decision that rendered the antimiscegenation laws illegal, we note that fewer than 5% of all African American men marry white women.

Census data indicate that the rate of African American male-white female marriages continues to rise (Crowder & Tolnay, 2000), yet the controversy about African American male athletes involved in relationships with white women rages on. When we examine the real problem with the issue of African American athletes we learn that it is the stud image that infuriates those who respond to opinion polls. It—the problem in context—is, to be sure, the *high-profile* African American athletes and their relationships with white women.

Table 1
Interracial Marriages (Black & White Only)

Year	Total Marriages (#)	Black/White Marriages (# and % of all Marriages)⁴³
2000	56,497,000	338,982 (.60%)
1998	55,305,000	331,830 (.60%)
1997	54,666,000	327,996 (.57%)
1996	54,664,000	338,916 (.62%)
1995	54,937,000	329,662 (.60%)
1990	53,256,000	213,024 (.40%)
1985	51,114,000	163,564 (.32%)
1980	49,714,000	169,027 (.34%)
1970	44,598,000	312,186 (.70%) ⁴⁴
1960	40,491,000	52,638 (.13%) ⁴⁵

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P20-514, Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March, 1998.

2000 data source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, P20-537, America's Families and Living Arrangements: April 2001. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/p20-537.pdf>

In the world of athletics where young men are goggled over for their strength, size, speed, power, “the athlete body” of African American athletes has been placed in positions of high visibility from TV commercials (Michael Jordan and Hanes underwear) to the fierce looking, sweat dropping, facial scrawl appearing several times a year in *Sports Illustrated* showing the mean, “I can kick your butt,” African American athlete who radiates with sexual energy.²⁰

Hidden behind all of this is the athlete's appetite for white women. The struggles that African American male athletes have with interracial relationships has not been a front page feature story but lives in the background within stories about groupies, wild sex parties, and sport bars and clubs that feature “lap dancing” strippers and sex for pay. It is well known that the female groupies who hang out at football stadiums and basketball arenas are predominantly white, while the higher percentages of both intercollegiate and professional football and basketball players are African American.

The phenomena of the African American athlete and the outward manifestations of sexuality (especially if the women are

Table 2
The Overrepresentation of African American
Men in High-Profile Sports

BASKETBALL	Number	% of the League
NCAA Division 1	2353	57.1%
NBA	263	77%
FOOTBALL	Number	% of the League
NCAA Division 1A	7511	42.1%
NFL	1350	63%

white) began with heavyweight fighter Jack Johnson.²¹ Johnson's sexual exploits are legend but what is not known is that his image was not "natural" but more or less manufactured.

Johnson's shaved head, tight pants, and heavily muscled arms were all part of his audaciousness. He was actually a pathetic figure who frequented white prostitutes but his legend grew larger than life as he criss-crossed the United States and often into Cuba flaunting his sexual virility. If there is a beginning to the fascination with race, sex, and sports it could be argued that the story begins with Jack Johnson.

The real issue, we argue, has less to do with prohibitions, either legal or simply attitudinal, against interracial marriage and more to do with beliefs about black male sexuality and its specific illustration in African American male athletes. Though many arguments against interracial marriage were utilized, among them the belief that "race mixing" would be the decline of both races, Angela Davis (1983) argued that the myths about black male sexuality were designed and perpetuated specifically to uphold the prohibition of African American male and white female unions.

Davis (1983) argues specifically that two aspects to black male sexuality put white women at risk. First, black male sexuality is believed to be wild, uncontrollable, and animalistic. This quality leaves white women vulnerable to rape. In addition, this belief seems counter to our dominant system of monogamy. If African American male sexuality is animalistic then promiscuity is an inevitable outcome (we will return to this later) and thus white women who partner with African American men will find themselves being

cheated on. Second, the belief that African American men are “well endowed” also fed into the belief that they would “hurt” white women. These two aspects of black male sexuality, prominent in racial ideology according to Davis, created fear in the minds and hearts of whites (especially males, see Johnston, 1970) and created a context that prohibited African American male and White female relationships as a matter of protecting white women.²²

It is against this backdrop that we examine relationships between African American male athletes and white women. As noted previously, the images of African American male athletes are that they are strong, powerful, and of course, well-endowed. Thus, we argue, that relationships between African American male athletes and white women are especially troubling and offensive to whites, even as the rate of interracial relationships rises, precisely because the images of these athletes specifically reinforce the image of the well-endowed, strong, and animalistic and is thereby threatening to the safety of white women. White’s fear of and disgust with these relationships was as true in the times of Jack Johnson as it is today. Here we consider the case of Dennis Rodman.

Dennis Rodman had a following when he played basketball in the NBA that perplexed sport devotees and sport reporters alike. Rodman, who writes about his sex life and white women in his own book *Bad as I Wanna Be*, held center stage of media attention (as in being buck-naked on the motorcycle on the cover of the book) when he hooked up with the singer, dancer and actress Madonna. He got instant attention to this relationship and sported it loudly. From Madonna’s “foreplay” instructions to his cross dressing, Rodman spells out plainly that he is sexual and that he prefers white women. He also says that in the NBA (National Basketball Association) many players prefer white women, both as girlfriends and wives.

From the perspective of how white women are viewed, there still remain several image problems which have not changed much over time. For example, the white female’s image is one of being an “object of conquest” and/or worse, she is seen as a whore. To be sure, she is seen as someone who has abandoned all sense of decency—the sex is less than an intimate encounter and more an

adventure, lacking depth and emotional connections—to be with an African American athlete as he too is defined as “forbidden fruit.”

While many African American athletes will no longer deny their personal choices that they make when dating White women we must remember that interracial dating needs to be examined as both an individual choice as well as a choice that is structured by and occurs within the confines of a particular “culture.” At the structural level we acknowledge both the prohibition around interracial dating as well as the notion that white women can be labeled a “conquest” or “forbidden fruit.” In this essay we do not focus exclusively on individual choices, and we note that it would be a stretch to try to conclude that none of these relationships are genuine and built on all the same platforms of love and respect that many relationships are built on. The interested reader may want to explore the lives of such athletes as: Wilt Chamberlain, Mike Tyson, Muhammad Ali, and Magic Johnson.

The Problem in Context II

[The Problem is Who’s Your Daddy: Uncommitted and Anonymous Sex]

As noted in the previous section, Angela Davis (1983) argues that a significant part of the myths and beliefs about black male sexuality is that African American men are hypersexual and animalistic. A logical extension of this belief is that African American men will participate in promiscuous, uncommitted, even anonymous sex as a result of their hyper masculinity.²³ This situation is compounded for the African American male athlete because he has access to a large pool of women who are willing to engage in uncommitted and/or anonymous sex. Wilt Chamberlain makes the public claim in his book *A View from Above* that he had sex with 20,000 women!²⁴ Furthermore, the sportworld²⁵ creates a culture that “dictates” that women, even wives, “put up with” their partners as “players.” The onus for being committed and monogamous falls exclusively to the athlete, as their wives and girlfriends have almost no input into the behavior of the men;

especially high profile athletes (see Benedict, 2004 and Pomerantz, 2005).

The multilayered misogynist male jock culture—which impacts all levels of sport from T-Ball to Little League to high school varsity sports, to intercollegiate athletics to big-time professional sport teams—has today become more of a problem than a viable solution to male identity-making.

This misogynist culture teaches males to be aggressive, oppressive, mean-spirited, tough, physically abusive, and violent, and for African American athletes violent sexual predators.²⁶ These athletes learn very early on that the best way to continue behaving in a business as usual way is to buy into the culture of silence.²⁷ Professor Mike Messner, a sociologist at the University of California notes (2002: 47):

This culture of silence is built into the dynamics of the group's spoken and unspoken codes and rituals. The eroticized dominance bond has already established that guys are part of the high-status, privileged in-group and very little during adolescence can solidify this sort of feeling as much as being part of an athletic team.

To be sure, it is the culture that initially shapes the attitudes and then leads into the actual behavior that then leads to reckless sexual encounters that produce (1) unwanted children or worse this attitude leads to behavior that produces (2) serious crimes like rape and gang rape. In this section we will deal with the issue of promiscuous and/or anonymous sex. We will deal with the issue of sexual violence on the next section.

The issue of promiscuous and anonymous sex plays out in many different ways; key among them is the issue of paternity. A major sport news story illustrates this nicely. *Sports Illustrated* published a feature story by Grant Wahl and Jon Wertheim entitled “Paternity”²⁸ on paternity suits against athletes thus giving us a glimpse of a problem that hitherto is hardly ever mentioned in the main media. The story was very illustrative beginning with the cover showing a cute little African American boy, about three years old, holding a basketball under the title “Where’s Daddy?”

In constructing the *All-NBA Paternity Team* the authors list some of the biggest stars who ever played the game of professional basketball. These are:

Larry Bird, Patrick Ewing, Juwan Howard, Shawn Kemp, Jason Kidd, Stephon Marbury, Hakeem Olajuwon, Gary Payton, Scottie Pippen, Isiah Thomas, Julius Erving.

An issue with the out-of-wedlock children is not the morality of it all²⁹ but, rather, that many of the women who have these kids live on public assistance (welfare) while their boyfriends or lovers lavish in an extremely high-profile, high-living lifestyle. These women and their children struggle to make ends meet.³⁰ Yet, many of the players who are absent fathers make in excess of eight to ten million dollars a year and it must be noted that many of these contracts that are public knowledge are base salaries only. That is, they do not include added money for meeting specific goals like winning a championship or an individual title like the All-Star Slam-Dunk contest.³¹

Sociologist Steven Ortiz of Oregon State University has done some pioneering work (2001) that corroborates much of what we have been arguing in this essay. In his ethnographic studies of

Table 3
African American Athletes and Their Fatherless Children

Athlete	Affiliation	Salary	Settlement	#Children
Larry Johnson	NY Knicks	\$84mil × 12	\$8,850 month	5
	Plus \$30,000 yr for a nanny			
Gary Payton	Seattle	\$87.5mil × 7	\$5,500 month	1
	Plus \$175,000 college trust fund and one million dollars life insurance			
Shawn Kemp	Seattle/Cleveland	\$15.3mil yr.	\$5,000 month	7
Juwan Howard	Washington	\$105mil × 7	\$7,000 month	1
Dennis Scott	Phoenix Suns	\$3mil yr.	\$5,000 month	1
Greg Minor	Boston Celtics	\$12.5mil × 5	\$7,860 month	3
Darryl Strawberry	LA Dodgers/ NY Yankees	\$750,000 (1yr)	\$3000 a week	5

Note: Stats for this table were compiled at the time stories broke about the paternity claims. Several athletes have subsequently changed teams and / or are no longer in sports.

professional athletes' wives (their husbands play football, baseball, hockey, and basketball) Ortiz says that these women are suspicious and angry over the "on-the-road" behavior of their husbands. What is unique about Professor Ortiz's work is that he limited his sample to married couples and spent most of his time in the field interviewing the wives of these professional athletes. This unique handle provides another voice to the hypothesis that there must be something to the hyper-sexuality of African American athletes (most of the wives in the Ortiz sample are women of color) as these men were not single, lonely, and simply looking for sex after the game. They had wives at home!

Did the need to add extra sex to their diets come from within? Did this need come from the culture of both sport and the African American community? In some ways we think the answer, although controversial, is "yes" to both questions.

An additional issue is that the behavior of these high-profile athletes is problematic in the structural (in addition to the individual issues raised above) in that it serves to reinforce the stereotype identified by Davis: that African American males are hypersexual and their behavior involving non-committed, anonymous, promiscuous sex is a "natural" outgrowth of such sexuality. This myth serves to damage African American men (especially athletes) in the reinforcement of this negative stereotype but it also serves to keep both men and women from establishing healthy, long-term meaningful relationships. Finally, we note that whereas there is some evidence that interracial marriages (especially African American-white marriages) are more stable than intra-racial marriages, these inter-racial relationships between African American male athletes and white women contradict this general trend. Thus, explanations for the instability of these relationships are both intellectually interesting and important.

The Problem in Context III **[Sexual Violence]**

Sexual violence by athletes begins early, in high school and/or before. In 1989 in the suburban town of Glen Ridge, New Jersey,

for example, a group of high school athletes (wrestlers) lured a retarded girl into a basement and raped her with a baseball bat and broomstick.³² Bernard Lefkowitz, Columbia University journalism professor, reports that the boys did not feel any remorse for their crimes for the simple reason that sports for them was a way to gain supremacy over females, even if they are retarded young women.

According to Lefkowitz:

[T]hese Ridges were taught that women's main purpose was to be decorative and to please and to praise men. A girl who resisted this role was treated as one more opponent to be bullied into submission.³³

Adolescent boys don't just pick up this attitude—willy nilly—nor do they just participate in this type of violent behavior. It is instilled into them, the jock mentality, as a part of the jock culture that says it is OK to be violent against women.³⁴ This violence comes in many packages.

This sense of entitlement, or privilege, that male athletes learn only grows when they enter college and the professional ranks. Benedict, in his examination of violence against women by NBA players, notes that among players in the 2001–2002 season, 117 players (40%) had a police record for a serious crime, the vast majority of which were sexual assaults.³⁵

Benedict demonstrates that the world of professional sports reinforces the lessons learned in little league. In this environment, men, mostly African American, are praised for their athletic bodies and their athletic skills. They are pursued relentlessly by women, “groupies” who are interested in everything from an anonymous sexual encounter to getting pregnant to ensure a paternity suit. It is in this context, as noted above, that athletes like Wilt Chamberlain report having sex with literally tens of thousands of women. Benedict notes that in this environment, men begin to see all women as possible sexual partners. It ceases to occur to them that a woman would say “no.” These athletes have sex when they want to and with whomever they choose, and sometimes the women don't consent to the sex. In a small percentage of these cases, women make a criminal complaint.

The recent charges and criminal and civil cases against Kobe Bryant provide an excellent illustration of both promiscuous, reckless sex, and sexual violence. In the summer of 2003 Los Angeles Lakers basketball star Kobe Bryant had sex with a 19-year-old hotel clerk he had met only 45 minutes before the sexual encounter. Within hours of the encounter, she went to the hospital and filed a criminal complaint, accusing Kobe Bryant of sexual assault. In the fall of 2004 the criminal case was dropped and a civil case was filed. As of this writing, the case was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount of money but believed to be in the neighborhood of \$2.5 million dollars to which the victim agreed to a confidentiality clause.

We will never know what transpired between one of the most high-profile NBA stars and this teenage hotel clerk. What this case illustrates, however, is the main point of this paper: the fine line between sexual promiscuity and sexual violence and the way that both of these are outgrowths of the culture that hypersexualizes African American male athletes. Kobe Bryant, a married man, had casual sex with a woman he had known for 45 minutes. And, according to the woman, this sexual encounter was against her will.

What is important here is the following: (1) the “culture” that creates this sexualization of African American male athletes with roots in the images of black men during Jim Crow;³⁶ (2) the outcome of this is that male athletes, especially African American—in the collegiate and professional ranks—develop a sense of entitlement that leads to them having anonymous and casual sex as well as taking sex when they want it and from whom, regardless of the consent of the woman. The outcome, as Benedict (2004) demonstrates, is a high level of promiscuous, casual, and anonymous sex as well as sexual violence perpetrated by African American male athletes against, primarily, white women. All an outcome, according to Benedict (2004), of the hypersexualization of African American male athletes.

Conclusion

In the beginning, there was . . . Uncle Tom

—Donald Bogle *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies & Bucks* (1994: 3)

Most, although not entirely all, of the research and articles and news stories about hypersexualization among athletes is about African American male athletes. This over coverage can be criticized on a number of fronts (mainly for the insensitive nature of the reporting and gross overgeneralizations) but for our purposes here this specific problem will not be addressed directly. It seems strange that no one in the sport science community (not the press, for there have been many stories about the ridiculous nature of the claims by Chamberlain in particular but moreso the sexual behavior of athletes in general)³⁷ seriously challenged the *sexual braggadocio* of Wilt “The Stilt” Chamberlain (1936–1999) when he made what he said was the serious claim in his book that he had had sex with more than 20,000 women.³⁸

Sports and the culture that sport revolves in are a mirror reflection or better yet a microcosm of the society we live in. That said, sport can be analyzed as a microcosm of the larger society and, therefore, can be viewed as a phenomena wherein sociologists and others can test the theories they hold about society. Sport, then, becomes a laboratory for sociological research and theorizing.

As sociologist Eitzen and Sage report, sport in American society is wide open for critical intellectual inquiry.³⁹ Sports are very important in American society. Sports are watched by millions of Americans each week and the behavior of athletes, including their sexual behavior, is covered extensively in print, Internet, radio, and television. Thus, whether these behaviors are real or imaginary, it is no argument to say that sport in America has become an institution that not only fuels the economy but becomes an important component of both individual and family life. And, athletes, like it or not, have become role models whose behavior is influential on both males and females, from the teen years well into adulthood.⁴⁰ Americans mimic the lives of star athletes. What concerns us, though, are at least two issues: (1) the way that young men and women may mimic the sexual promiscuity and even violence they

associate with athletes and (2) the ways in which this behavior reinforces the negative stereotypes of African American male sexuality that both Davis and Patterson discusses (Davis, 1983; Patterson, 1998).

In this context, for example, Chamberlain is set up for easy target practice the social stereotype of the oversexed African American male. It is a stereotype that has gotten many, many African American men lynched in the past.⁴¹ Although the numbers are hard to validate it is clear that lynching was a method used to intimidate African American men into a subservient position for life. In fact, during the revision of this paper, in June 2005, the Congress of the United States of America officially apologized for its failure to pass anti-lynching legislation during the height of lynching in the early twentieth century (Jonsson, 2005).⁴²

The late tennis professional Arthur Ashe understood this well. Before he died Arthur Ashe commented on the sexual exploits of both Chamberlain and Magic Johnson. In *Days of Grace* (1993: 238) he said the following:

As much as I like Wilt and Magic, I must say I did not enjoy reading these accounts. I must also admit candidly that part of my reaction to Wilt's and Magic's revelations was a certain amount of racial embarrassment, an affliction to which I hope never to become immune. African Americans have spent decades denying that we are sexual primitives by nature, as racists have argued since the days of slavery. These two college-trained black men of international fame and immense personal wealth do their best to reinforce the stereotype.⁴³

We are mindful that the images discussed above do not indict every African American male athlete. The charge would be foolish and irresponsible. We are also mindful that the image that is circulating in public space is stereotypical and that in the final analysis it may be false. Yet, there is ample evidence to show that the African American male athlete does play into the image placed on him as being hypersexual in his role and behavior as an athlete. It can be found in all sports that African Americans play.

In this essay we have tried to focus on a growing problem of reckless sexual behavior by athletes but moreso this same behavior by African American athletes. The institution of sport in the

United States remains one of the few areas of upward mobility legitimately available to young African American males.⁴⁴

The question becomes, then, why do so many of these student-athletes and professional athletes blow the restricted opportunities that are available by participating in the types of behavior explored in this chapter? Professional football rookies, having just penned signing bonuses in the amount that ranges from \$624,000 to \$1 million dollars are arrested and charged for all sorts of crimes even before they play one down of football.⁴⁵ For us this is the \$64,000 dollar question. Far too many of the stories that show up in local newspapers, in national dailies like *USA Today* or appear in highly respected weekly sport magazines like *Sports Illustrated* discuss and detail aggressive behavior such as battering, rape, assault, and even *murder* involving African American athletes.⁴⁶

Some argue this behavior is the result of bad genetics. We can by-pass this argument for now on the grounds that there is no empirical evidence in the literature to support this position. Others argue that it is steeped in an “oppositional culture” that African Americans have not been able to escape. Some people believe that in this oppositional culture, African Americans perpetuate behaviors that work against them. This culture, so goes the argument, is supposed to encourage an overall hostility to mainstream institutions and norms, and that it is a direct outgrowth of slavery. Oppositional culture is also supposed to set up young people to fail instilling in them the need to “mire in mediocrity” and therefore they end up with accepting mediocre qualities in themselves.

Since so many African American males who participate in athletics are from low socioeconomic backgrounds, many of the arguments theorizing about an oppositional culture found in the sociological research on the “underclass” would seem to fit in this context.⁴⁷

Thus in concluding this essay it is ironic that the exploitative and reckless sexual behavior discussed herein grows out of the very institutional nexus that still shares with the United States military a favorable image as one of very few places where the downtrodden can not only co-exist but also “make it”—based on athletic skills they possess and the amount of hard work they are

willing to expend. It is past time that this myth is finally shattered and we pay attention to the exacting meaning(s) of the label STUD as it is applied from within and without the institution of sport.

Notes

1. Sociologist William Julius Wilson is best in describing the problems that ensue to researchers who take on controversial social problems like poverty, based on the vocal responses to his work on the "Ghetto Poor." See, in particular, his book *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass, and Public Policy* (1987), and "Studying Inner-City Social Dislocation: The Challenge of Public Agenda Research." *American Sociological Review* 56: 1–14, 1990.
2. E. Franklin Frazier, 1932, *The Negro Family in Chicago*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
3. *Ibid.*, Frazier's concept of the black matriarchy, which has been repeatedly challenged by new approaches towards understanding the African American family still dominates good sociological research on the black family.
4. Bureau of Justice Statistics. 1996. *National Crime Victimization Survey*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.
5. Hindelang, Michael. (1978). "Race and Involvement in Common-Law Personal Crimes." *American Sociological Review* 43: 93–109 and Hindelang, Michael et al. (1979). "Correlates of Delinquency: The Illusion of a Discrepancy between Self-Report and Official Measures." *American Sociological Review* 44: 995–1014.
6. Russell, Kathryn K. 1998. *The Color of Crime: Racial Hoaxes, White Fear, Black Protectionism, Police Harassment, and other Macroaggressions*. New York: New York University Press.
7. "We don't endorse this perspective, but note its dominance in the attitudes of white Americans."
8. For once the notion is accepted that black men harbor irresistible and animal-like sexual urges, the entire race is invested with bestiality (Davis, 1983: 182).
9. We note the series of court decisions, beginning with the Dred Scot decision that ruled that African Americans had fewer legal rights, and they were defined as only partial humans (citizens). The scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois consistently addressed this very issue, especially in his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*. Davis Levering Lewis, the biographer of Du Bois, in his W.E.B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois Lecture at Colgate University in October 2003 could note the following: "The dawn of the 20th century was a time when lynching of African Americans went unpunished and the attitudes of mainstream American society toward the aspirations of its black citizenry were neglectful at best, but more often outwardly hostile. One of the notable books of the day was even titled *The*

- Mystery Solved: The Negro a Beast.* The national white consensus emerging at the turn of the century was that African Americans were inferior human beings whose predicament was three parts their own making and two parts the consequence of misguided white philanthropy." See Gary Frank, 2004, "Fireworks Going Off in the Cemetery." *The Colgate Scene*, Vol. 32, No. 4. (January).
10. Angela Davis, in her 1983 essay "Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist" in *Women, Race, and Class*, notes that antimiscegenation laws created a context in which any sex between a black man and a white woman was defined as rape. She also notes that as a result of the intersection of patriarchy and racial domination, white men frequently had sex with black women, most often non-consensually. This sexual interaction is the origin of a "mulatto" race in the United States despite the strict ideology enforced by the anti-miscegenation laws. See, also, Johnston 1970.
 11. Edwin Schur. 1984. *Labeling Women Deviant: Gender, Stigma, and Social Control*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishers. Quotes on p. 135.
 12. T. S. Nelson, 2002. *For Love of Country Confronting Rape and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military*. New York: Haworth Books.
 13. Gary Alan Fine, 1987. *With the Boys: Little League Baseball and Preadolescent Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 14. Timothy Curry, 1991. "Fraternal Bonding in the Locker Room: Pro-Feminist Analysis of Talk about Competition and Women." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 8: 119–135.
 15. Randi Druzin, 2004. "Women Reporters in the Men's Locker Room: Rugged Terrain." Women's Sport Foundation, <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/media/article.html?record=852>
 16. His magisterial Ph.D. Dissertation, *Race Relations in Virginia & Miscegenation in the South, 1776–1860*, took some 25-plus years to find a publisher.
 17. We note that even today, in one of the most public of cases, there remains vociferous debate focused on the Thomas Jefferson/Sally Hemmings relationship. The same is true of the Strom Thurmond/Essie Mae Washington relationship.
 18. Even today, 2005, there is controversy over black / white relationships. Rex Chapman, who played college basketball for Kentucky and now is with the NBA team the Phoenix Suns as director of basketball operations told a local newspaper that when he was playing college basketball at Kentucky he was told to stop dating African American women. He also said that "They liked the players enough to cheer for them at games, but they didn't like the players enough to let them date their daughters," Chapman told the *Courier-Journal*. Chapman is white. See ESPN.Com (<http://espn.go.com/>) May 17, 2005.
 19. Antimiscegenation laws were ruled unconstitutional in the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Loving v. Virginia* (RICHARD PERRY LOVING et ux., Appellants, v. VIRGINIA , 388 US 1, 18 L ed 2d 1010, 87 S Ct 1817, Argued April 10, 1967. Decided June 12, 1967).

20. There needs to be a research piece on *Sports Illustrated* and how they portray African American athletes on the cover of the magazine, in advertisements and in feature stories. To our knowledge this does not exist today.
21. Tony Martin, *Bad Nigger* (1975).
22. There are many, many depictions of the neverending quest to understand African American male sexuality and especially the folklore around his penis size. Here we offer the following. John Howard Griffin in his autobiographical book entitled *Black Like Me* (a white male who takes measures to darken his skin to look black) is hitchhiking in the south and the truck driver who picks him up, thinking he is black immediately asks to “see” his penis. The flip side to this is the autobiographical book by Grace Halsell entitled *Soul Sister* (white female who takes measures to darken her skin to look black). She takes a job as a domestic maid in the South and when her white female boss is out playing tennis, the husband comes home to get “some black pussy” exercising his belief that African American women are loose, wild, and exotic in the matter of sex. We feel that both illustrations play on the stereotypical belief systems that some whites have about African American sexuality.
23. Former basketball star James Worthy and track star Edmund Moses comes to mind here. Worthy solicited prostitutes and so did Moses. These athletes obviously did not know the women they are perusing for paid sex. See for Worthy: <http://creativesports.com/newsmanager/templates/premium.asp?articleid=2422&zoneid> and for Moses:
24. Wilt Chamberlain in his book, *A View from Above* (1991), brags that over his long athletic career he had sex with over 20,000 women. Here is how Chamberlain explains this much sex as being “encounters” and definitely not valued intimate relationships. “Yes, that’s correct, twenty thousand different ladies. At my age, that equals out to having sex with 1.2 women a day, every day since I was fifteen years old. . . . I’m not boasting. I don’t see all this lovemaking as any kind of conquest; all I’m saying is that I like women. People are curious about my sex life, and, to most people, the number of women who have come and gone through my bedrooms (and various hotel rooms around the country) would boggle the mind.”
25. See Earl Smith, *Race, Sport, and the American Dream*, forthcoming (2006), for a discussion of the term “sportworld.”
26. See, especially, Mike Messner “Taking the Field.”
27. The best case example is the research on “hazing” that came to light a few years back. The NCAA found that athletes on many teams, not just football, participated in this behavior but remained silent about it. The same was found for military recruits. See also, the case at Yucca Valley, California where six high school football players were charged with false imprisonment, sexual battery, rape with a foreign object and conspiracy. In Messner, 2002, p.1.
28. Grant Wahl and Jon Wertheim, 1998, “Paternity.” *Sports Illustrated*, May 4, pp.63–71.
29. We hardly ever agree with former NBA star Charles Barkley but even he

- saw the issue of out-of-wedlock babies as not being a moral issue but, more so, an issue of where the current players come from themselves. According to Barkley they are themselves products of out-of-wedlock births. Wahl and Wertheim, 1998.
30. A good place to look for a contemporary examination into the daily lives of poor women and children can be found in Jonathan Kozol's books. See in particular *Savage Inequalities* (1992).
 31. See *New York Times Magazine*, Sunday August 18, 2002 for a story about new rookies in the National Football League. An interesting statistic in the story reveals that of the 262 rookies invited to the four-day symposium held at the LaCosta Resort and Spa, north of San Diego hosted by the NFL to teach rookie players everything from how to dress with class (and not like thugs) to how to put on a condom (condoms were distributed along with bananas) the author notes that 50 percent of the rookies had fathered children. Steven Dubner, "Life is a Contact Sport."
 32. Bernard Lefkowitz. 1997. "Our Guys." *Sports Illustrated*, July 23rd, PP. 83–98.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
 34. A good part of the attitude is that nothing ever happens to the perpetrators of the crimes anyway. In the Glen Ridge case it took a good four to five years before any of the men did prison time.
 35. Jeff Benedict. 2004. *Out of Bounds*. NY: HarperCollins.
 36. Angela Davis "Rape Racism and the Myth of the Black Rapist" in *Women, Race, and Class*.
 37. See *San Francisco Examiner* in 1993 a report on the sex party that basketball players participated in: "Blazers Won't Be Charged in Sex Party." January 28th, section D, p.5. Citation in Ortiz, 2001.
 38. These comments remind us again of sociologist W. I. Thomas who argued that "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences!"
 39. D. Stanley Eitzen and Geore H. Sage. 2003. *Sociology of North American Sport*. 7th Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishers.
 40. Hattery, Angela and Earl Smith. 2006. "Athletes, Role-Models, and Criminals: What Do We Make of this Tripartite Mess?" in Brian Lapman (ed.), *Sports in Our Schools: A Critique*.
 41. See the editorial in the magazine the *Messenger* August 1919, II, Pp. 8–10. "The *Messenger* wants to explain the reason why Negroes can stop lynching in the South . . . All mobs act on the principle of pessimism. One hundred to fifteen thousand men usually take part in lynching one Negro, with the Negro handcuffed and arrested, unable to defend himself." Cited in H. Aptheker (ed), 1973. *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States: From The emergence of the NAACP to the Beginning of the New Deal, 1910–1932*. New York: Citadel Press.
 42. During the early part of the twentieth century anti-lynching legislation was introduced at least three times into the U.S. Senate. On each occasion, Southern Senators used the filibuster to avoid passing it. See Jonsson, 2005.
 43. Arthur Ashe, 1993. *Days of Grace*. New York: Knopf. (Magic Johnson, like Wilt Chamberlain, gave a number in regards to his sexual conquests.

- Ashe notes that Magic, in relation to Chamberlain, is “almost monkish, with a mere 2,500 partners” (p. 238).
44. See the excellent text *Breaking Through: The Making of Minority Executives in Corporate America* (1999) by Harvard Professors David Thomas and John Gabarro that explores many of the problems African Americans have in trying to excel in American society through legitimate routes of opportunities. Most of which are closed even at this point in time.
 45. A good example comes from the recent National Football League “rookie symposium” wherein rookies to professional football are taught how to behave off the playing field. Approximately a month after the symposium was held, On July 2, Rodney Wright, a Buffalo Bills rookie, would be arrested on felony hit-and-run charges. See endnote above.
 46. See Smith and Berry (2000) for an analysis of African American athletes and crime. In recent years several charges of murder have been levied against African American athletes. The most famous case was beyond a doubt that of former professional football player O.J. Simpson. But in 2000/2001 Ray Lewis of the Baltimore Ravens was arrested and charged for murder that took place at the Cobalt Lounge in Atlanta after he attended SuperBowl XXXIV (he pleaded guilty to a lesser crime of obstructing justice). Then there is Rae Carruth of the Carolina Panthers who was charged in the shooting death of a girlfriend (Cherica Adams) who later gave birth to Carruth’s son on her deathbed. Carruth is now in prison serving a sentence of 18 to 24 years. Carlton Dotson a student athlete at Baylor was charged with the death of teammate Patrick Dennehy. Dotson was sentenced to 35 years in prison.
 47. Sociologist William J. Wilson made these views well known in his text *The Truly Disadvantaged*. As Wilson points out in his widely read and cited book, some African Americans (mainly young males) exhibit a behavior that typifies the meaning of *underclass*. Although definitions vary widely on the use of the term underclass, we have adopted the following definition whenever we use the term: “Underclass is to mean a group of people who live in near isolation away from the mainstream; underclass is a group of people who have low to intermittent contact with the wage labor force. This intermittent contact is buttressed by (a) nonparticipation in the labor force and/or (b) welfare receipt and dependence on social agencies for the essentials for survival, e.g., food, shelter and clothing. There will also be the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Underclass also means that the group has a high incidence of deviance, thus increasing as the social isolation grows resulting in the deep concentration of poverty.”

Although this definition is not intended to be definitive and we are not addressing any of the many issues that have come forth in the debates about the underclass and even the use of the term itself, we can support the notion that life chances are shaped early in one’s life. That is to suggest that the Horatio Alger stories are mythical as we do not often rise from impoverished beginnings in America to take on a life of plenty.

References

- Adelman, R. (2001). Beyond the ghetto: The black middle class and neighborhood attainment. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University at Albany, State University of New York.
- Anderson, E. (1990). *Streetwise: Race, class, and change in an urban community*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Aptheker, H. (1973). *A documentary history of the Negro people in the United States: From the emergence of the NAACP to the beginning of the New Deal, 1910–1932*. New York: Citadel Press.
- Ashe, A. (1993). *Days of grace*. Knopf: New York.
- Benedict, J. (2004). *Out of bounds: Inside the NBA's culture of rape, violence, and crime*. NY: HarperCollins
- Benedict, J., & Yaeger, D. (1998). *Pros and cons: The criminals who play in the NFL*. New York: Warner Books.
- Bogle, D. (1994). *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, & Bucks*. New York: Continuum Publishing Company.
- Boyd, T., & Baker, A. (1997). *Out of bounds*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Chamberlain, W. (1991). *A view from above*. New York: Villard Books.
- Collins, P.H. (2004). *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Copeland, L. (2001). NBA star testifies in mob trial. *USA Today*, July 24, p. 3a.
- Cose, E. (2002). *The envy of the world: On being a black man in America*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Crowder, K.D., & Tolnay, S.E. (2000). A new marriage squeeze for black women: The role of racial intermarriage by black men. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62(3), 792–801.
- Curry, T. (1991). Fraternal bonding in the locker room: Pro-Feminist analysis of talk about competition and women. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 8, 119–135.
- Davis, A. (1983). Rape, racism and the myth of the black rapist. Chapter 13 in *Women, Race, and Class*. New York: Vintage Books.
- DeParle, J. (1990). What to call the poorest of the poor. *The New York Times*, August 26, p. 2e.
- “Dotson sentenced to 35 years for murder former Baylor player shot ex-teammate Dennehy to death.” June 22, 2005. MSNBC report. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7765582/>
- Eitzen, D., Stanley D., & Sage, G.H. (2003). *Sociology of North American Sport*. 7th Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishers.
- Entine, J. (2001). Why race matters in sports. In http://www.jonentine.com/reviews/AOL_Why_Race_Matters.htm (April 25, 2001)
- Fine, G.A. (1987). *With the boys: Little League Baseball and preadolescent culture*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Frazier, F.E. (1932). *The Negro family in Chicago*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Glassner, B. (2000). *The culture of fear: Why Americans are afraid of the wrong things*. NY: Basic Books.
- Hattery, A., & Smith, E. (2006). Athletes, role-models, and criminals: What do we make of this tripartite mess? In Brian Lapman (ed.), *Sports in our schools: A critique*.
- Hill, S. (2005). *Black intimacies: A gender perspective on families and relationships*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishes.
- Hoberman, J. (1997). *Darwin's athletes*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Hochschild, J. (1995). *Facing up to the American dream*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Johnston, J.H. (1970). *Race relations in Virginia & miscegenation in the south, 1776-1860*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Jonsson, P. (2005). Deep South's response to a lynching apology: The Senate's gesture fits a larger pattern of attempts at reckoning—but to many, it comes too late. *The Christian Science Monitor*. June 15, 2005. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0615/p03s01-ussc.html>
- Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage inequalities*. Perrin Paperback Books.
- Lefkowitz, B. (1997). Our guys. In *Sports Illustrated*, July 23, pp. 83–98.
- Lemann, N. (1986). Origins of the underclass Parts I & II. In *Atlantic Monthly*. June and July
- Martin, T.-A. (1975). *Bad nigger! The national impact of Jack Johnson*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press.
- Merton, R.K. (1936). The unanticipated consequences of social action. *American Sociological Review* 1, 894–904.
- Messner, M. (2002). *Taking the field: Women, men, and sports*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Moynihan, D.P. (1966). *The Negro family: The case for national action*. Office of Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor: Washington, D.C.
- Nelson, T. S. (2002). *For love of country: Confronting rape and sexual harassment in the U.S. military*. New York: Haworth Books.
- Ortiz, S. (2001). *When sport heroes stumble: Stress and coping responses to extramarital relationships among wives of professional athletes*. Paper read at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Anaheim, CA, August 18.
- Patterson, O. (1999). *Rituals of blood: Consequences of slavery in two American centuries*. New York: Civitas.
- Pomerantz, G. (2005). *Wilt, 1962*. New York: Crown Books.
- Rodman, D. (1996). *Bad as I wanna be*. New York: Delacorte Press.
- Sabo, D. (1985). Sport, patriarchy, and male identity: New questions about men and sport. *Arena Review* 9, 1–30.
- Sabo, D. (1992). Pigskin, patriarchy, and pain. p. 158–161, in M. Kimmel & M. Messner (ed.). *Men's Lives*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Sabo, D., Melnick, M., & Vanfossen, B. (1992). Educational effects of interscholastic athletic participation on African-Americans and Hispanic youth. *Adolescence* 27, 295–308.

- Sailes, G.A. (1998). *African Americans in sport*. Transaction Press: New Brunswick, NJ.
- Schur, E. (1984). *Labeling women deviant: Gender, stigma, and social control*. McGraw-Hill Publishers: New York.
- Seattle Times*. (1993). Risky Business—Magic Johnson's lesson does not connect in NBA. January 30. Saturday, Final Edition, P. A11.
- Smith, E. (1999). Race matters in the National Basketball Association. *Marquette Sports Law Journal* 9(2), 239–252.
- Smith, E. (2000). There was no golden age of sport for African American athletes. *Society Magazine*, March, pp. 45–48.
- Smith, E. (2004). The African American Student Athlete. Pp. 121–145 in Charles Ross (ed.), *Race and sport: The struggle for equality on and off the field*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- Smith, E. (2006). *Race, sport, and the American dream*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Smith, E., & Berry, B. (2000). Race, sport, and crime: The misrepresentation of African Americans in team sports and crime. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17(2), 171–197.
- Steeh, C., Bobo, L., Krysan, M., & Schuman, H. (1998). *Racial attitudes in America: trends and interpretations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Stevenson, R. (1991). Magic Johnson ends his career, saying he has AIDS infection. *The New York Times*, November 8, 1991, Page 1, Column 2.
- Thomas, D., & Gabarro, J. (1999). *Breaking through: The making of minority executives in corporate America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Thomas, W.I., & Thomas, D.S. (1928). *The child in America*. New York: Knopf.
- Wahl, G., & Wertheim, J. (1998). *Paternity*. In *Sports Illustrated*. May 4, (63–71).
- Waters, W. (1993). Challenged to change: Perspectives of abusive men involved in wife abuse prevention programs. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Syracuse University.
- Wiggins, D. (1997). *Glory bound: Black athletes in white America*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Wilson, W.J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wilson, W.J. (1990). Studying inner-city social dislocations: The challenge of public agenda research. *American Sociological Review* 56:1–14.

Copyright of *Sexuality & Culture* is the property of Transaction Publishers and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.