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AFRICAN AMERICAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACHES AT  
DIVISION I FBS SCHOOLS:  
A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON TURNING POINTS

by

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B.S. University of Florida, 2001  
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education  
in the Department of Child, Family and Community Sciences  
in the College of Education and Human Performance  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term  
2015

Major Professor: Rosa Cintrón

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation was centered on how the theory ‘turning points’ explained African American coaches ascension to Head Football Coach at a NCAA Division I FBS school. This work (1) identified traits and characteristics coaches felt they needed in order to become a head coach and (2) described the significant events and people (turning points) in their lives that have influenced their career.

This study employed a Constant Comparative method in which participants answered interview questions designed for them to elaborate on their educational and athletic careers, and those events and people who were major influences in their careers. Commonalities and discords from participant responses resulted in the discovery of five major themes. The themes identified were: Faith, Family, Graduation from college and participation in sport, Joining professional associations, and Previous coaches/administrators worked for/under.

The identification and explanation of specific turning points suggest a blueprint for African American assistant coaches aspiring to become a head coach while also providing opportunities for current athletic administrators to increase their attempts at expanding their own networks to include more African Americans as strong candidates for potential open positions for Head Football Coach.

I dedicate this project to my late mother Rosa Ann Condry Rivers. You taught me the importance of education and instilled in me that knowledge is power. Your thirst for and acquisition of knowledge has always been a motivation for me. Thank you for always protecting my family, and me and for making this project happy. I wish you were here to celebrate with us. I love you always. 8/31/55-11/20/94

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To my committee members, Dr. Owens, the King of Logic. Thank you for subconsciously (or not) making me think of the academy, and athletics' place in it, from a

different perspective. Prior to joining this program, I had a pretty clear vision of the relationship between athletics and academics. Boy was I wrong. I thank you for showing me the light, and helping me to shape a more realistic viewpoint of all facets of higher education. And I thank you for talking me off the ledge (unbeknownst to you) a few times! To Dr. Duke, your background in coaching and hearing you speak about why you love coaching was one of the catalysts in my study. I thank you for your expertise in coaching, leadership, and motivation and for your participation on my committee. The turning points in your career that you have communicated were definitely factored in to foundation of my study. Dr. Harrison, it has been absolutely fantastic having you on my committee. Even before I began this journey, you have been a fantastic mentor for me. Thank you for always being there for me to bounce ideas off of. Thank you for sharing your passion and expertise in sports administration with me has been tremendous in helping me to develop as a future sports administrator. I will always appreciate you and the different networks that you continue to expose me to.

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this program, you inspired me to be better, and encouraged me to continue to be different. Being different led to the creation and completion of this document. A good dissertation may be a done dissertation. But a great dissertation is one that the author can relate to. A great dissertation is one that the author can put himself into the situations and scenarios that his subjects are in. A great dissertation is one that is meaningful to him, not just because he completed it. You made me write a dissertation that made me get very personal with myself on many occasions. You made me write a dissertation that made me self-reflect...the same thing that I asked my study participants to do. You continued to challenge me, even until the end. You made me write a great dissertation. And I am so thankful for that. You took a sports guy by nature and nurtured him into becoming a higher education scholar. Thank you for your unwavering support. Thank you for the extra effort and attention that you gave me to help me achieve this goal of mine. Thank you for inspiring me. Thank you for believing in me.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

FBS	Football Bowl Subdivision
FCS	Football Championship Subdivision
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association



## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The initial section of this chapter presents a general background and a statement of the problem: the lack of information on and knowledge of turning points and the career trajectories of African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools. The second area frames the significance and purpose of this study. The following two sections outline the conceptual framework for this study and the research questions for the study. The final two sections give a definition of terms used frequently in this study followed by a brief summary of the introductory chapter.

### **General Background of the Problem**

Since Willie Jeffries became the first African American head football coach at a predominantly White institution in 1979, there have been approximately 566 head football coaching vacancies at NCAA Division I-FBS colleges and universities (Rittenberg, 2012). Of those vacancies, 7.9% of those positions went to African American coaches. Table 1 shows the historical timeline of African American head coaches hired at Division I-FBS football programs in the NCAA (Lapchick, Anjorin, & Nickerson, 2012). At the end of each football season, some teams fail to live up to the standards of athletic directors, university presidents, boosters, and fans. Thus, football coaches resign, retire, or have their employment contracts terminated. As the turnover in football coaches continues—30 NCAA Division I-FBS coaches retired, resigned, or were fired in 2012 (Figure 1)—African American coaches are largely denied the opportunity to become head coaches (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010).

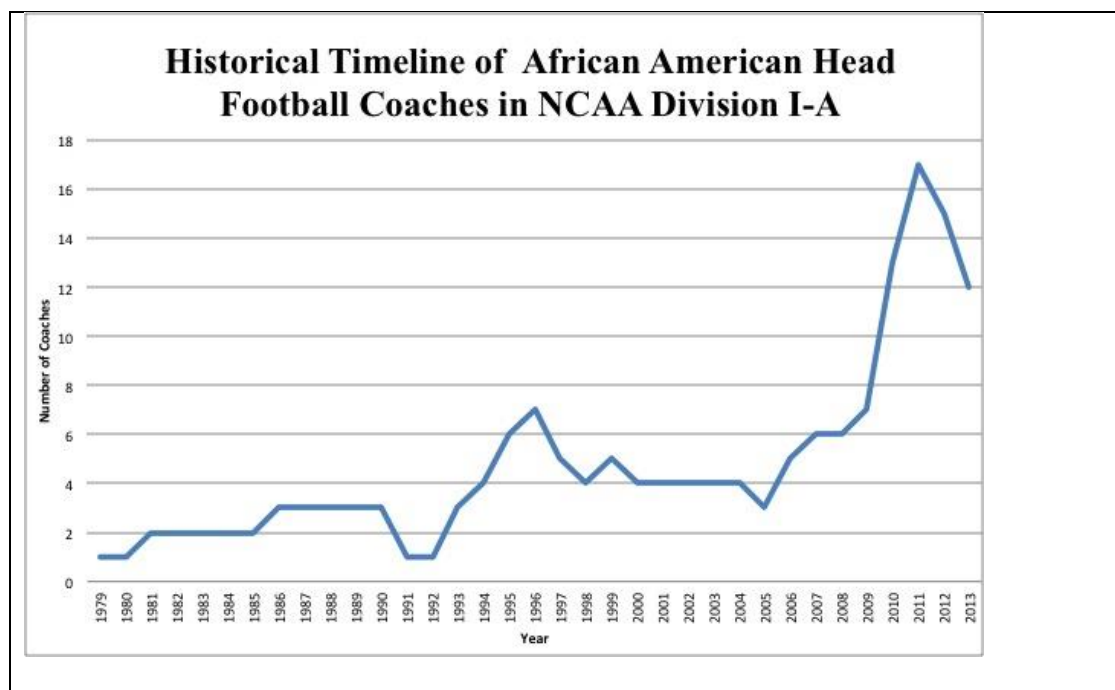


Figure 1: Historical timeline of African American head coaches. Created by T. Rivers, 2014.

In 2012, only 2 of the 30 vacant positions were filled by African American coaches (Adelson, 2012; Lewis, 2013), and four of the 20 vacant head coaching opportunities in 2013 went to African Americans (Appendix 1). Considering college football is a sport in which 54% of the players are Black or minority, the underrepresentation of African American head coaches (12 out of 128 Football Bowl Subdivision schools) corroborates research concerning access discrimination among African American head coaches (Lewis, 2013). This underrepresentation persists even though African American athletes have similar, and perhaps greater, aspirations to enter the coaching profession that White athletes (Cunningham & Singer, 2010). This study will explore turning points of African American coaches as well as the occupational socialization (or lack thereof) for African American coaches in their profession.

Table 1  
2012-2013 FBS Head Coaching Changes

Name	School	Reason For Change
John L. Smith	Arkansas	Fired
Gene Chizik	Auburn	Fired
Frank Spaziani	Boston College	Fired
Jeff Tedford	California	Fired
Jon Embree	Colorado	Fired
Mario Cristobal	Florida International	Fired
Robb Akey	Idaho	Fired
Joker Phillips	Kentucky	Fired
Tom O'Brien	NC State	Fired
Danny Hope	Purdue	Fired
Skip Holtz	South Florida	Fired
Ellis Johnson	Southern Mississippi	Fired
Derek Dooley	Tennessee	Fired
Bill Cubit	Western Michigan	Fired
Gus Malzahn	Arkansas State	Resigned
Butch Jones	Cincinnati	Resigned
Darrell Hazell	Kent State	Resigned
Sonny Dykes	Louisiana Tech	Resigned
DeWayne Walker	New Mexico State	Resigned
Dave Dorean	Northern Illinois	Resigned
Chip Kelly	Oregon	Resigned
Mike MacIntyre	San Jose State	Resigned
Doug Marrone	Syracuse	Resigned
Steve Addazio	Temple	Resigned
Tommy Tuberville	Texas Tech	Resigned
Gary Anderson	Utah State	Resigned
Willie Taggart	Western Kentucky	Resigned
Bret Bielema	Wisconsin	Resigned
Chris Ault	Nevada	Retired
Mike Price	Texas El Paso	Retired

### Statement and Significance of the Problem

Since the Jeffries hire in 1979, only 46 of the vacant 566 head coaching positions have gone to African American coaches. In 2005, two-thirds of the African American coaches in NCAA Division I-FBS could be watched in one football game: the UCLA-Washington game. Tyrone Willingham was the head football coach for the University of Washington, and Karl

Dorrell led the UCLA Bruins (Adelson, 2012). Since that game in 2005, there has been an increase of over 400% in the amount of African American head football coaches (Lapchick, 2010a). This increase has been a result of position coaches being promoted to coordinators and coordinators being promoted to head coaches. Despite the recent increase, there has been little research studying turning points in the careers and career trajectories of African American head football coaches at Division-I FBS schools in the NCAA.

American colleges and universities traditionally have relished significant latitude in consummating their missions. While there is no single model for producing a good football team, freedom to determine who shall coach has been restricted in a number of places, and come under attack in others. Achieving diversity in college football coaching does not require quotas. Nor does achieving diversity in the coaching ranks warrant admission of ineligible applicants. Achieving diversity does require that athletic programs make a concerted effort to build salubrious and diverse hiring pools from which to cull coaches, something that has been lacking (Day, 2012).

With the prestige and salary (Coaches Hot Seat, 2014; Van Riper, 2006) that comes with being the head football coach at a predominantly White institution, holding that position makes a signal to society about who is valued. While there are protocols for ascending to the top of other professions (i.e., law enforcement officers taking appropriate promotion examinations), there is no specific or clear protocol for ascending to the position of head football coach at a Division I FBS school. With over 13,000 football student athletes participating on the highest levels of intercollegiate football, examining the career trajectory of their coaches, who are often mentors, provides insight into student athletes if they ever choose coaching as a career (Crowly, 2006).

Coaching trees are graphical depictions of the former assistant coaches of a certain head coach that went on and became a head coach. The coaching tree can also show the next generations of head coaches at each layer. Coaching trees, specifically for Division I FBS coaches, can be useful to track the philosophical influence and trace the lineage of a coach back to several other coaches (Appendix 2). As recently as 2011, all 32 coaches in the NFL could be traced back to three prominent head coaching legends: Bill Walsh, Bill Parcells, and Vince Lombardi. While the lineage of African American head coaches can be traced, the offspring produced by African American head coaches is limited. Working for specific coaches or being part of a particular coaching tree has led to more hires for Whites than it has for African Americans.

Few have argued through the years that the lack of cultural diversity within college football has resulted from an over-reliance on social networks not available to all (Mirabito, 2012; Smith, 2008). These social networks often referred to as the good old boy network describe social and business connections among people who have known each other for a long time (Brooks & Althouse, 1993). Within these networks, White coaches have been continuously given opportunities to lead Division I-FBS schools whereas African American coaches, despite similar credentials, are denied those same opportunities (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010; Associated Press, 2004; Bozeman & Fay, 2013; Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Brooks & Althouse, 1993; Shropshire, 1996). Lapchick (2012a) laments that despite his 30 plus years of working on college campuses, it is discouraging that the hiring practices of collegiate athletic organizations are clearly behind professional levels. According to The Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sports (TIDES), the National Football League has received a higher grade than the National Collegiate Athletic Association member schools on racial hiring practices for the past 6

years. The Rooney Rule, which the NFL established in 2002 as a method to increase the number of African Americans in general manager and head coach positions, has been instrumental in more minorities receiving opportunities to lead professional football teams (Solow, Solow, & Walker, 2010). Since its inception in 2002, the NFL went from 6% of its coaches being African American to a high of 22% (2009) of the league's coaches being African American (Moore, 2012).

For assistant coaches with aspirations of becoming a head football coach, networking with other coaches in positions to assist or aid with career advancement is crucial. However, the kind of networks expound why there are coaches who are more successful than others in securing new positions and promotions. Same-race relations provide easy access to 'old boy' networks for White males, which facilitate ingress into high caliber positions (Day & McDonald, 2010). Similarly, same-race ties do not help in the ingress of disadvantaged groups because they do not connect minorities to these high caliber positions. Most White individuals have bigger influences, more opportunities, and higher salaries than African American individuals and networks. White networks are associated with more promotions, more mobility, and better outcomes (Ford, 2010).

### **Conceptual Framework**

Previous research identified employment barriers that constricted the prospects for African Americans to be promoted to the position of head football coach. These barriers are based in the theories of human and social capital, glass ceiling, stacking or channeling, and attribution theory (Brooks, Althouse, & Tucker, 1996). For this study, identifying and assessing turning points, specifically during the occupational socialization stage, will be used to explore

career trajectories and any cultural and social barriers African American head football coaches may or may not face at Division I FBS schools.

While there have been many theories used to try and explain the underrepresentation of African American head football coaches at predominately White institutions, none have explored turning points and the effect that they may have had on a coach and his career. Turning points are events or experiences that influence a person's life (Bullis & Bach, 1989; Irvine, Taylor, Smith, Mee, & Chrisp, 1997; Moustakas, 1977; Strauss, 1971; Super, 1957). These experiences or events help in the formation of a person's identity. Turning points are often of crisis and challenge, times of upheaval that significantly alter the world in which a person lives (Moustakas, 1977). Turning points can be connected to a family experience, new beginnings and endings, with death and birth, and with destruction or creation (Fombrun, 1992). For the purpose of this study, examining turning points will be used to track career trajectories and the occupational socialization processes of African American head coaches at predominately White institutions.

Turning points are significant events or experiences that have been acknowledged as important influences on personal or career matters (Bullis & Bach, 1989; Harrison & McKeon, 2010; Hodkinson, Sparkes, & Hodkinson, 1996; Strauss, 1971; Super, 1957). Turning points shape, alter, or accentuate the ways in which turning point experiences simultaneously liberate or constrain (Harrison & McKeon, 2010). Turning points can have a significant effect on career development and are features of many careers and personal lives (Brawley, 1998; Ducat, 2002; Hancock, 2009). Turning points, according to Hodkinson, Sparkes, and Hodkinson (1996):

At a turning point, which may be of a short duration or extend over a period of time, and which may be recognized at the time or only with hindsight, a person goes through a transformation of identity (p. 142).

Turning points, specifically those involving socialization in the workplace, identify the career trajectories and occupational socialization patterns of African American head coaches at predominately White institutions. Most research attempting to explore the underrepresentation of African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I-FBS institutions has focused on the quantities of available head coaching positions and the number of employment opportunities given to African Americans from that same pool of available positions (Adelson, 2012; Lapchick et al., 2012; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005). However, few have investigated what turning points African American head football coaches have faced in employment trajectory and occupational mobility. There has also been a lack of investigation into what characteristics African American head football coaches feel they needed to possess in order to become a head football coach at a NCAA Division I-FBS school.

Hancock (2009) and Hodkinson et al. (1996) note that there are three distinct types of turning points: structural, such as leaving school; incidents that impact a person yet the person has no control over them, such as a parent dying; and decisions within a person's control, such as which university to attend (Figure 2). Ducat (2002) adds that these three types of turning points have the ability to cause technological change, deregulation, and social recklessness that are at times contradictory and often anti-efficient in corporate environments.

The presence and timing of structural turning points are determined by structural patterns of life course that are built in to the society where the person lives (Fombrun, 1992). Fixed ages for retirement and graduation from secondary schooling are examples of structured turning points, which are determined by society (Avent, 1994; Hodkinson et al., 1996). In England and Wales, students are forced to consider their futures at the age of 16. Those students have to



decide whether to pursue full-time education and/or what type of occupation they seek to find. An important aspect of structural turning points is that they occur at predictable times in a person's life (Hodkinson et al., 1996).

The second turning point occurs when a person encounters external factors outside of their control, which in turn makes a person reconsider their future (Hodkinson et al., 1996; Super, 1957). Often, these turning points are unexpected and can be very traumatic. Bereavement, physical injury, and changes in a person's working conditions are examples of external factor turning points. The key component of external factor turning points is the fact that they are completely unexpected (Brawley, 1998; Super, 1957).

The final category of turning points is the self-initiated turning points. These types of turning points are the first-hand decisions that a person makes concerning his or her future (Irvine et al., 1997). Examples include choosing to get married, retire early, quit an occupation, or have a child. While these are all self-initiated turning points, they can also fall into other categories of turning points. If a student fails to complete a competency exam, a career change might be forced upon the person through a combination of structural turning points (he may not be entitled to any more specific training and be forced to change professions) and forced external circumstances (no certification forces the employer to fire the individual). While turning points are not always predictable in effect or timing, they can be independent or inter-related (Avent, 1994; Hodkinson et al., 1996; Strauss, 1971).

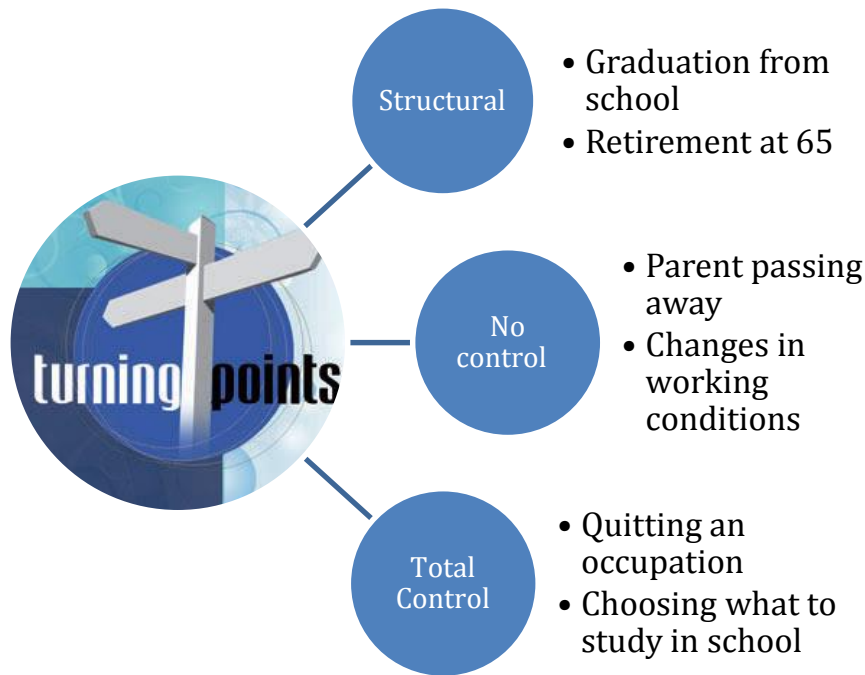


Figure 2: Turning points illustration. Created by T. Rivers, 2014.

Chance or coincidence on career choice is often ignored (Hancock, 2009). Super (1957) noted that coincidences or accidents can affect careers. Life incidents, although not major, are also turning points (Moustakas, 1977). Life incidents can be categorized into three distinct categories: small, medium, and large (Avent, 1994; Hancock, 2009). The general effects, frequency, and identity of those life incidents fall into small, medium, and large categories as well. For small life incidents, the effects are short in duration and minor and may only be noticed with hindsight and are a more frequent and standard part of life. The identity of the individual is not affected much with small life incidents. For medium life incidents, the effects are perceptible at the time of the incident, are less frequent, and tend to be a normal part of the individual's life. The identity of the individual is usually affected in some way. For large life incidents, the effects are always long term, are major, and are devastatingly visible (Irvine et al.,

1997; Moustakas, 1977). Large life incidents tend to be infrequent and may not affect everyone's life the same way (Clarke, 2012; Douglass, 2008; Super, 1957).

Identifying turning points and reviewing how to negotiate these points (before, during, and after) as well as in relation to the context in which the transition takes place forms a basis for analysis (Harrison & McKeon, 2010). Turning point analysis is a method in which researchers may "listen" to participants' point of view (Bullis & Bach, 1989). Retrospective interview techniques are often most effective and used in order to identify turning point experiences (Gabor, 2011).

### **Research Questions**

The following research question was designed to address the research objectives and will be examined to identify and assess turning points and their relation to the career trajectories of African American head football coaches working in athletic departments at Division I FBS schools.

1. How do hHead fFootball coaches make sense of their career turning points at Division I FBS schools?

### **Positionality**

Being employed in college athletics for over 15 years has afforded me the opportunity to meet and work with hundreds of football coaches on the NFL, NCAA FBS, and NCAA FCS levels. When watching coaching changes yearly, often, it frustrates me to see many of the same coaches being hired to head coaching positions. These coaches have had little success in some of their previous stints, but I always felt like there was a prevailing issue of recycling the same coaches. Incongruously, it did not seem that African American coaches were receiving multiple

head coaching opportunities. This led me to question the merits of the African American coaches who applied. Media personalities were often raving about the brilliance of the head coaches on the sidelines. Were they not qualified enough? Were they lacking educationally? Was their knowledge of the game inferior to their White counterparts? Did they not have the right social connections? Were African Americans not brilliant enough to coach a football team? Did they not attend the right college?

Growing up in Tallahassee, Florida, I had the unique opportunity to watch a Division I FBS and Division I FCS school compete. I was always fascinated at the high level in which Florida State University (the Division I FBS school) performed athletically and the amazing resources it had available. Conversely, Florida A & M University (the Division I FCS school) had outdated facilities and infrastructure, and their athletic performances left a lot to be desired. Florida A & M's football teams were led by a few different African American head coaches whereas Florida State was led by one White male head coach. I was inspired watching Florida State legendary head football coach Bobby Bowden lead his team, and I knew that if given the same opportunity at a Division I FBS school, an African American coach could lead his team to prominence and performance at a high level as well.

As a person who believes very strongly in the principles of meritocracy, it seemed to me that meritocracy was ignored and that hiring decisions and the career trajectories were all grounded under the "who you know, not what you know" mentality. My perception is that White coaches with less prestigious academic and athletic backgrounds and with less coaching experience were being hired and promoted ahead of African American coaches with more playing and coaching experience, and higher and more prestigious academic and playing credentials. Do I feel that my career trajectory in athletic administration has been hindered or

delayed? Absolutely. I feel that my race and the lack of access to certain networks despite my academic and professional pedigree have delayed my ascension. Certain networks within collegiate sports allow for introductions to the “power brokers” and decision makers in athletic organizations. Those introductions are significant events that often lead to job offers. Therefore, my interest in this study is to identify and understand the turning points African American head coaches experienced during their ascension to the position of hHead fFootball cCoach and find commonalities and/or discords.

### **Definition of Terms**

For use in this study, the following terms are defined as such:

1. *NCAA*: The National Collegiate Athletic Association is the official governing body of college athletics. The NCAA implements policies and procedures with the intent of protecting student-athletes athletically and emphasizing academic excellence (NCAA, 2013).

2. *BCA*: The Black Coaches and Administrators is an organization whose primary purpose is to foster the growth and development of ethnic minorities at all levels of sports both nationally and internationally (BCA, 2011).

3. *Predominantly White institutions*: (PWI) is the term used to describe colleges or universities in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment.

4. *Athletic organizations*: Athletic organizations are defined as the 128 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) teams in NCAA Division I-FBS as of December 2013.

5. *Power Conferences*: Power conferences are defined as the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Southeastern Conference (SEC), Big 12 Conference, Big 10

Conference, and the Pacific 12 Conference (PAC 12), who received automatic berths to the Bowl Championship Series football games at the end of the season. The 72 schools in these conferences have significantly higher operating budgets than the other 48 NCAA Division I-FBS schools (Lapchick, Hoff, & Kaiser, 2011).

6. *Employment trajectory*: The process or events in which a coach moves within an organization or organizations for his or her career path and development.

7. *Athletic leader*: Athletic leaders are defined as the head football coach, the athletic director, or senior-level administrators within an athletic organization.

8. *Head football coach or head coach*: The head football coach is the leader of the football team. He is in charge of all players, coaches, staff, and coordinators. He is responsible for each and every aspect of the team including its performance on and off the playing field.

9. *Offensive coordinator*: Offensive coordinator is a member of the coaching staff who is usually responsible for developing the offensive game plan and calling the plays on offense. He is generally in charge of all offensive players and assistant coaches.

10. *Defensive coordinator*: Defensive coordinator is a member of the coaching staff who is usually responsible for developing the defensive game plan and calling the plays on defense. He is generally in charge of all defensive players and assistant coaches.

11. *TIDES*: The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport serves as a comprehensive resource for issues related to gender and race in amateur, collegiate and professional sports. The Institute publishes annual studies on hiring practices in coaching and sport management in college and professional sports (Lapchick, Elkins, & Matthew, 2008).

12. *FBS*: Football Bowl Subdivision. Member schools of the NCAA that participate in bowl games belong to the Football Bowl Subdivision

13. *FCS*: Football Championship Subdivision. Member schools of the NCAA that participate in the NCAA-run football championship belong to the Football Championship Subdivision.

### **Summary**

Despite the efforts of the NCAA and other organizations in tracking diversity by numbers, member institutions in the NCAA have failed to significantly increase diversity in the head coaching ranks (Cooper, 2012; Matthews, 2013). Identifying and addressing turning points and the paucity of research on turning points and career trajectories of African American head football coaches at Division I FBS schools has the potential benefit of creating a minority leadership structure reflective of the population it leads (Lapchick et al., 2012).

Chapter Two includes a discussion of peer-reviewed literature and provides the foundational structure on which this study is based. Chapter Two provides an examination on employment opportunities and identifies development and common characteristics of head football coaches. Chapter Two also presents a review of socialization as most professional turning points occur during the occupational socialization phase. Finally, Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of hiring practices in the NCAA, in higher education, in the NFL, and the impact that social networks have on hiring decisions.

Chapter Three introduces the methodology used to identify and assess the turning points and career trajectories of African American head football coaches at Division I FBS schools. The first sections of the methodology section include the qualitative tradition used in the study,

reliability and credibility in qualitative research, and the paradigm as it relates to the research question. The target population, instrument development, interview protocol, data collection procedures, and data analysis will be presented in the next portion of the section. The methodology section concludes with the explanation of the thematic analysis, protection of subjects, and originality score.



## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

Chapter Two provides a review of the materials including articles published in professional publications, dissertations, peer-reviewed scholarly journals, and data and information presented at professional seminars and conferences. The literature review includes: (a) an overview of general characteristics and traits of NCAA Division I-FBS head football coaches, (b) career paths of NCAA Division I-FBS coaches, (c) a summary of identity and identity development in African Americans and African American athletes, (d) a summary of socialization within professions, and (e) hiring practices within collegiate and professional athletic organizations.

### **Characteristics of Head Football Coaches**

While the career paths of head football coaches at Division I-FBS institutions in the NCAA vary significantly, the general characteristics and traits of head football coaches are remarkably similar (Van Horn, 2008). The characteristics of a head football coach are directly related to that coach's identity, and conversely, how he or she leads their team. According to Pete Carroll, former head football coach at the University of Southern California, a college football coach should be tough, but fair, and reasonable (Voight, 2006). "Football is a tough game" Carroll explained, "and football players are generally tough people" (Voight, 2006, p. 326). Most tough people respect people that they perceive to be as tough or tougher than they are. If players feel their coach is lax on discipline and does not correctly have command and control of the team, then they likely will not respect him (Voight, 2006). Carroll believed these three traits will develop discipline, structure, and challenge—all characteristics needed to field a

successful football team. Carroll believed the five most common characteristics of football coaches include:

1. Be a transformational leader and motivator.
2. Be a good communicator.
3. Have a firm knowledge of the game.
4. Being tough, but fair.
5. Be open-minded.

These traits, according to Anderson (1993), are inherent in every football coach.

Although coaches are ultimately evaluated in terms of wins and losses, it is imperative for coaches to invest in their athletes in order to be successful. While the NCAA does not have a voice in deciding whom a university can hire or fire, it does have a constitution that each of its member schools, and members by association (football coaches), have to follow. Any time changes or amendments to the NCAA rules are made, the members agree to adopt said legislation and conduct their programs in accordance to them (Fuller, 2009). Being compliant with the rules set forth in the constitution are also a responsibility of a head football coach. For a football coach, being able to lead his team is the number one priority. Although some teams incorporate the “there is no ‘I’ in team” philosophy, Anderson (1993) found that all teams need one person to give them direction. Being a good communicator is unquestionably the most important attribute for a head football coach (Schwarz, 2010). Coaches should not only be proficient at communicating to players effectively on the playing surfaces, but they need to be able to talk to them off of it. Coaches have to realize the different groups of people with whom they interact. Communication style, language, content, and tone should be age appropriate and reflective of the player’s abilities. There should be effective communication between employees,

fellow staff, parents, and members of the media as well. Another critical facet of communication involves body language (if any) being used by coaches. Coaches should display body language that reflects the message(s) they are trying to convey.

Football coaches employ different tactics in order to implement their systems and procedures. Often, changes are forced upon football coaches depending on the players and staff with whom they interact. It is necessary that coaches adjust their approach and attitudes in order to effectively implement their policies and procedures to their team (Gucciard, Gordon, Dimmock, & Mallett, 2009; Maitland & Gervis, 2010). Coaches should not dismiss new or different concepts because of familiarity with their own concepts (Schwarz, 2010). Human beings are not perfect—coaches included. The better coaches realize this and embrace adjustments. Therefore, it is important that coaches be open minded in order to enhance their own knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Football coaches have many different roles and responsibilities that they must learn, specifically the technical aspects of the game. Football strategies are complex and many take years of study to understand. Football coaches must also be cognizant of NCAA rules and regulations and comply with them as well (Fuller, 2009). More experienced and superior coaches are more equipped to handle and are more knowledgeable of the basics than novice coaches. These coaches are also able to modify and progress a player's performance in the least invasive manner. Any material provided by a more knowledgeable coach will also be accurate and more comprehensive than that of a less experienced coach.

Handling conflicts, determining disciplinary measures, and persuading players and other coaches to invest time, energy, and effort are critical for head football coaches to lead their teams (Anderson, 1993). Doing so while maintaining the deference of team members, fellow coaches,

and staff makes it easier to maintain a high morale and facilitate cohesion among team members. Effective coaches also display leadership by leading by example. If a coach expects his players to remain positive, then he or she needs to display a positive attitude as well. Successful coaches also must motivate and inspire players. Getting players to believe in themselves and their abilities comes easier for some coaches than it does for others. Motivational techniques are not limited to speeches and pep talks. They can include competitions and challenges that are new and fun for their players. However, a coach who effectively motivates his players will make sure they understand that they control their own energy and efficiency.

### **Leadership**

Given the relationship between higher education and college football, it would be easy to argue that college football head coaches are not just leaders of their respective teams but also university leaders (Soucie, 1994; Washington, Boal, & Davis, 2008). Kruse (2013) defined leadership as a process of social influence, a process that maximizes the efforts and actions of others, towards the achievement of a goal. Leaders and leadership is defined into two different categories: transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985; Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). Superior leadership performance, or transformational leadership, occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when leaders generate awareness and overall acceptance of the mission of the group, and when they inspire employees to set aside their own personal goals for the good of the group (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino, 1990). Most transformational leaders tend to have outstanding relationships with both their supervisors and their employees. Although transformational leaders are often characterized as being a “players coach,” coaches who are perceived to be transformational leaders generally inspire players to make more of a contribution to the team

(Lewin et al., 1939).

Charisma and idealized influence in a transformational coach provides players with vision and a clear sense of vision. It also helps to instill pride, respect, and trust; all qualities needed in order to be a truly effective coach. Players want coaches to be able to identify with them, which helps to increase the level of trust and belief in the coach (Maitland & Gervis, 2010). It also positively influences confidence the player has in his or her own ability and in the ability of the coach. The influences of football coaches provide an inspiration and excitement in their players with the notion that great things on and off the playing surface will be accomplished. Transformational coaches tend to pay closer attention to the similarities and differences among their players and adjust their coaching tactics accordingly (Waldman et al., 1990). This is not to say that transformational coaches play favorites; instead, they guide players who may require extra mentoring and coaching to mature. Finally, the last trait of transformational coaches is to intellectually stimulate their players. Coaches who stimulate their players intellectually are able to demonstrate to their fellow coaches and players innovative ways of looking at situations and providing them direction to present rational solutions to these situations (Burns & Our Lady of the Lake University, 1978).

### **Communication**

Communication is the act of expressing (or transmitting) information, cognizance, mental conceptions, and feelings, as well as understanding what is expressed by others (Burton & Raedeke, 2008). The communication process involves both sending and receiving messages and can take many forms. Effective communication is vital to all human interactions. Verbal communication is the verbalized word, while nonverbal communication involves actions, body position, and gestures. Communication can occur in one-on-one or group settings and in edited

formats (e.g., printed materials) or in visual formats (e.g., pictures, videos, and observational learning). It involves not only the content of a message but withal its emotional impact or the effect the message has on the person receiving it (Burton & Raedeke, 2008).

What is verbally expressed conventionally carries with it an emotional message. Some coaches can convey anger with a softly verbalized word or inject humor into the most aggressive looking gestures. College coaches interact and communicate with each of their players, fellow coaches, staff members, media, and boosters in different fashions. Therefore, communication by college coaches needs to be one of the most diverse and talented parts of their personalities. Whether it be delivering messages concerning game strategy, imparting discipline, or teaching, coaches must mix their delivery methods in order to effectively convey their message (Gucciardi et al., 2009; Jablin, 1982). Because one of the responsibilities of being a football coach at a Division I-FBS school is fundraising, effective communication by coaches helps to procure funds for their respective athletic departments (Sanderson, 2010).

### **Knowledge of the Game**

Knowledge is necessary so that football coaches can do their job effectively. Beyond knowing the correct terminology and basic fundamentals, having a firm knowledge of the game makes it easier to implement strategies and styles, as well as make necessary changes. Having a firm knowledge of the game also enables a coach to manipulate different aspects of his team to maximize efficiency within rules. Some coaches' knowledge can be broad and extensive, while others may just have a specialist area or topic that they excel within (Voight, 2006). The fundamentals for their knowledge are the same; the ability to highlight successful performers while identifying and rectifying any mistakes. The more experienced and superior the coach will be better at the basics than novice coaches, and be able to correct and improve a players

performance in the least intrusive manner (Fuller, 2009). The information provided will also be accurate and more comprehensive (as to why that course of action is required) than that of a less experienced coach.

### **Discipline**

Discipline is defined by the training or conditions imposed for the improvement of physical powers, managing self-control, and learning new skills (Nicolau, 1999). Discipline takes an authoritative approach where athletes learn alternatives to their behaviors. Coaches employ discipline to teach players new skills and how to conduct themselves appropriately. Structure gives a sense of security for players as it helps to manage expectations for players. These coaches were not afraid to reprimand players when needed (McInnaly, 1998). However, when they “got on” players they had the ability to convey to the players that they were attacking their performance or behavior and not their personalities (Gould, Lauer, Collins, & Chung, 2002). Discipline by football coaches requires them to implement and enforce rules to all players in a universal and unbiased way. Loss of respect and lack of discipline can often result in biased or discriminatory practices by coaches toward different members of their teams (Gould et al., 2002).

### **Social Responsibilities**

One of the important facets in the job responsibility of head football coaches is meeting with the media. Often, a list of media obligations is outlined in a coach’s contract. In addition to holding news conferences after each game, head football coaches in the NCAA and NFL must be available on a regular basis to the media that regularly covers their team during each practice week of the season (Burton, 2010). For teams in the NFL, the head coaches must be available at

least 4 days during each practice week from training camp through the end of the season. While some NCAA FBS schools do limit the media responsibilities of assistant coaches (the university of Alabama does not allow their assistant coaches to speak with the media), many do give assistant coaches or coordinators the responsibility of meeting with the media periodically (Rankin, 2014).

Fundraising and donor cultivation are also the responsibility of most college football coaches (Parry, 1959). As head football coaches are usually the most visible members of the athletic department, procuring money to fund the athletic department is an important responsibility. Parry (1959) stated that while coaches cannot openly solicit clients, he or she must constantly keep the name of the institution and his or her face consistently in front of the public. Whether it be for promoting the university, recruiting, or fundraising, formal speaking for head football coaches is increasingly important. As the budgets for intercollegiate athletic programs has skyrocketed, football coaches are called on more often to aid in fundraising.

Social media is a huge part of the intercollegiate athletics culture. For college football coaches without an active presence on social media, they are falling behind in their recruiting efforts. As most of the top prospects are on some form of social media, it has become increasingly important for coaches to be active participants in that area. Top college athletic programs and coaches are mastering the art of engagement of fans by creatively using social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Maddox, 2013). In today's age of social media, the top coaches in intercollegiate athletics are using photo and video content as new ways to excite followers, communicate with donors and the fan base, and increasingly, contact recruits. Many head football coaches have to educate themselves on how to use Facebook, Twitter, and Skype. Information about potential recruits is usually readily available



just by looking at the recruit's online profile. Using Skype (online videoconferencing), coaches are able to contact recruits and have face-to-face communication hundreds and even thousands of miles apart (Hooker, 2011).

Twitter has become one of the most popular recruiting tools in college athletics, and it is permissible for coaches to tweet as long as they are not contacting individual prospective student athletes (Carvell, 2012; Hooker, 2011, Maddox, 2013; Robinson, 2013). Beyond just using social media outlets to correspond with recruits, fans, and donors, coaches also use social media to monitor activity of student athletes. Notifications can be set up to be sent when third parties contact athletes, when a specific key word is used (such as the school name, nickname, etc.), or a notification can be sent to the coach whenever a player makes a comment on a social media site.

The characteristics listed above are critical in the development of identity of football coaches. Complete identity in a football coach includes a demonstration of his or her morals, ethics, standards, characteristics, and from their work. These identifying characteristics are central to how coaches run their teams from the inside and how their teams are perceived to be from those outside the organization. How a coach or his team is perceived has a direct effect on career mobility and upward trajectory (Kamphoff & Gill, 2008).

### **Career Paths of NCAA Division I-FBS Coaches**

Becoming a football coach, particularly a head football coach, is not the same as applying for an entry-level position. While there is no general blueprint for becoming a head football coach at a Division I-FBS college or university in the NCAA, the minimum requirement is a bachelor's degree (Fitzgerald & Sagaria, 1994). While many schools may prefer to hire a coach with a Master's degree, it is not necessary. Most head coaches, current and aspiring, believe that

the most important factor in landing a job at the college level is your network of contacts (Voight, 2006). While the minimum education requirements may be exceeded by many coaches, seldom do coaches care how much you know about a particular defense or offense as much as they know how hard you will work, how well you will fit in, and if they can trust you (Hughes & Wright, 2003).

Many coaches learn the technical and practical experiences of football through their playing careers. From participating in high school football, to college football, and even into the professional ranks, many coaches learned schemes, strategies, and techniques from participation (Butcher, 2012; Hughes & Wright, 2003). Participation in sport on the collegiate and professional levels mandates that a player watch countless hours of film and practice drills repetitively. This repetitiveness and film study affords the player with on-the-job training if he ever aspired to become a football coach.

The official foray into collegiate coaching usually begins with accepting a graduate assistant position at a college or university. The roles of graduate assistants usually vary from institution to institution based on the makeup of each staff, what needs to be done, and the size of the budget. The roles of graduate assistants often mirror those of entry-level employees at larger companies. From running copies of papers, to getting coffee for the assistant coaches, to breaking down game film and putting together statistical reports, graduate assistants usually do the tasks the full-time assistant coaches and the head coach do not take the time to do.

The flexibility and humility gained by graduate assistants from doing menial, and often tedious, tasks teaches respect for the profession and learning to do the little things necessary in order for the organization to run smoothly. Some organizations do present opportunities for graduate assistants to practice their skills by coaching certain positions (the scout team) and

leading meetings. These practical applications lead to bigger roles, more responsibilities, and ultimately (and hopefully), a full-time role as a position coach.

The next step in becoming a football coach at a NCAA Division I-FBS institution usually is by becoming a position coach. Position coaches are more than likely assigned to coach a position in which that coach played in his career. For example, when a head coach chooses a running backs coach, the likelihood that he will choose someone who has played running back will be chosen to fill the position as opposed to someone who played linebacker is higher (Bozeman & Fay, 2013). However, the most common preceding step in becoming a head football coach is to be a defensive or offensive coordinator. Some position coaches (linebackers, quarterbacks) are more likely and expected to be in demand for those coordinator positions. It is thought that those position coaches have a higher football aptitude and are more prepared to be a coordinator (Bozeman & Fay, 2013).

Finally, some coaches have become head football coaches at NCAA Division I-FBS institutions after leaving the coaching ranks of the National Football League. Since 1980, 30 coaches who have served as head coaches in the NFL have subsequently accepted a head coach position with a college football team at NCAA Division I-FBS institutions (Harrison & Bukstein, 2014). Zero non-White individuals have transitioned from a former NFL head coach to a college football head coach since 1980.

### **Stacking**

Stacking is defined as placing athletes in certain positions based on racial stereotypes (Ball, 1973). Researchers have found that in football, White males (who are commonly thought of as a smarter and more intelligent male than an African American male) are pushed to play the positions of quarterback, center, and middle linebacker (Kahn, 1992; Singer & Cunningham,

2011; Smith, 2008; Suggs, 2000; Van Horn, 2008; Woodward, 2004). These positions are frequently associated with requiring quick decision-making and strong intellectual skills. Conversely, most African Americans players are encouraged to play the skill positions of running back, wide receiver, and defensive back, as those positions are commonly thought of as reactionary positions that require less thought but greater athleticism (Kahn, 1992; Woodward, 2004).

Stacking is also prevalent in coaching on the collegiate and professional football level. There is a propensity for African American coaches to be placed into non-central coaching positions (rRunning bBacks cCoach, wWide rReceivers cCoach, dDefensive bBacks cCoach) and Wwhite coaches placed into central coaching positions (qQuarterbacks cCoach, oOffensive lLine cCoach, lLinebackers cCoach) (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010; Anderson, 1993; Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Finch, McDowell, & Sagas, 2010). This establishes a correlation between the race and playing position of an athlete and the race and playing position of a coach: coaches playing central or non-central positions were more likely to coach that same central or non-central position (Anderson, 1993; Bimper & Harrison, 2012).

Current research on stacking in the collegiate coaching profession leads credence to the notion that the coach's position on a coaching staff has an effect on his potential for mobility and ascension (Finch et al., 2010). Stacking has contributed to this matter due to the collection of networking opportunities allowed to student-athletes participating in central and non-central positions. Social capital is accumulated through participation in central positions. Non-central position coaches are generally tasked with coaching and recruiting predominantly African American players. Non-central position coaches are also less likely to have input on formulating

the team's game plan, propagating the notion that they are less intelligent than coaches coaching central positions.

Brooks and Althouse (2000) contend that the scarcity of Black head football coaches in college football results from the following issues:

1. African Americans do not play the "central positions."
2. Black coaches lack access to existing head coach recruiting networks and socialization opportunities.
3. Discrimination by school presidents and athletic directors.

Brooks and Althouse (1993) noted that in order for Black coaches to obtain a position on a Division I FBS football staff, having played on the collegiate level was of greater significance than his aptitude for the game of football, his prowess on the recruiting trail, or how good or bad of a personality the coach has, all deemed necessary characteristics of successful football coaches. A majority of these coaches were assigned non-central positions to lead: coaching the running backs, wide receivers, and defensive backs (Banks, 1979).

### **Salary Ranges of NCAA Division I-FBS Football Coaches**

As recently as 6 years ago, there were 42 head football coaches at NCAA Division I-FBS schools who received more than \$1 million in annual compensation (Lapchick et al., 2011). At the beginning of the 2013 football season, there were 47 head football coaches at NCAA Division I-FBS schools who received more than \$2 million in annual compensation (Brady, Berkowitz, & Upton, 2012). Table 2 illustrates the total annual compensation ranges for head football coaches for the 2014 football season, which range from \$375,000 (Dan Enos at Central Michigan University) to \$7.3 million (Nick Saban at Alabama) (Coaches Hot Seat, 2014). For

the 13 African American head football coaches, the salaries range from Paul Haynes's \$450,000 yearly compensation to Charlie Strong's \$5 million annual salary.

Table 2  
Coaches' Salaries (Coaches Hot Seat, 2014)

#	Coach Name	School	Compensation
1	Nick Saban	Alabama	\$7,300,000
2	Bob Stoops	Oklahoma	\$5,250,000
3	*Charlie Strong	Texas	\$5,000,000
4	*Kevin Sumlin	Texas A&M	\$5,000,000
5	Urban Meyer	Ohio State	\$4,800,000
6	Les Miles	LSU	\$4,500,000
7	Brady Hoke	Michigan	\$4,300,000
8	Art Briles	Baylor	\$4,250,000
9	Gus Malzahn	Auburn	\$4,000,000
10	Kirk Ferentz	Iowa	\$4,000,000
11	*James Franklin	Penn State	\$4,000,000
12	Brian Kelly	Notre Dame	\$4,000,000
13	Steve Spurrier	South Carolina	\$4,000,000
14	Jimbo Fisher	Florida State	\$4,000,000
15	Steve Sarkisian	USC	\$3,750,000
16	Mark Dantonio	Michigan State	\$3,700,000
17	Mike Gundy	Oklahoma State	\$3,500,000
18	Jim Mora	UCLA	\$3,500,000
19	Gary Patterson	TCU	\$3,500,000
20	Bobby Petrino	Louisville	\$3,500,000
21	Chris Petersen	Washington	\$3,400,000
22	Mark Richt	Georgia	\$3,400,000
23	Dabo Swinney	Clemson	\$3,300,000
24	Gary Pinkel	Missouri	\$3,250,000
25	Butch Jones	Tennessee	\$3,200,000
26	Tommy Tuberville	Cincinnati	\$3,200,000
27	Dan Mullen	Mississippi State	\$3,200,000
28	Hugh Freeze	Mississippi	\$3,200,000
29	Bo Pelini	Nebraska	\$3,100,000
30	Bret Bielema	Arkansas	\$3,000,000
31	Bill Snyder	Kansas State	\$3,000,000
32	Will Muschamp	Florida	\$3,000,000
33	*David Shaw	Stanford	\$3,000,000
34	Dana Holgorsen	West Virginia	\$2,800,000
35	Mike Leach	Washington State	\$2,750,000
36	Paul Johnson	Georgia Tech	\$2,700,000
37	Gary Anderson	Wisconsin	\$2,700,000
38	Frank Beamer	Virginia Tech	\$2,600,000
39	Charlie Weis	Kansas	\$2,500,000
40	Todd Graham	Arizona State	\$2,500,000
41	Sonny Dykes	California	\$2,500,000
42	Mike MacIntyre	Colorado	\$2,500,000
43	Kyle Whittingham	Utah	\$2,500,000

#	Coach Name	School	Compensation
44	*Mike London	Virginia	\$2,400,000
45	Pat Fitzgerald	Northwestern	\$2,400,000
46	*Darrell Hazell	Purdue	\$2,300,000
47	Al Golden	Miami	\$2,300,000
48	*Derek Mason	Vanderbilt	\$2,250,000
49	Dave Clawson	Wake Forest	\$2,250,000
50	Mark Stoops	Kentucky	\$2,250,000
51	Randy Edsall	Maryland	\$2,250,000
52	David Cutcliffe	Duke	\$2,250,000
53	Kliff Kingsbury	Texas Tech	\$2,200,000
54	June Jones	SMU	\$2,100,000
55	Jerry Kill	Minnesota	\$2,100,000
56	Larry Fedora	North Carolina	\$2,000,000
57	Rich Rodriguez	Arizona	\$2,000,000
58	George O'Leary	UCF	\$2,000,000
59	Bronco Mendenhall	BYU	\$2,000,000
60	*Willie Taggart	South Florida	\$2,000,000
61	Mark Helfrich	Oregon	\$2,000,000
62	Dave Doeren	NC State	\$2,000,000
63	Paul Chryst	Pitt	\$1,800,000
64	Tim Beckman	Illinois	\$1,800,000
65	Paul Rhoads	Iowa State	\$1,800,000
66	Steve Addazio	Boston College	\$1,750,000
67	Ken Niumatalolo	Navy	\$1,700,000
68	Mike Riley	Oregon State	\$1,600,000
69	Jim McElwain	Colorado State	\$1,500,000
70	Tim DeRuyter	Fresno State	\$1,500,000
71	Bob Diaco	Connecticut	\$1,500,000
72	Kevin Wilson	Indiana	\$1,400,000
73	Scott Shafer	Syracuse	\$1,400,000
74	Matt Rhule	Temple	\$1,300,000
75	*Ruffin McNeill	East Carolina	\$1,250,000
76	Bryan Harsin	Boise State	\$1,200,000
77	*Curtis Johnson	Tulane	\$1,200,000
78	Craig Bohl	Wyoming	\$1,000,000
79	Tony Levine	Houston	\$1,000,000
80	Troy Calhoun	Air Force	\$1,000,000
81	Justin Fuente	Memphis	\$975,000
82	Kyle Flood	Rutgers	\$900,000
83	Rocky Long	San Diego State	\$850,000
84	Mark Hudspeth	La. Lafayette	\$825,000
85	Todd Monken	Southern Miss	\$800,000
86	Bob Davie	New Mexico	\$800,000
87	Rick Stockstill	Middle Tennessee	\$750,000
88	Bobby Hauck	UNLV	\$725,000
89	Dan McCarney	North Texas	\$725,000
90	Bill Blankenship	Tulsa	\$700,000
91	Blake Anderson	Arkansas State	\$700,000
92	Norm Chow	Hawaii	\$700,000
93	Jeff Monken	Army	\$700,000

#	Coach Name	School	Compensation
94	David Bailiff	Rice	\$700,000
95	Doc Holliday	Marshall	\$650,000
96	Skip Holtz	La. Tech	\$600,000
97	Ron Turner	Fla. International	\$600,000
98	Jeff Brohm	Western Kentucky	\$600,000
99	Matt Wells	Utah State	\$600,000
100	Charlie Patridge	Florida Atlantic	\$600,000
101	Bill Clark	UAB	\$600,000
102	Frank Solich	Ohio	\$550,000
103	Brian Pollian	Nevada	\$550,000
104	Ron Caragher	San Jose State	\$550,000
105	Sean Kugler	UTEP	\$550,000
106	Chuck Martin	Miami, Ohio	\$550,000
107	*Trent Miles	Georgia State	\$550,000
108	Rod Carey	Northern Illinois	\$525,000
109	P. J. Fleck	W. Michigan	\$500,000
110	Doug Martin	New Mexico State	\$500,000
111	Bobby Wilder	Old Dominion	\$500,000
112	Larry Blakeney	Troy	\$500,000
113	Mark Whipple	Massachusetts	\$500,000
114	*Dino Babers	Bowling Green	\$500,000
115	Matt Campbell	Toledo	\$500,000
116	Willie Fritz	Georgia Southern	\$500,000
117	Scott Satterfield	Appalachian State	\$500,000
118	*Paul Haynes	Kent State	\$450,000
119	Pete Lembo	Ball State	\$450,000
120	Chris Creighton	Eastern Michigan	\$450,000
121	Terry Bowden	Akron	\$425,000
122	Paul Petrino	Idaho	\$425,000
123	Joey Jones	South Alabama	\$425,000
124	Jeff Quinn	Buffalo	\$400,000
125	Dennis Franchione	Texas State	\$400,000
126	Todd Berry	La. Monroe	\$400,000
127	Larry Coker	Texas - San Antonio	\$400,000
128	Dan Enos	Central Michigan	\$375,000

\*Denotes African American Coaches

The average annual salary for head football coaches at Division I-FBS schools (including the four schools that moved up to the Football Bowl Subdivision this season) is \$1.60 million, up 11% over last season—and more than 70% since 2006, when *USA Today* first began tracking head football coaches' compensation (Brady et al., 2012). Coaches' pay increases has even outpaced the pay of corporate executives, who have drawn the ire of Congress and the public



because of their increasingly staggering compensation packages often paid for by tax dollars (Greene, 2012). Between 2007 and 2011, CEO pay, which included salary, stock options, and bonus pay, increased an average of 23%. According to Brady et al. (2012), coaches' pay increased over 44% during that same period.

Investments made by boosters provide colleges and universities with capital to fund athletic programs and salaries. Many of the boosters are well-heeled professionals who are accustomed to having influence in the hiring, firing, and salary decisions of employees. Naturally, the boosters expect to be influential when they fork over sizable donations to their favorite schools and teams, as their donations augment the salaries of coaches (Hill, 2004). Many athletic directors and presidents feel that boosters do not feel comfortable investing large sums of money into African American head football coaches. In order to appease their investors, hiring, firing, and determining salary are reflective of that thought (Hill, 2004).

### **Identities**

Identity has been defined as a set of meanings that classifies who an individual is when he or she is occupying a given role in society or being a member in a group or specifies a set of characteristics that identify him or her as an individual (Burke & Stets, 2009). Identity has also been denoted as being a part of an individual's self-concept, which derives from his or her knowledge of membership in a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Liyan, 2005). Some use identity to refer to the culture of people. Others use identity to refer to common identification within a social category. Still finally, some use the term identity with reference to parts of a self composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in society (Lambkin, 2010).

Cultivation of professional identity is one of the most important functions that occur during the occupational socialization phase (Kram, 1985). To this point, research has shown that professional identity is developed through the exploration of multiple selves, relationships, or organizations (Kram, 1996). These environments allow individual professional identities to serve as an integral part in shaping their careers, as opposed to traditional organizational settings that often have boundaries restricting professional growth (Dobrow & Higgins, 2005).

Previous research categorized identity as five separate and mutually exclusive forms of identity: Individual, Social, Collective, Multiple, and Stigmatized (Browne, 2013). However, the intent of this study is to speak to the development of multiple identities within a single realm. Racial identity, sport identity, and coaching identity are all cultivated during the occupational socialization phase. It is during this phase that a majority of turning points occur and changes in career trajectories occur (Kram, 1985).

Identity is an important construct when explaining human development. For football coaches, life experiences directly affect their coaching practices and procedures, thus affecting their professional identities (Butcher, 2012; Duncan, 2012, Hindmarch, 2008). Duncan (2012) found that coaches with deep Christian views viewed their team as significant individuals because they were created in God's image and not just as people with who they have a business or contractual relationships. Their beliefs impacted the way that they interacted and coached their teams in terms of tone of voice, philosophical approach, and actual verbiage used towards players. Coaches also believed that events that took place throughout practices and competition were a result of divine intervention (Duncan, 2012). Ellinger and Bostrom (2002) posit that a coach's behavior and identity is strongly dependent upon their assumptions, mentality, and past experiences.

Hindmarch (2008) felt that her effectiveness and philosophy as a coach was a direct result of her personal and professional experiences. Her identity as an individual and subsequent career and personal decisions were all based on the turning points in her life. While the socialization process does not follow a clear pattern of growth, identity is developed from turning points in an individual's life (Bullis & Bach, 1989).

### **Black Identity/Formation**

As Black people commenced to demand respect, recognition, and to be socially accepted during the 1960s, many Whites responded with considerable anxiety and discomfort to the sudden interruptions of the status quo (Bimper & Harrison, 2012; Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990; Hutchinson, 1994). Widespread public protests and demonstrations made it arduous for Whites, as well as Blacks to continue to ignore the injustices that characterized Black lives. American society was not accustomed to witnessing Black assertion and leadership on large scales (Helms, 1990). However, most Whites likened the assertion by Blacks to aggression and other militant behavior. This led to creating the general impression that Blacks were unpredictable, and such unpredictability could lead to violence and hostility in all aspects of society, further justifying why Blacks should not be leaders (Solomon, 1999).

Cross (1971) presented a four-stage model of racial identity development where each stage was characterized by self-concept issues concerning race. Cross (1971) believed that each stage had different implications for a person's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. The first stage, Preencounter, is the idealization of the dominant traditional White worldview and denigration of a Black worldview (Cross, 1971). White culture and Whiteness are viewed as superior to Black culture and Blackness in the United States. The Black person who adopts the Preencounter perspective has to find some way to separate himself or herself from the undervalued group in

order to minimize discomfort that comes when his or her cognitions are incompatible. Examples of this include a person believing that his or her racial group is responsible for, or causes, its own outcomes. Whites are presumed to hold advantaged status due to exemplary effort and Blacks are presumed to occupy disadvantaged status because they have not displayed equal effort. The individual in the Preencounter stage defines being exceptional or deficient based on how well or poorly they fit into and portray characteristics of White culture (Cross, 1971).

Cross's (1971) second stage, Encounter, intimates that Blacks are bombarded with racial affronts and indignities regardless of whether or not he or she is involved in interaction with whites. At some point in their lives, it is unfeasible to repudiate the notion that Blacks cannot become an acknowledged part of the "White world." This awareness is usually concurrent with an event in which Black individuals realize that no matter how well he or she conforms to White standards, Whites will always have a perception of him or her as Black and therefore inferior. The Encounter stage is typified with individuals having two extremes of emotions. Initially, a person in the Encounter stage struggles to discover their new identity, exhibiting emotions including confusion, anxiety, depression, and anger (Bimper & Harrison, 2012). As he or she swings back and forth between the recently deserted Preencounter stage and their new phase in Black identity in the Encounter stage, those emotions turn into high self-esteem, low anxiety, and positive self-regard during the latter part of the Encounter stage.

The Immersion/Emersion stage is the third of Cross' (1971) four-stage model. During the Immersion/Emersion stage, the person immerses himself in the world of Blackness. He or she attends political meetings, seminars, and anything that focuses on Blackness. Everything of value must be Black or relevant to Blackness and the complete opposite of White or Whiteness. The immersion is a powerful and dominating sensation categorized by a developing sense of

pride by the individual into Blackness. During this stage, the White world, culture, and person are dehumanized and become biologically inferior. Individuals in the immersion stage are said to have a growing ferocity, hostility, and belligerence. Emergence is categorized by an individual's participation in and developing a positive non-stereotypic African American perspective on the world. Total acceptance of Blackness is no longer a necessity for the individual to feel self-confidence self-worth. The individual begins to separate the strengths and flaws of Black culture and being Black.

During Cross' (1971) fourth stage, Internalization, the main theme is the blending of one's personal identity with a Black ascribed identity. Individuals in this stage develop an idealistic level of expectancy toward most things "Black." Blacks become the primary reference group to which the individual belongs and relates to. As a stable Black identity is finally realized, the individual is able to use personal strength positives and a feeling of security to face the world (Bimper & Harrison, 2012). An individual in the Internalization stage rejects racism and other similar forms of oppression while concurrently reestablishing relationships with individual White associates whom merit such relationships. Blacks in the Internalization stage are also able examine Whiteness and White culture for its strengths and weaknesses.

Within each of the four stages of Cross' Racial Identity model, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive expression are proposed to differ. From the Preencounter stage in which the idealization of Whiteness and denigration of blackness are the general themes, to the Internalization stage in which racial transcendence has occurred, a vast array of emotional themes and identity components are present. While every person does not enter the developmental cycle at the same time, individuals progress (or regress) through the phases or stages throughout their lifetime.

## **Sport Identity**

Participation in sports and sport-related skills is an important aspect of life. Sport participation is also an essential factor in the growth of social acceptability and prestige. This is particularly true in African American men who often utilize sport performance as a mechanism to exhibit masculinity (Bimper & Harrison, 2012; Majors, 1990). Harrison, Sailes, Rotich, and Bimper (2011) noted that relationships between racial identity development and athletic identity development may also shield elite African American athletes from discrimination and promote the perception of a post-racial society.

Extreme levels of commitment are necessary and imperative prerequisite for participation in elite levels of coaching. Time and effort dedicated to the profession comprise a significant portion, or the majority of their social and personal identity (Harrison et al., 2011). The degree in which an athlete identifies with himself or herself is referred to as athletic identity (Vickers & Schoenstedt, 2010). Athletes with pronounced athletic identity are more likely to sacrifice peripheral activities and interests in order to narrow their focus on their athletic development (Harrison et al., 2011). While athletic identity can lead to superior athletic performance, it can also lead to increased isolation and even depression.

African American athletes are more probable to play certain skill positions (wide receiver, defensive back, running back), which plausibly affect their athletic identities on the field (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010; Anderson, 1993; Banks, 1979; Bimper & Harrison, 2012; Brooks & Althouse, 1993; Brooks & Althouse, 2000). This, in turn, affects the perceptions of African American's coaching ability as the central positions and experience requirements of being a head football coach are lacking (Bozeman & Fay, 2013; Burdman, 2002). Thus, from playing a certain position in football, the career outcome tends to mitigate African Americans'

ascension and elevation to head coach. The initial assistant coaching positions that African Americans are typically offered give a less select route to becoming a coordinator, the presumed next ladder on the coaching rung (Bozeman & Fay, 2013; Brown, 2011; Carey, 2007). The lesser the likelihood of becoming a coordinator further reduces the likelihood of obtaining a head coaching position (Figure 3).

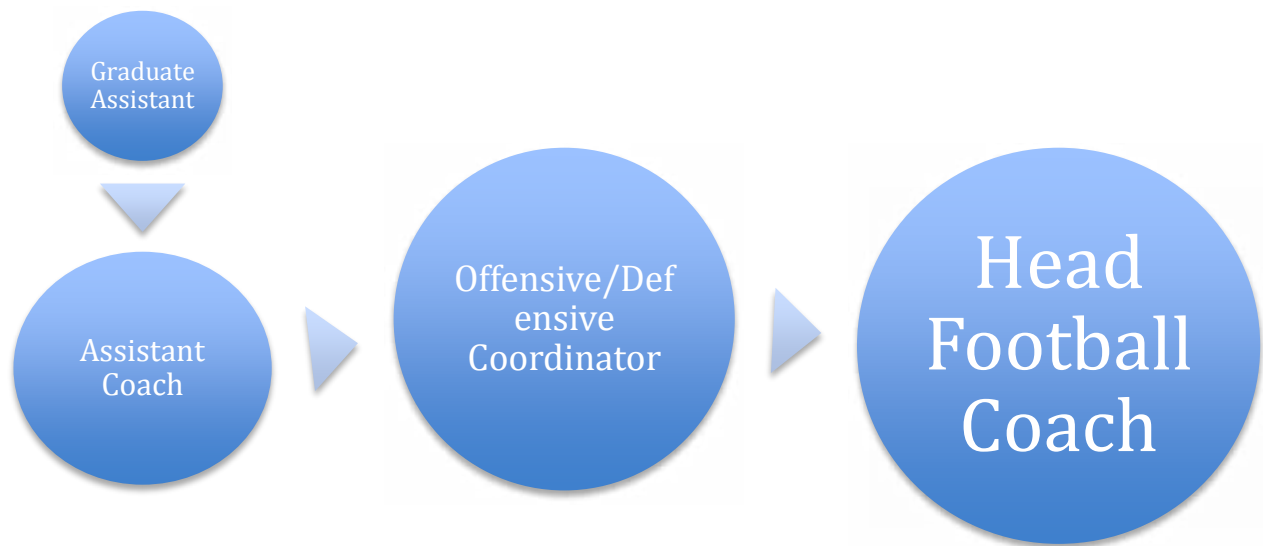


Figure 3: Traditional career trajectory of college coaches. Created by T. Rivers, 2014.

### **Coaching Identity Formation**

Wenger (1998) considered identity formation as a way in which individuals confer on how learning transforms them, including the changing individuality while learning within a community of practice. Communities of practice are groups of individuals that learn from each other in specific activities via mutual engagement. For football coaches, their community involves other coaches who engage in joint activities and share information regarding to coaching football (Vickers & Schoenstedt, 2010). These include discussing specific plays, formations, policies and procedures, and overall structure of their respective programs. It also includes interacting and sharing experiences, stories, and problematic situations and how the

individual coach handled it. The individual coach may alter his or her disposition or temperament dependent upon the expectations and dispositions of other community members (Wenger, 1998). In order to maintain full access to the information and privileges provided within that coaching community, individual coaches must manage their image in relation to other members within the same community (Vickers & Schoenstedt, 2010).

Coaches require interactions and conversations with other coaches in their community as an important ingredient for learning. From benchmarking to learning new teaching strategies, as these experiences occur, knowledge and deeper understanding of the particular sport develops. Coaches further their knowledge and behaviors and adjust how they interact with other coaches as they develop through different stages of their careers. Each coach is unique, and coaches modify their identity to specific situations by adopting multiple personalities based on observations and experiences (Vickers & Schoenstedt, 2010).

### **Occupational Socialization**

Occupational socialization process is the acquisition of knowledge, values, and attitudes of a professional subculture (Cunningham, Sagas, & Ashley, 2001; Siegel, Blank, & Rigsby, 1991). In a similar manner, Sage (1973) defined socialization as the process by which people learn the norms, patterns, values, behaviors, and what others expect of them in an occupation. This allows a person to successfully and efficiently work within a given environment. Within a given work environment lies the organizational culture. Culture is defined as values, attitudes, and beliefs of shared by a specific collection of people (Taormina, 2009). Cultures within athletic organizations have hierarchical structures with visibly defined roles and responsibilities, and are structured to operate in an orderly and efficient way. Cultures can be results oriented,



enterprising, or creative, all which makes each organizational culture different. Culture reproduces itself through the socialization of new members entering the group or organization (Taormina, 2009). Therefore, socialization is viewed as the principal method in which individuals become a part of, ingratiated in, or connected to the organization (Hart & Adams, 1986; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Weidman, 2006). Therefore, the objective of socialization, specifically occupational socialization, is to facilitate the individual becoming a part of or fitting into the culture within the organization. To be effective in the environment and new role, a person has to be socialized through training and interpersonal experiences. Sage (1973) also noted that coaching socialization stemmed from amateur coaches interacting and emulating the actions and mannerisms of older coaches, therefore learning the skills and values deemed essential for the coaching profession (Cunningham et al., 2001).

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) argued that there is a culture that contains both a formal and informal way of doing things beyond a specific job or position. They define organizational socialization as the method in which an individual learns the ropes of an organization. While this process is not linear or simple, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) contend that organizational socialization is complex, and different for each individual, organization, and setting (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001).

Expanding on the work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979), Weidman et al. (2001) defined socialization as the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to make them more or less effective members of society. Relating socialization to graduate and professional students, Weidman et al. (2001) noted that graduate and professional students are faced with the often-difficult challenge of identifying with their roles as students while concurrently learning to identify with the roles of their future profession

and professional culture. Weidman et al. (2001) believed that a four-stage model of professional student socialization was indispensable: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal. With the progression of each stage, a student becomes more entrenched in the academic culture and takes on incrementing levels of responsibility (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

### **Stages of Socialization**

In the anticipatory stage of socialization, the novice becomes aware of the attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive expectations held for a role incumbent before being accepted into the group (Elias, 2006; Sage, 1973; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Weidman et al., 2001). The anticipatory stage includes the preparation and recruiting phases as the individual enters the occupation or program with stereotypes and preconceived expectations. The individual identifies with a group to which he does not yet belong but which he proposes to join (Sage, 1973).

Although individuals enter an occupation or program with their own preconceived notions or ideas, those notions or ideas are frequently adjusted based on a more concrete understanding of what needs to be known and done to be successful. During the anticipatory stage, the individual must make a commitment to the occupation or program.

Information about anticipated roles in an organization is often derived from the mass media (published news stories, articles about the position) and through personal observation and interaction with current role incumbents (Weidman et al., 2001). The knowledge about the anticipated role helps to socialize the individual to the extent that accurate information about the role is presented. Novices in a role tend to learn professional jargon, vocabulary, normative behaviors, and acceptable emotions from professors, supervisors, and older peers during the anticipatory stage of socialization (Stein, 1992).

The formal stage of socialization inducts individuals into the organization or program. The formal stage of socialization of individuals into an organization and occupational roles is accomplished through professional education, apprenticeship, or in-service training (Hart, 1986; Weidman et al., 2001). Professional education and apprenticeship programs impart knowledge and skills necessary for the occupation, and communicate values that are essential for assimilation into the cultural climate of the organization. As an apprentice, the individual observes the activities of role incumbents and peers and is able to learn role expectations. During this stage of socialization, current role incumbents, faculty, and older peers clearly state and document the expectations for the novice individual. Expectations are observed and imitated through role taking, role rehearsal, and becoming familiar faces within the organization or program (Sage, 1973; Stein, 1992; Weidman et al., 2001).

The formal stage of socialization stage allows for novices to a task or occupation to become veterans in that same task or occupation who have some experience yet who still need specific information on normal standards, rewards, and sanctions (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Weidman et al., 2001). Novices establish their professional goals and seek positive feedback and modification in their continued development and growth. Increasing levels of responsibility and privilege are given to the novice as he becomes more proficient in his occupation and increases in maturity (Sage, 1973; Stein, 1992). This stage becomes validation for novices as they successfully complete formal examinations, and it signals their way towards program completion and professional goals (Weidman et al., 2001). However, in order to be successful, incumbents cannot remain in the formal stage but must continue the socialization process into the informal stage.

The informal stage of socialization is the stage in which the individual learns informal role expectations. These role expectations are conveyed to the individual through interactions with peers and others who are incumbents in the role. Behavioral clues, acceptable and non-acceptable behavior, and other nuances within the organization are transmitted to the individual. While most of this information comes from the faculty or management in an organization, the individuals tend to develop their own cultural and social support systems as anxieties and triumphs are communicated to their peers and mentors in this stage of socialization (Sage, 1973; Weidman et al., 2001). While social anxiety associated with fitting in and adapting to organizational culture may be evident in some individuals, the individual who acclimates to the organizational culture more quickly tends to have a longer social and emotional cohesiveness and connectedness with other members of the organization (Sage, 1973).

### **Core Elements of Socialization**

Knowledge acquisition is identified as a core element of socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Knowledge acquisition is the learning of accurate specific skills and information critical to a certain discipline or profession (Lyles & Salk, 1996). They must also determine the caliber to which they are able to efficaciously meet the demands of their professional role. During the first few months on a job, new employees focus on gathering new information, learning about the tasks necessary for the job, and clarifying their role within an organization (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Acquiring new knowledge results from organizational members sharing experiences and prior learning. Coworkers help new employees integrate various pieces of information in the work setting and help communicate subtle values, norms, or expectations that may not be explicitly stated by supervisors or mentors (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

Within socialization, new employees often reference three non-interpersonal sources for acclimation: official organizational literature, experimentation with new behaviors, and observation (Ashford, 1986; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Official organization literature can come in the form of a handbook and usually include information about organizational policies, procedures, and specific duties for the employee. Experimenting with new behaviors can be learned through rewards and/or punishments from new efforts at problem solving or experimenting with new behaviors (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Lastly, new employees can acquire knowledge, values, and accepted behaviors by observing others within the organization performing relevant tasks.

Top management also plays a role in defining knowledge structures within the organizational context (Krauss, 2012; Nicholson, 1984; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Supervisors mitigate the negative effects of unmet expectations, help with assimilation, and are important for new employees' eventual success or failure. Mentors also help facilitate the adjustment for new employees by providing advice, support, and inside information. During the acquisition stage, cognizance shifts from general to concrete, and a person commences the process of developing a professional identity (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

For football coaches, learning certain skills and information concrete to their discipline and their professional role is critical. While there are a multitude of play designs, schemes, and ways in which to organize and run a football team, there are fundamental principles of football that each coach must be familiar with and also proficient. During the infancy stages of a coaching career, these patterns and behaviors are taught. Policy and procedure manuals (although they vary from coaching organization to another) outline the roles and responsibilities of each position coach. In these official organizational literature, information as detailed as dress

codes and grooming policies, recruiting areas, and accepted code of conduct are found. Conversely, this information is reiterated and reinforced by other coaches within the organization, which helps new coaches in the socialization process. Other coaches on staff actively help new coaches with the acclimation process by sharing nuances and tidbits that they have acquired as the success of the organization/football team is dependent upon the success of each individual in the organization (Occhino, Mallett, & Rynne, 2013; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Specific coaching strategies and mannerisms are developed and cultivated in meetings with other coaches, with the players they coach, and on the field in a practical manner. The positive or negative responses/reactions from the players that the new coach receives helps to shape his coaching strategy and mannerisms. Implementing new formations, schemes, and strategies also contribute to knowledge acquisition phase. Finally, observing how other coaches interact with players and coaches, teach players, and conduct themselves on and off the field aid new coaches in acquiring new information and knowledge. Observing gestures, routines, words, and actions that are common to coach contribute to forming an identity for a new coach. Coaches emerge as a member of a professional community by the cessation of this stage in socialization (Occhino et al., 2013). Understanding the responsibilities associated with this role is part one of the socialization process (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

The second core element of socialization is investment. Investment in socialization is committing something of personal value such as time, money, alternative career choices, social status, or reputation to some aspect of a professional role (Weidman et al., 2001). During this stage of socialization, commitment to a particular professional role or task comes in the form of specialized classes and learning new skills that are not transferrable to other occupations. Thus, changing professions or tasks becomes increasingly difficult. This investment in learning can

usually be quantified in terms of time and money spent. Throughout this stage of socialization, the more specialized the knowledge that is acquired creates an even greater investment (Stein, 1992).

Often within the investment stage of the socialization process of a new employee is sponsorship by that employee by an incumbent or mentor in that position. Sponsorship may create a sense of indebtedness for the new employee to the person sponsoring them, consequently creating an increased commitment and investment to the role (Weidman et al., 2001). Investment does, however, hinder upon the value placed on the investment by the new employee. If the new employee places a lower value on career, then subsequently, little concern for extended time in his or her career preparation will occur (Stein, 1992; Weidman et al., 2001).

For most new football coaches, the investment stage of socialization begins with a combination of a formal education and apprenticeship program. These programs, commonly referred to as graduate assistantships, impart knowledge and skills that are useful in coaching football, as well as helping to communicate values and expectations within the organization and profession (Hajli & Hajli, 2013). While the roles may vary from school to school based on the makeup of the staff, size of the budget, and what tasks need to be accomplished, most graduate assistant football coaches work toward a postgraduate degree while on staff. Because graduate assistants for football spend a tremendous amount of time learning the profession and organizational expectations and are paid disproportionately to the time spent, this is investment stage of occupational socialization for football coaches.

Graduate assistants learn practical experience and increase their proficiency to move into a coaching role. They are responsible for analyzing video, determining tendencies of teams, play breakdown, providing spreadsheets, and ultimately making pertinent information known to the

coaching staff (Thompson, 2013). In addition, graduate assistants help coaches formulate game plans, teach the scout team the schemes and strategies of the opposing team, and travel with the team to all home and away games. All the while, graduate assistants are students in graduate school programs that require a heavy workload. Graduate assistants are required to remain in good academic standing with the university that they are attending and cannot afford to be lax in their studies (Thompson, 2013).

Coaches become more entrenched in the professional culture, hence dedicating more time to it. As one becomes increasingly committed to his field, it becomes arduous to consider transmuting professional paths (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). At this point, mentorship of a more seasoned coach is critically paramount to the prosperity of a coach (Weidman et al. 2001). Identifying mentors avails to increment the accountability and overall commitment to the field (Krauss, 2012).

Involvement is the third core element of socialization. Involvement is the participation of the professional role or preparation for it (Weidman et al., 2001). Levels of the intensity of the involvement vary as a person progresses through their occupation and as rites of passage demand their attention (Weidman et al., 2001). This usually occurs in the forms of examinations, licensure, and practical experiences. Involvement also occurs with the participation in organizations related to the profession. Involvement with older peers and teachers also give the amateur insight into the professional ideology, motive, and attitudes of the organization and profession.

### **Socialization and Professional Organizations**

Like education, a coach more involved in his or her own vocation, the more likely he or she will be to prosper (Astin, 1984). By joining professional organizations, attending clinics and



networking events are ways that coaches can become more involved in the professional coaching community. These types of involvement lead to increased awareness of individual and prevalent issues associated with the profession while also helping to solidify a coach's identification with his professional role. For most football coaches, the most prevalent coaching organization is the American Football Coaches Association or AFCA.

The AFCA is a national organization dedicated to improving football coaches through continuing education, interaction, and networking. It provides resources for professional and personal development in the coaching profession. From high school, collegiate, international, or professional football leagues, the AFCA has over 11,000 members in the organization. The organization strives to maintain the highest standards in football and the coaching football profession (AFCA, 2013).

Conversely, the Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA) (2011) is a non-profit organization whose primary goal is to foster the growth and development of minorities in the coaching and administrative fields at all levels of sports on both the national and international level. The BCA's focus has to bring to the forefront inequities of hiring practices of coaches and administrators, as well as educating minority coaching and administrative candidates. The BCA champions itself as the preeminent voice for Blacks in sports, ranging from NCAA collegiate athletics to professional sports. With a long history of working to ensure diversity, the BCA has successfully helped to evolve the face of college and professional sports to include coaches and administrators of color (Cunningham, Bruening, & Straub, 2006; Day, 2012; Day & McDonald, 2010; Farrell, 1997; Frei, 2012; Harrison, Lapchick, & Janson, 2009; Wolverton, 2005).

Although each of the core elements can be discussed individually, the elements are all interrelated (Coleman, 1990). Acquisition of specialized knowledge, skills, or abilities

(knowledge acquisition) coupled with participation in formal preparation for the occupation (investment) denotes commitment to a profession (Stein, 1992; Weidman et al., 2001). Likewise, interaction with co-workers, peers, mentors, or supervisors (involvement) provides additional opportunities to become aware of organizational culture, values, and attitudes (knowledge acquisition). Feelings of socialization are positively cognate to commitment and other desirable work outcomes. Hart and Adams (1986) proposed that coaches with incomplete or insufficient socialization are more liable to leave the coaching vocation sooner than would other, more socialized individuals. Consequently, feelings of commitment to an occupation and the low desire to leave the profession both appear to be the likely results of professional socialization (Cunningham et al., 2001).

### **Hiring Practices**

Whether an individual is hired based on merit, social/professional connections, or being a part of a certain demographic, being incorporated into an organization is the initial stage of the occupational socialization process. As organizations go through the hiring process, a key component in the vetting process is determining whether the prospective employee will fit into the organizational culture and conform to the ideals and philosophy of the organization. Individuals who are deemed to be able to assimilate into the organizational culture quicker are given preference over those deemed to assimilate slower (Sage, 1973). The hiring practices of organizations represent stage one in the career trajectory of an individual as career ascension cannot begin without first being hired.

Blacks represented 3.6% of all persons occupying managerial positions in the United States in 1977. While that number has risen in the 40 years, many observers have commented on

the presence of an invisible barrier, or “glass ceiling”, that prevents Blacks and other minorities from advancing beyond lower or middle management positions (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Loy & Elvogue, 1970). O’Sullivan, Mugglestone, and Allison (2014) found that African American men need two or more levels education to have the same employment prospects as their White peers. While Blacks have increased access to upper tier managerial jobs, there still remains a cause for concern that Black managers may face discrimination with how they are treated. Treatment discrimination occurs when subgroup members receive fewer rewards, resources, or opportunities on the job than non-members of the subgroup (Smith, 2008). Rather than merit or achievement, discrimination is based more on their subgroup membership (Levitin, Quinn, & Staines, 1971). Treatment discrimination affects position assignments, salary, salary increases, promotions, termination, and support from supervisors. Subgroup members who encounter treatment discrimination are more likely to experience less favorable organizational experiences than their counterparts in the dominant member group (Kanter, Stein, & Stein, 1979; Levitin et. al, 1971; Lin, 1999).

Kanter et al. (1979) argued that minority members have low access to opportunity and power within organizations. Employees with restricted opportunities ultimately lower their commitment to engage in social settings within the organization. Restricted access to opportunity and power within an organization also produces a cycle of disadvantage for minority members who are unable to influence organization actions or the course of their own careers. Kanter et al. (1979) posited that treatment discrimination experienced by minority members of an organization reduces their job performance and career prospects. Fewer opportunities to enhance work-related skills, organizational socialization, and supportive relationships within an organization are a byproduct of treatment discrimination.

Greenhaus et al. (1990) identified five organizational experiences that race affected. Those were sponsorship, job discretion, acceptance, supervisory support, and career strategies. Sponsorship refers to the organizational structure that fosters career growth. Blacks are less likely than Whites to have access to these resources because potential sponsors (usually White) tend to choose mentees who have similar social backgrounds and with whom they can readily identify (Kanter et al., 1979; Portes, 1998; Scott, 1988). Discretion by a job occupant is an important indicator of an individual's potential to have power within an organization, hence affecting his or her organizational experiences. Minority members experience low levels of job discretion and influence as a result of the lesser roles within the organization (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Relationships in formal and informal social networks are also likely to influence organizational advancement and promotion. Kanter et al. (1979) suggests that minority members, as out-group members, are usually not fully accepted into the informal networks within their organization. Alienated by their non-minority peers, Black managers feel less accepted and less socialized in their organizations than White managers (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Kanter et al. (1979) posited that minorities have less supportive relationships with their immediate supervisors than their White counterparts. Supportive relationships take the form of career guidance and information and work assignments that promote professional development. An organizational climate that is supportive for managers enhances and expedites their socialization process. Career strategies can help employees reach their career goals and promote high levels of career success. However, being exposed to unfavorable treatment encourages subgroup managers to display a less active approach to the management of their careers than their White counterparts (Kanter et al., 1979). Managers who perceive the organization to be hostile and inequitable may not see the benefit of engaging in career strategy behaviors.

Black men are disproportionately excluded from supervisory authority, resulting in lower pay (Maume, 1999). In an effort to minimize encroachment into privileged positions, African American men are channeled into “racialized” jobs. This reserves the more visible and revenue producing jobs for Whites. The impact is magnified, as these jobs typically do not prepare African American executives to be a CEO, hence producing a ceiling on their advancement opportunities.

With African Americans accounting for less than 8% of all NCAA Division I-FBS head football coaching hires in the past 34 years, cultural diversity is lacking among college and university leaders (Associated Press, 2004). Sagas and Cunningham (2005) found that the institution of college football has remained relatively exclusive, permitting an overwhelming number of White males access to head coaching positions, while limiting or denying those same coaching opportunities to African American coaches (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010). Since 1982, 505 of the 566 (8.9%) open head football coach positions have gone to White males (Gaither, 2012). The pattern of continued underrepresentation of African American head football coaches in college football has led to allegations of discrimination by civic groups (Congressional Black Caucus and Black Coaches Administrators) and social scientists (Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Lapchick, 1996). However, the lack of qualified Black coaching candidates has mandates that career paths and coaching trajectories of Black head coaches be examined (Lapchick, 2010b). Discrimination, stacking, attrition, and critical race theory are examples of the theories used to explain the racial disparities and inequalities in college football hiring practices (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010). Despite statistics that show a high number of African American football players participating on the field, that has not translated into equitable

representation in positions of leadership, specifically as the head football coach (Lapchick, 2012; Shropshire, 1996).

Lapchick (1996) often describes the social institution that is sports as a microcosm and likeness of society as a whole. The disparity in lack of minority representation in Division I-FBS football coaches parallels the lack of minority representation in corporate America. As there have only ever been 13 minority chief executive officers in Fortune 500 companies, the lack of racial diversity in coaching reflects a larger demographic imbalance in America for minority leaders (Isidore, 2012). While African Americans are viewed as valuable commodities on the playing fields and lower level positions, that same value is not reflected in coaching and management positions as evidenced by the infrequency of African Americans in leadership positions (Frey & Eitzen, 1991). Because of the hundreds of minority assistant head coaches, football is one of the few occupational fields in which it is easy to set aside market supply arguments and focus on other elements that may explain inequitable minority representation at the head coach position (Bozeman & Fay, 2013; Hill, 1997). This study examines the turning points for African American head football coaches in athletic organizations at Division I FBS schools. The underrepresentation of African American coaches in Division I-FBS football is a reflection of the lower value that is placed on African Americans as leaders by society.

### **Glass Ceiling Effect**

The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) proposes that the concept of the glass ceiling refers to artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities. These barriers reflect discrimination, a deep line of demarcation between those who prosper and those who are left behind. The glass ceiling is the unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, despite their achievements or

qualifications (Committee on Energy and Commerce House of Representatives, 2007; Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). This suggests that the glass ceiling is measured as the residual difference due to race or gender after controlling for education, experience, abilities, motivation, and other job-relevant characteristics. Glass ceilings exclude from top leadership of corporations, able people of diverse backgrounds who businesses need in order to compete successfully (Maume, 1999). Prejudice against minorities and White women continue to be the single most important barrier to their advancement into the executive ranks (Morrison, 1992).

### **Hiring in Higher Education**

Most of the research pertaining to minority hiring in higher education fixates on hiring faculty members and shows a vigorous consensus that minorities perpetuate to be underrepresented in every discipline and field of higher education (Astin, 1984; Bozeman & Fay, 2013; Cunningham et al., 2001; Onwuachi-Willig, 2010; Tapia, 2010). Many arguments contend that the circumscribed prosperity of hiring minorities in higher education can be attributed to varieties of discrimination, poor mentoring of doctoral students, minorities' more constrained resources for occupationally useful convivial capital and network ties, and an insufficient number of available minorities to recruit (Bozeman & Fay, 2013; Stovall, 2005). The number of minority administrators at four-year public colleges outpaces the number of minority faculty members (Patton, 2013). Although administrators in the “pipeline” are present, most of these administrators are concentrated in the student-affairs and diversity offices. Administrators in these positions rarely ascend to senior leadership positions on campus.

The key leadership positions at NCAA Division I-FBS football schools continue to be held by a majority of White men (Clopton, 2011). Of the 238,700 people who held professional administrative jobs at colleges nationwide in 2011, 9% of those jobs (21,483) were held by

Blacks, with over 78% (186,186) of those jobs held by Whites (Patton, 2013). Of the 486 campus leadership positions at FBS schools (President, Director of Athletics, Faculty Athletics Representative, Head Football Coach), 436 were held by Whites (Lapchick et al., 2012). With over 90% of the presidents and 87.5% of the athletic directors being White, Patton (2013) contends that the lack of diversity at the top of the leadership structure in institutions of higher education is representative of exclusion practices in hiring (Day, 2011; Gordon, 2008; Mixon & Trevino, 2004; O'Bryant, 2010).

Thirteen of 128 head football coaches in the NCAA FBS are African American. This accounts for 10.2% of coaches in a sport in which 54.9% of its players are African American. African Americans coaches represent 38% of all coaches in NCAA FBS (approximately 400 head coaches and assistants). While this number is lower than the number of African American football players, it does represent an increase than the number of minority representatives in other professions (Bozeman & Fay, 2013).

It has been hypothesized that many African American assistant coaches do not aspire to be head coaches (Brooks et al., 1996). Cunningham and Sagas (2004) theorized that African American assistant coaches may have already been subject to discrimination and are unwilling to pursue positions where discrimination is more visible and potentially more malicious (Bozeman & Fay, 2013). Cunningham and Sagas (2004) also found that African American football players possessed less interest in becoming head football coaches than White football players.

Previous research on the dearth of African American coaches in college football have used Critical Race Theory to justify the *Hiring Report Card*, which the Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA) produces every year to place the hiring process of colleges and universities under public scrutiny (Jackson, 2013; Lapchick, 2012b; Singer, Harrison, &



Bukstein, 2010). However, previous research has failed to examine the turning points in the careers of and career trajectories of African Americans pursuing head coaching positions (Whitlock, 2008). Leadership networks in intercollegiate athletics can be described as being majority White, Protestant, heterosexual males (Fink & Resnick, 2001). Employees who did not hold comparable characteristics often experienced negative work experiences and comprised a much smaller subgroup. This leadership network has allowed the authoritative group (White, Protestant, heterosexual males) to avow and maintain control (Singer & Cunningham, 2011; Suggs, 2000; Walker, 2005). For many Black coaches in intercollegiate athletics, the ceiling hinders career ascension in the coaching ranks further perpetuating the effect (Hill, 2004; Hughes & Wright, 2003; Singer, Harrison, & Bukstein, 2010).

### **Hiring in the National Football League**

As of August 2014, of the 32 teams in the National Football League, only four employ an African American as the head football coach. Pittsburgh and Cincinnati have employed Mike Tomlin and Marvin Lewis for the past 6 and 10 years, respectively, while Lovie Smith (Tampa) and Jim Caldwell (Detroit) enter their first years with their respective franchises (Moore, 2012). At 12.5%, the number of African American head coaches is significantly less than the percentage (65%) of African Americans who currently play football in the National Football League (Bozeman & Fay, 2013). Head coaches come from the pool of assistant coaches (or previous head coaches). This pool of assistant coaches includes a substantial number of minority coaches.

Since 1963, there have been 152 head coaches in the National Football League. Of those, 14 have been African American, with Art Shell becoming the first African American head coach of the modern era in 1989 (Harrison & Bukstein, 2014; Nicols, 2008). Of the 14 African American hires, 12 have come after the implementation of the Rooney Rule. The Rooney Rule

was enacted in 2003 after sports activists and their attorneys threatened employment discrimination lawsuits over head football coach selection decisions in the National Football League (Collins, 2007; Conlin & Emerson, 2006; Smith, 2008; Wilner, 2013). The NFL ultimately decided that it would be required for owners to interview at least one minority candidate for vacant General Manager and Head Coach Positions.

Lack of movement or progression of African Americans in the football coaching ranks has been ascribed to negative acknowledgments. These negative stereotypes that Whites hold in regards to African Americans cause people to make harsher judgments on hiring and firing (Smith, 2008). It is suggested that leaders and decision makers in collegiate athletics perceive African American football coaches to lack the necessary decision making skills and leadership abilities in order to be placed into head coaching or coordinator roles—positions that require strong leadership and authority (Barthel, 2014). As players, coaches stereotype African Americans as lacking reliability, thinking ability, and quick mental comprehension; qualities deemed necessary for central positions on a football field. Categorizing African Americans as persons lacking intellect and leadership and authority characteristics adheres to the idea of attribution and suggest that coaches be placed into positions that reflect those same racial stereotypes.

### **Social Networks and Hiring**

Economists and social theorists have long realized and recognized that many workers find employment through friends and relatives (Montgomery, 1991). Examining search methods used by job seekers, it was found that friends and relatives as sources of employment information was extremely important (Fernandez, Castilla, & Moore, 2000; Montgomery, 1991; Parnes, 1954; Saloner, 1985; Sheppard & Striner, 1966; Ullman, 1960). Because the use of employee

referrals is both widespread and purposive, the pattern of social ties may play an important role in determining labor outcomes. Holzer (1987) found that employers' heavy reliance upon social networks to recruit prospective employees more than formal networks was due to the inexpensive nature of using those networks, and social networks can serve as a useful screening device. Employers will solicit referrals from high-ability employees who tend to refer others who are similar to them.

Ullman (1960) found that employees do not refer people who will not be good employees, whether it is through their production, or fitting in with other employees currently employed in an organization. Friends of employees also knew more about the company in advance and were comfortable with the socialization process. Ullman's (1960) study also found that there was a low discharge rate among those employees hired through employee referrals. This implied that the informal networks and referrals from employees provided the highest-quality workers. Employees were either better at judging quality than the company interviewers, or the supervisors favored people referred by employees (Ullman, 1960).

The importance of social networks and occupational socialization is evident in professional and college football. Many of the NCAA and NFL's notable head coaches can be traced back through coaching trees that start with iconic names. In the quickly changing coaching climate of today, more head coaches are emerging with a history filled with working for multiple head coaches (Ford, 2010).

### **Summary**

The common traits and characteristics of Division 1-FBS coaches are all essential to the development of their identities, coaching style and philosophy, and socialization processes

within organizations. Most coaches have to possess good communication skills, be a strong leader, have a firm knowledge of the game, be a fair disciplinarian, and be open minded. These skills and traits are developed during the course of their traditional career path to becoming a coach (Figure 3). While progressing through their careers, turning points occur. These turning points affect their choices and career trajectories, identities, and philosophies.

Through establishing our own identities and learning about the identities of other individuals and groups, we come to learn what makes us similar and different from others and therefore form social connections with them (Bimper & Harrison, 2012; Cross, 1971; Harrison et al., 2011; Wenger, 1998). How a person sees themselves will influence the friends they have, who they will marry, what occupation to pursue, and the communities and groups to which they relate to and belong to. While individuals are not free to adopt any identity they like, as race and sex are set, a coach can nurture his or her coaching identity by exhibiting personal traits and professional tendencies (an aggressive play caller on offense might be deemed to be an aggressive coach; a conservative coach on offense may be deemed conservative).

Stacking and the glass ceiling effect are theories long thought to influence hiring practices of and the socialization of African Americans. These theories are purported to limit the career trajectories by placing coaches in certain positions based on past playing experience and put a perceived invisible barrier of their careers (Kahn, 1992; Suggs, 2000; Van Horn, 2008; Woodward, 2004). Stacking coaches into certain positions and placing limits on advancement opportunities affect their athletic identity (Federal Glass Ceiling, 1995; Singer & Cunningham, 2011; Van Horn, 2008; Woodward, 2004). Career turning points generally happen during the occupational socialization phase. From the anticipatory stage, through the formal and then informal stages of socialization, individual turning points occur throughout all of these stages,

which help to shape the identity of an individual. Hiring practices in organizations have led some researchers and scholars to argue that African Americans are being unfairly treated and excluded in the hiring process (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010; Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Burdman, 2002; Day, 2012; Cunningham, et al., 2006; Lapchick, 1996; Lapchick, 2012a). Unfair treatment in hiring practices affects identity development, the socialization process within an organization, and ultimately experiences in their life, or potential turning points.

Chapter Three presents the methodology used to identify and assess the turning points of African American head football coaches at Division I FBS schools. The methodology section includes the qualitative tradition used in the study and the paradigm as it relates to the research questions. The methodology section concludes with the explanation of the thematic analysis, protection of subjects, and originality score.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the methods and procedures used to conduct this study of turning points of African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I-FBS institutions. This chapter will include a description of the type of research used, the target population, selection of the subjects, interview protocol, and the development of the procedures used in data collection and analysis.

Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, and occurrences in terms of the significance people bring to them (Denzin, 1994). This research involves the studied use and collection of empirical materials—personal experience, life story, and interviews—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in an individual’s life. Qualitative research’s intent is to study individuals’ understanding of their experiences. This study intends to identify the turning points in the lives of head football coaches at Division I FBS schools and ascertain the relationship between those turning points and the respective career trajectories of coaches.

### **Qualitative Tradition**

Qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers a wide array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate, and come to terms with the meaning of certain naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. For this study, the case study approach will be used as the qualitative tradition. Case study research excels at examining the interplay of all variables in order to provide as complete understanding of an event(s) or situation(s) (Merriman, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Case studies require a problem that seeks a holistic interpretation of the event or question using inductive logic. Often interchangeable with

ethnographic or field studies, case studies take place in a natural setting and often offer new variables and questions for further research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of conditions or events and their relationships. Yin (1984) defined case study research as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

A case study research design should be considered under the following conditions:

- When the focus of a study is to answer “how” and “why” questions
- The researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study
- The researcher wants to cover contextual conditions because he or she believes they are relevant to the phenomenon under study
- The boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and the context

While the case studies may involve multiple sources of data, multiple cases within a study, and produce a large amount of data for analysis, case studies provide a basis for a researcher to build upon theory, dispute or challenge theory, explain a situation, or explore and describe an object or phenomenon. Case studies ensure that a researcher can discover new relationships of realities and build up and understanding of the meanings of experiences rather than verify predetermined hypotheses (Riege, 1998).

### **Criteria for Qualitative Research**

To obtain trustworthiness, the researcher followed the Lincoln and Guba (2000) guidelines. These guidelines include:

1. Credibility
2. Transferability

3. Dependability

4. Confirmability

Credibility refers to the confidence in the “truth” of the findings. It acknowledges that there are multiple accounts of social reality and that the research has been carried out according to best practices and peer review. Transferability is showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts and that the research illuminates the contextual uniqueness of their object of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Dependability shows that the findings are consistent and can be repeated. It also takes an “auditing” approach to research and details all work phases.

Confirmability is the degree of neutrality or the extent to which findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest. Lincoln and Guba (2000) also have a series of techniques that can be used to conduct qualitative research that achieves all the criteria they outline. These techniques include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and peer debriefing.

### **Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research**

The value of scientific research is dependent on the ability of individual researchers to demonstrate the credibility of their findings (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). While reliability is concerned with the replicability of findings in a study, validity is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings. Reliability in case study research refers to the degree to which other independent researchers, given a previously generated construct, would match those constructs with data in a similar manner, as did the original researcher (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Further, systematically identifying and examining all causal and consequential factors in ethnographic studies establish credibility. Validity in case study research requires determining the extent to which conclusions represent reality. Admitting into research the objective experiences of the



investigator and participants provides case studies a depth of understanding often lacking in other studies (Golafshani, 2003).

### **Population**

The NCAA's diverse membership includes schools ranging in size from hundreds of students to tens of thousands of students (NCAA, 2013). Division I schools generally have more students, larger athletics support staff, and larger athletics budgets than schools in Division II or Division III. Division I FBS schools are also required to meet the following membership requirements:

1. Sponsor a minimum of 16 varsity intercollegiate sports, including football.
2. Schedule and play at least 60% of its football contests against members of Football Bowl Subdivision.
3. Average at least 15,000 in actual or paid attendance for all home football contests over a rolling 2-year period.
4. Provide an average of at least 90% of the permissible maximum number of overall football grants-in-aid per year over a rolling 2-year period.
5. Annually offer a minimum of 200 athletics grants-in-aid or expend at least \$4 million on grants-in-aid to student-athletes in athletics programs.

The target population for this study includes all full-time African American head football coaches employed at the 128 NCAA Division I-FBS institutions at the beginning of the 2014 football season. To identify all members of the target population, the researcher did an Internet search on the Athlon Sports website [www.athlonsports.com](http://www.athlonsports.com). As each of the 128 head football coaches at NCAA Division I-FBS institutions were listed, an additional identification search was

done on ESPN.com to determine the race of each coach. The second and in this process included a review of the online media guides from each institution that had a Black head coach for verification. This procedure produced a target population of 13. With a total target population of only 13 subjects, a range of 6 to 13 participants was targeted for participation in this study. The final step in this process was to search the institution's staff directory for contact information including mailing address, email address, and telephone number.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

In this study, questionnaires were mailed to the population that meets inclusionary and exclusionary criteria. Data collection began in early December 2014 and continued until March 2015. A personalized, individually signed cover letter accompanied each questionnaire packet sent out (Appendix 3, 4). The packets were mailed to the contact information found off the athletic websites with a postage paid self-addressed return envelope included. Each respondent should allow a minimum of 10 minutes for the completion of the survey questionnaire. A second round of mailing to non-respondents was conducted approximately 1 week after the initial mailing to generate a larger return (Appendix 6). A third and final round of mailing to non-respondents will take place approximately 6 weeks after the initial mailing (Appendix 7) (Dillman, 1978). This final mailing will be accompanied by a telephone call and email to the non-respondents to maximize and finalize participation.

All interviews took place either via the telephone or in a face-to-face setting. Face-to-face interviews will be scheduled prior to travel. For all face-to-face interviews, the researcher traveled to the campuses of study participants. Artifacts (written notes/audio recordings) were collected and documented by the researcher. Interviews were done with head football coaches

based on topics relating to career trajectories and turning points. Data collection and analysis focused on rich description and integration of the researcher as a participant observer within each situation in an attempt to identify different perspective on different issues.

### **Interview Protocol**

Part 1 of the interview protocol (Table 3) requested personal information regarding age, educational background, and marital and parental status. Part II requested information about the participant's educational and athletic background, including any accolades and honors that may have been earned during their athletic careers. Part III inquired about participants' coaching experience including when respondents got their first head coaching job, how long they had been in the coaching profession, the length of employment at their current institution, and the respondent's coaching history at previous institutions and organizations. Part IV requested the respondents to identify significant people and events in their personal or professional careers that they perceived to influence and/or hinder their ascension to the position of head football coach. Part IV also asked about participants' initial entry into the coaching profession. Part IV also asked participants to rank the characteristics they feel most important for head football coaches. A copy of the final survey questionnaire appears in Appendix 4. The face-to-face interview protocol was individually constructed to each respondent to allow for any elaboration on content covered in the questionnaire. Specifically, the researcher asked for participants to elaborate on individuals on and specific turning points in their professional careers and on potential influences and hindrances in their ascension to head football coach (Part IV of Appendix 4). Turning point analysis is the method in which I listened to the participants' point of view and identified and analyzed turning point experiences (Gabor, 2011).

In conjunction with tape recording interviews, field notes were taken. Field notes are created by the researcher to remember and record behaviors, activities, and events of the setting being observed (Burgess, 1991). Field notes provide meaning and understanding of the culture, social situation, and phenomenon being studied to explore, analyze, and expand the information gathered from the face-to-face interview. In this study, field notes captured observations about participants' non-verbal communication, emotions, and any additional questions on topics broached during the interview.

Table 3  
Interview Protocol

Research Question	Questionnaire #s	Theoretical Framework
1. How do Head Football coaches make sense of their career turning points at Division I FBS School	1-2, 4, 6, 9-10, 12-17, 20-22	Career Turning Points
	3, 5, 7-8, 11, 18-19, 23	Identity Formation

Before analyzing any interview, I had all interviews and/or observations transcribed by a professional transcription service. Themes and/or patterns were identified and organized into coherent categories. A typed copy of the interview and my field notes were provided to each participant for their review and modification. Patterns and connections within and between categories were identified and assessed by myself and NVIVO software. NVIVO software enables researchers to collect, organize, and analyze data from interviews and observations for the respondents.

An audit trail was also created to give a transparent description of the research steps being taken in this study. All raw data, including written field notes, summaries of condensed

notes and qualitative summaries were available to participants. Information concerning the themes and a conclusion were mailed to all participants at the conclusion of the study.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

After the participants return the survey questionnaires, data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) Software to report demographic findings using descriptive statistics. Demographic data was analyzed for both the total population and for the respondents. The questionnaire was designed to identify and analyze the following variables:

1. Age of the head football coach
2. Age when he attained his first head coaching position
3. Marital and parental status of the participant
4. Educational background
5. Coaching history
6. Collegiate and professional playing career lengths and position
7. Influential members in the participant's coaching career
8. Influential events or turning points in the participants coaching career.
9. Hindrances or roadblocks in participants' coaching career.
10. Characteristics or traits participants feel are important for head football coaches to possess

Data analysis used a constant comparative method to examine data for recurring patterns and/or themes. The constant comparative method involves taking one piece of data (interview, statement, theme) and comparing it with all others that may be similar or different in order to

develop conceptualizations of the possible relations between the various pieces of data (Thorne, 2000). Data were compared across demographic and playing career backgrounds.

### **Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is a process of encoding qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis allows researchers to review data, make additional notes, and then sort into categories. It also helps researchers to move their analysis from a broad reading of the data towards discovering patterns and developing themes. Themes capture something important about the data in relation to the research question(s) and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes (words or phrases) will be developed to serve as labels for sections of data.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

As this study was designed to work directly with humans, the approval of the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) was mandatory before beginning data collection. The IRB consists of a committee established to promote for the protection of the welfare and rights of participants involved in research studies. The moral concerns related to this study are linked to privacy and confidentiality of the information shared during the survey questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. All information collected in this study was available to study participants after consenting to participate and upon completion of the research.

Approval is required for all research involving human subjects. In obtaining the approval of the University of Central Florida IRB for this study, all forms of communication used in this study were included in the application for IRB approval. Upon review by the board, any required adjustments were implemented in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participants involved (Appendix 5).

## **Originality Score**

The University of Central Florida requires students submit their theses and dissertations to iThenticate.com. IThenticate is a plagiarism detection and prevention technology used by research institutions to ensure originality of written work before publication. IThenticate helps editors, authors and researchers prevent misconduct by comparing manuscripts against its database of over 56 billion web pages. My dissertation chair submitted my work to this system and presented the results to the rest of my committee the date of my defense.

## **Summary**

Chapter Three has given a description of case studies, which is the qualitative tradition that will guide this study. A description of the population, as well as the data collection, data analysis, and interview protocols are given. Finally, the methodology chapter ends with an explanation of how IRB and originality obligations were met as required by the University of Central Florida.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE EMBLEMATIC AFRICAN AMERICAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACH**

The purpose of this study was to identify and assess the turning points in the lives of African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I FBS Schools. This study was designed to examine and analyze the influential people and moments in the lives of African American head football coaches and their ascension to the position of head football coach at Division I FBS schools. This study targeted all 13 African American head football coaches employed by the 128 NCAA Division I FBS schools as of the 2014 football season.

### **Preparing and Getting the Data: The Phenomenology of Thaddeus**

When I made the decision to mail the survey questionnaires instead of emailing them, I did so because I felt that coaches would be more apt to respond to an actual physical questionnaire as opposed to an email. I receive unsolicited emails all the time, and I cannot hit the delete button fast enough. I also receive unsolicited mail frequently, which I often rip up without opening or reading it. So I decided to use the UPS-signature required service. I figured when my questionnaire reached the office of each coach and their respective assistant signed for it, it would be considered priority since a signature was required. What surprised me was the added cost of for requiring a signature. However, I just figured I would re-allocate some of the money I had budgeted for travel over to the monies I had budgeted for postage.

I was a little nervous about what the response rate would be. Throughout the formulation of my study, my chairperson questioned me often about the fact that I had such a small target population and that there was a minimum response rate that I needed in order to conduct my study. I assured her on each occasion that I would have more than enough participants and that



she need not worry. Somehow, once I mailed the questionnaires out, the confidence that I displayed to my chairperson disappeared completely. What if not enough people responded? I would be devastated and embarrassed. Embarrassed in the fact that I would have to basically start from scratch. I know that I am mentally tough, but with the amount of time and energy that I had invested to this point, I did not think I could do it all over again. I had already dodged a major hurdle in the fact that no members of my target population had changed jobs (fired or resigned) since the end of the football season. I shared these feelings with a friend who happened to complete her doctorate studies under my same chairperson but at the University of Oklahoma. She assured me that I would get the proper response and that I would have a fantastic final product that she could not wait to read. That bit of positive reinforcement instantly replenished my confidence.

In addition to the nerves I had about my data collection, I knew that I needed to hurry and finish with my doctoral program, as my family and work dynamics were changing. I was spending a lot more money on babysitters because I was busy at work or in the library working on this paper. Plus, my children were growing quickly, and I was beginning to miss some of their activities. It was starting to be a strain on me physically and mentally. When I was there for them physically, my mind was often times on my research. When I was working on my research, often, my mind was on my children. It was not fair to anybody or anything; my kids, my research, or me. I needed to hurry.

Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 5:07 pm. I will never forget how I felt at that time. I was on the phone talking to my older sister (it is her birthday) and walking through my house towards my front door. I opened the door and screamed. There was a UPS letter envelope addressed to me. The exact pre-paid one that I had put in all the questionnaires for the coaches to return the

completed questionnaire to me free of charge. I told my sister I loved her and then I hung up the phone and opened up that envelope. I had a strong feeling of elation that one of the most powerful men in the country had felt my questionnaire was worthy of their time and effort to complete (I consider college football coaches as the figureheads of the university and powerful for the sheer fact that there are only 128 of these jobs available and the competition for them is high). The next day I received three additional completed surveys, and by the end of May, I had completed all of my data collection and interviews. From February through May, my work obligations increased, so I had to throttle back the amount of time that I had spent analyzing data. When I did resume diligently working on my paper at the end of May 2015, I felt as if I had a large collection of data, but I was a bit lost with how to organize and present it. Perhaps it was a byproduct of me taking time away from my paper to focus on other things. Regardless, I wasted many hours sitting at my computer yet making no progress on my paper.

In struggling to convey the data that I gathered using methods and procedures outlined in Chapter Three, I met with my dissertation chairperson on July 1, 2015 and asked her advice on how to frame and express the data I collected. It was important to me that before I presented the data, I thoroughly explained how I came about the presentation format. There were several adjustments that I made to the data collection procedures, and I needed to explain what and why those adjustments happened in order to maintain validity, reliability, and replicability. I also sought her advice and direction on the many different thoughts and emotions running through my head on the turning points that were communicated to me by the respondent population throughout the data collection procedures. Dr. Cintrón calmly reminded me to remove the emotion from the equation and focus on delivering the data concisely and effectively. She suggested that since I was studying football coaches, I separate the data into an appropriate

consonance and titles that would be easy for both football coaches and novice readers to follow effectively. With that advice and insight, I was able to structure, expound, and effectively report the results of the respondent population and present the next two chapters in the form of four “quarters”. Every football game is divided into quarters to keep things in small and easily digestible chunks. After the first two quarters comes a period known as halftime—generally 15-20 minutes that gives each team time to rest and make adjustments. After the halftime period is over, the final two quarters are played and then the game ends. All four quarters will be presented in this chapter: First Quarter: Responses and adjustments to procedures; Second Quarter: Descriptive profiles of the respondents; Third Quarter: Character Traits; and Fourth Quarter: The Emblematic African American Head Football Coach.

### **First Quarter: Responses and Procedure Adjustments**

I mailed 13 questionnaires on January 8, 2015 to the African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I FBS schools. This total population was identified using the inclusionary and exclusionary criteria identified in Chapter Three. The first survey questionnaire was returned to me on January 13. Three additional questionnaires were returned on January 14, 2015. Although the second mailing was originally scheduled for January 15, 2015 (1 week from initial mailing), a three-week delay to accommodate National Signing Day was given. I decided to deviate from Dillman’s protocol for survey and questionnaire mailings because I felt it did not consider the schedule for the individual participants and other priorities they may have. I know my target population is full of extremely busy individuals, and I am very cognizant of the open periods in their calendars. National Signing Day, usually the first Wednesday of February (February 4, 2015), is the first day that a high school senior can sign a binding National Letter of

Intent (NLI) for college football with a school that is a member of the NCAA (National Letter of Intent, 2015). The weeks and months prior to National Signing Day prove to be extremely busy times for head football coaches as they are usually out of the office recruiting prospective student athletes.

Therefore, on February 5, 2015, I mailed a second batch of questionnaires with two being returned. The third and final mailing to the seven coaches who had not responded was sent on February 26, 2015. I placed a telephone call to the administrative assistant for one of the population members. This administrative assistant and I were classmates and co-workers in college, so I implored him to ask his head coach to participate in my study. From his encouragement, the head coach filled out and returned the survey questionnaire to me on March 3, 2015. I also received two additional survey questionnaires on April 6, 2015, bringing the total respondents to 9.

I attempted to contact each of the four coaches who had not returned my survey questionnaire by telephone. After calling each coach's office once daily for four days, I concluded that they had no interest in participating in my study. I was a bit disappointed because I thought that these coaches were missing out on a chance to be a part of what I believed to be a fantastic study. I was also disappointed with these four coaches' lack of participation because I really wanted to have 100% participation and be able to tell my chairperson that she never needed to worry (although I worried).

From the nine survey questionnaires returned, approximately four interviews were scheduled with participants so that additional clarification could be garnered on some of the responses. I attempted to schedule interviews with all nine participants; however, three respondents declined further participation, and despite persistent attempts, I could not reach the

other two via telephone or email. Of the four respondents who agreed to further participation, three of the respondents agreed to telephone interviews, while one other respondent agreed to a face-to-face visit, which took place on March 13, 2015. Each of the four interview participants declined to be tape recorded and/or videotaped. Each of the interview participants did agree to me taking notes of our conversations (See Appendix 6 for an example of field notes).

### **Second Quarter: Descriptive Profile of African American Head Football Coaches**

One of the primary purposes of this study was to collect and analyze background and personal experiences of African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I FBS schools. As this total number of coaches who met these criteria is 13, the entire population was included in this study. From the data collection process, a response rate of 69% (9 out of 13) was obtained. Table 4 reports the age of the study participants. Each of the survey respondents fall between the ages of 41 and 55, which is consistent with the average age (50.25 years) of all 128 NCAA Division 1 FBS Coaches (Coaches Hot Seat, 2014). Each respondent was married and had children.

Table 4  
Demographics of Study Participants

Participant	Age Range	Marital Status	Children
1	51-55	Yes	Yes
2	51-55	Yes	Yes
3	51-55	Yes	Yes
4	41-45	Yes	Yes
5	41-45	Yes	Yes
6	46-50	Yes	Yes
7	51-55	Yes	Yes
8	41-45	Yes	Yes
9	41-45	Yes	Yes

### **Educational Experiences of African American Head Football Coaches**

Most of the respondents attended a public predominantly White institution (PWI) for their undergraduate studies, with two of coaches attending private predominantly White institutions. Each coach participated in athletics during his time in college. As noted in Chapter Two, many coaches learn many of the technical and practical aspects of coaching during their playing experiences in college. All nine coaches are college graduates, with two coaches earning post-graduate degrees (Table 5).

Table 5  
Collegiate Athlete Status of African American Head Football Coaches

Participant	College Attended	College Athlete	Educational Attainment
1	Public PWI	Yes	Post Graduate Degree
2	Private PWI	Yes	College Graduate
3	Public PWI	Yes	Some Post Graduate Work
4	Public PWI	Yes	Some Post Graduate Work
5	Private PWI	Yes	College Graduate
6	Public PWI	Yes	College Graduate
7	Public PWI	Yes	College Graduate
8	Public PWI	Yes	Post Graduate Degree
9	Public PWI	Yes	Some Post Graduate Work

Kram (1996) noted that professional identity is developed and cultivated through exploring multiple relationships and organizations. While each coach held positions at other colleges and universities throughout his career, only two coaches have been at their current institution longer than 4 years. Those two coaches, conversely, have been affiliated with their current institution for at least 9 years. Three coaches were also able to begin their professional journeys by being drafted to play professional football. While two coaches actually made the team and played, just one coach's playing career lasted longer than 5 years (Table 6).

Table 6  
Professional Journey of African American Head Football Coaches

Participant	Length at current school	Drafted Professionally	Professional Career Length
1	0-4 years	Yes	Did not play
2	9-12 years	Yes	0-4 years
3	0-4 years	No	Did not play
4	0-4 years	No	Did not play
5	9-12 years	No	Did not play
6	0-4 years	No	Did not play
7	0-4 years	Yes	5-8 years
8	0-4 years	No	Did not play
9	0-4 years	No	Did not play

### Third Quarter: Character Traits

The third quarter will be presented in two different areas of analysis: sStraight rRankings by coaches, and tThematic discovery. Identity and character traits are indicative of how coaches lead their teams (Voight, 2006). According to Anderson (1993), the five most important traits needed for a head coach are: Being a transformational leader and motivator, being a good communicator, having a firm knowledge of the game, being tough but fair, and being open minded. These characteristics, along with others, are directly related to that coach's identity and how they lead their teams. Character traits complement their occupational traits, which result in greater coaching ability.



## **Character Traits: Straight Rankings**

Question 23 of the survey questionnaire asked each coach to rank from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important) characteristics or traits they felt were necessary for a Head Football Coach to possess.

**Effective communicator.** Survey respondents ranked being an Effective Communicator as the most important trait that a coach should possess. Four of the respondents listed Effective Communicator as the most important trait a coach should possess, four respondents listed it as the second most important trait, while one coach felt that being an effective communicator was the third most important trait a head coach should possess. Sanderson (2010) noted that effective communication by coaches as both an important trait for them to possess when dealing with their teams, administrators, and members of the media.

**Leadership.** The second most important characteristic that the survey respondents felt a head coach should have is Leadership. Five respondents felt that Leadership was the most important characteristic; two coaches felt it was second most important; one coach felt that it was the third most important, and one coach felt it was the fourth most important characteristic. Soucie (1994) notes that head football coaches are not just leaders of their respective football teams, but often, university leaders as well. Although more coaches ranked Leadership as the most important characteristic, it fell slightly behind Effective Communicator.

**Honesty.** African American Head football coaches ranked being Honest as the third most important trait. Two coaches ranked Honest as the most important trait a coach should possess; one ranked it as the second most important trait; two coaches ranked it the third most important; two coaches ranked it the fourth most important; while the final two coaches ranked them the fifth and sixth most important trait, respectively. Maitland and Gervis (2010) noted that coaches

are most effective when they build a high level of belief and trust in their players, and being honest with them speaks directly to that.

**Faith.** Faith ranked as the fourth most important characteristic for head football coaches to have. One respondent ranked Faith as the most important trait a head coach should possess; two coaches ranked Faith as third most important; three coaches had it as their fifth choice; two coaches believe Faith is the sixth most important trait; while one coach listed Faith as the ninth most important trait that a head coach should possess.

**Good Motivator.** Being a Good Motivator ranked as the fifth most important trait a head football coach could have. Two coaches ranked being a good motivator as the third most important trait; two coaches ranked being a good motivator as the fourth most important trait; two coaches ranked it as being the fifth most important trait; one coach ranked being a good motivator as the sixth most important trait and one coach ranked being a good motivator as the ninth most important trait. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the influences of football coaches provide an inspiration and excitement in their players with the notion that great things on and off the playing surface will be accomplished.

**Organization.** Being Organized ranked as the sixth most important trait to have by African American head football coaches. While Being Organized ranked sixth most important, it was the character trait with the most diverse ranking as seven different coaches ranked it differently on their priority scale. Individual rankings included being listed as the most important trait to have, to the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth most important traits to have, including three coaches feeling that Organization was the eighth most important trait to have.

**Flexibility.** Being Flexible ranked as the seventh most important trait for a head coach to have. Three coaches ranked flexible as being the fifth most important trait; one coach ranked it

as the sixth most important trait to have; one coach ranked it as the seventh most important trait to have; two coaches ranked Flexible as the eighth most important trait; while two coaches ranked Flexible as the least important trait to have.

**Disciplinarian.** Disciplinarian ranked as the eighth most important trait for a head football coach to possess. Two coaches ranked being a Disciplinarian sixth most important; two coaches ranked Disciplinarian seventh; two coaches ranked Disciplinarian eighth; two coaches ranked Disciplinarian ninth; and one coach ranked Disciplinarian tenth. Gould et al. (2002) stated that discipline allows a coach to implement rules to the entire team in a fair and unbiased manner.

**Strategist.** Being a Strategist ranked as the ninth most important characteristic for a Head Football Coach to have. One coach ranked Strategist as the fourth most important trait; two coaches ranked Strategist as the sixth most important; one coach ranked Strategist seventh; one coach ranked it eighth while four coaches ranked Strategist the least important characteristic to have; the largest number of coaches to vote a trait least important.

**Media Savvy.** Being Media Savvy was ranked the least important trait for a head football coach to have. One coach ranked Media Savvy as the fourth most important trait to possess; one coach ranked Media Savvy as the sixth most important trait to have; one coach ranked Media Savvy the eighth most important trait to have; four coaches ranked Media Savvy as the ninth most important trait to have, and two coaches ranked Media Savvy as the least important trait to have. With the increased use of social media in addition to the customary media obligations to the media that coaches have, coaches still felt that being Media Savvy was least the least important trait for them to possess (Hooker, 2011).

## **Character Traits: Thematic Discovery**

In an effort to systemize and increase traceability of this study, the Constant Comparative Method was used to identify themes. In Stage One of my thematic discovery process, I identified all turning points listed by coaches that literature in Chapter Two categorized as Structural, No-Control, or Total Control. Structural turning points are structural patterns of life that are built in to the society where a person is living (Fombrun, 1992). For coaches, these themes were Faith, Graduation from college and participation in sport, Joining a professional organization, Family, Previous coaches and administrators worked for, and Becoming a graduate assistant.

In the next step of Stage One thematic discovery process, I identified each turning point that the literature in Chapter Two categorized as No-Control. No-Control turning points were identified as those external events and happenings in a person's life that they have no control over (Hodkinson et. al, 1996). For coaches, these themes were: Not being good enough to compete professionally, Former coaches and administrators worked under, Being demoted, Family, Faith, Becoming a high school coach, Their former high school coach, Previous head coaching interviews, and a Near death experience.

In the final step of Stage One thematic discovery process, I identified all turning points that the literature in Chapter Two categorized as Total-Control. Irvine et al. (1997) defined Total-Control turning points as first hand decisions that a person makes concerning their own future. The themes identified by the coaches as being Total Control were Faith, Former coaches/administrators worked under, Coaches that they admired from afar, Graduation from college and participation in sport, Earning a post-graduate degree, Becoming a graduate assistant, Becoming a high school coach, Learning to deal with credit/blame as a coordinator,

Becoming a coordinator, Joining professional associations, Mentors from around the country, Getting immersed in the community, Being a parent, Returning to coach at alma mater, and Winning championships.

Comparing and contrasting all questionnaire responses by coaches enabled me to identify 20 different themes. The 20 different themes identified were: Faith, Family, Joining professional Associations, Graduating college and participation in sport, Previous coaches/administrators worked for and under, Winning the conference championship and on other levels of play, Becoming a graduate assistant, Lack of athletic ability, Becoming a high school coach, Being demoted, Becoming a coordinator, Mentors from around the country, Returning to coach at alma mater, Learning to take the credit and blame of decisions, High school coach they played for, Previous head coaching interviews, Coaches admired from afar, Obtaining a post-graduate degree, Becoming immersed in the university community in which they lived, and a Near death experience. Although there were 20 different turning point themes identified, several themes were identified by multiple coaches (Appendix 7).

For Stage Two of my thematic discovery and analysis, I took the 20 different themes identified by coaches and I grouped them into eight sub-major theme categories. The first step in me determining what would be the sub-major themes required me to note which themes were identified by multiple coaches. There were 11. Still feeling that this was a bit much (I wanted to reduce and group the individual themes into sub-major themes by at least 50%), I grouped similar turning point themes into a singular sub-major theme categories. The turning point themes Former high school coach and earning a post-graduate degree were grouped under Graduation from college and participation in sport. Becoming a graduate assistant was grouped under Previous coaches and administrators worked under. This resulted in eight sub-major

theme categories; approximately 40% of the individual theme total. These sub-major themes are: Graduation from college and participation in sport, Family, Former head coaches and administrators worked for and under, Faith, Joining professional associations, winning, Becoming a high school coach, and a Random category in which I assigned isolated random themes that were identified by coaches (Table 7). A complete list of individual themes and the sub-major theme category in which they are grouped under can be found in Appendix 8.

Table 7  
Sub-Major Themes Identified

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Sub-Major Theme 1	Faith
Sub-Major Theme 2	Graduation from college and participation in sport
Sub-Major Theme 3	Family
Sub-Major Theme 4	Former head coaches and administrators worked under
Sub-Major Theme 5	Winning
Sub-Major Theme 6	Joining professional association
Sub-Major Theme 7	Becoming a high school coach
Sub-Major Theme 8	Random isolated themes

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#### **Fourth Quarter: The Emblematic African American Coach**

Based on the demographic and character traits, I was able to develop the quintessential African American head football coach. The emblematic African American head football coach is typically married and has children. He is a college graduate of a predominantly White

institution, and he also played sports in college. The typical African American head football coach is at least 41 years old but not older than 55. This coach also was not drafted to play football professionally and did not make a professional team.

In creating the emblematic African American Head Football coach, I thought about all the pictures and videos I had seen on television and magazines of head coaches roaming the sidelines on game days. I wanted to create a silhouette similar to that, but with arrows pointing out different characteristics. Originally, I thought about using just a headshot but then I thought a full body profile would be better. I also felt that I needed to have an image in which the coach had a headset on as wearing a headset would be most representative of a head coach on game days.

In creating the image, the first few renderings came via me doodling on my yellow pad (Appendix 9). While I had a general idea on what I wanted the final image to look like, I lacked the graphic expertise to create the image myself. Therefore, I enlisted the services of one of my student workers, Evan Brown, who is proficient in Photoshop. I suggested that we find an image from the Internet and use that as a baseline for creating the image I wanted. After finding an image of a coach on the sideline, some editing was done to remove distinguishing features (polo color and team emblem). He then added in the demographic characteristics that I gave him and the third (and what I thought was final) version of the Emblematic African American Head Football Coach was produced (Appendix 9).

During a meeting with my chairperson on July 24, 2015, she suggested that I include the character traits discovered during my study in addition to using the demographic characteristics on the Emblematic African American Football Coach image. She also asked me if anyone would be able to recognize the coach that I used as the silhouette for my image. I told her that people

could very well recognize the person based on the silhouette. She then suggested that I change the picture and use an image of myself as the profile silhouette for the Emblematic African American Head Football Coach. Using resources from work, I was able to dress in traditional football coaching attire (slacks, a polo shirt, a belt, sneakers, and a headset communication system). I had four photos taken of me and I sent those photos to Evan so that he could edit and create an amended version of the Emblematic African American Head Football coach (Figure 4).

Figure 4

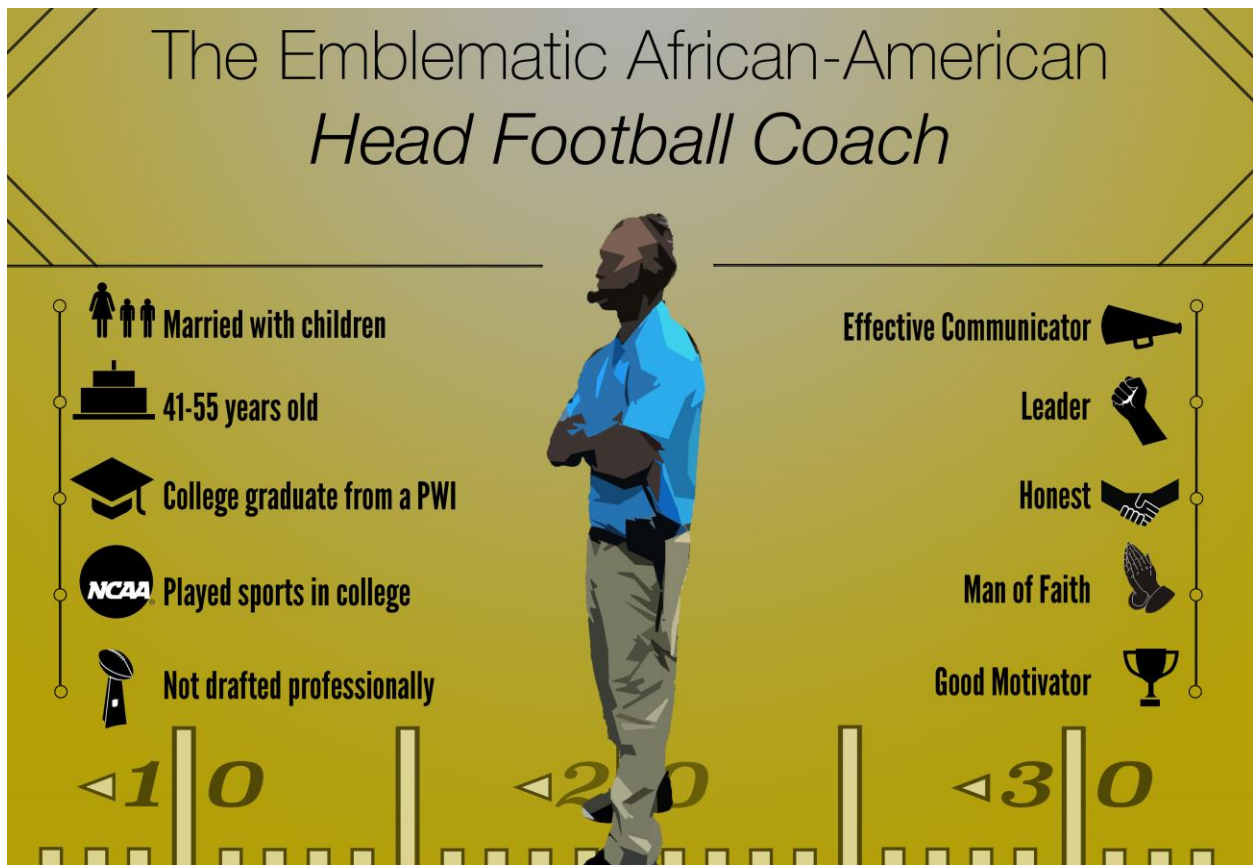


Figure 4: The emblematic African American head football coach. Created by T. Rivers, 2015.



## **Summary**

This chapter explained my phenomenology and struggles in regards to preparing and presenting the data collected in this study. This chapter also introduced the “Four Quarters” metaphor that presents the data analysis. The first three quarters, First Quarter: Responses and adjustments to procedures; Second Quarter: Descriptive profiles of the respondents; and Third Quarter: Character Traits were all presented in this chapter. The first three quarters culminated in the Fourth Quarter with the creation of The Emblematic African American Head Coach. Additionally, 20 themes were identified from coaches’ questionnaire responses using the Constant Comparative data collection process. From those 20 themes, 8 sub-major turning point themes were developed (Table 7). Chapter Five will continue with theme discovery and analysis with the focus on turning points revealed during the interview portion of data collection and major theme identification.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CAPTURING TURNING POINTS IN THE VOICES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACHES**

Chapter Four listed 20 major themes and eight sub-major themes that were identified from the questionnaire returned by the nine participating coaches. While I felt that discovering these eight sub-major themes was a fantastic first step in determining how African American Head Football Coaches make sense of their turning points, I needed to hear how their individual turning points affected their careers. While I was certain that I would find differences in each coach's story and subsequent career path, I wanted to find a connection and commonality between each coach and use those common turning points as major themes.

I was able to schedule four interviews from the nine questionnaire respondents. As mentioned in Chapter Four, I attempted to contact all nine questionnaire respondents multiple times to schedule an interview; however, three questionnaire respondents declined further participation in my study, and two coaches I was unable to contact. The first interview was conducted face to face on March 13, 2015. The final three interviews took place via telephone on March 25, 2015, March 29, 2015, and April 28, 2015.

I originally set a budget of \$3,000 for travel expenses related to my study. Although I anticipated traveling to each of the 13 schools to interview study participants, I knew that one of the coaches in the total population was within driving distance and would not require me to purchase an airplane ticket or book a hotel to conduct that interview. I thought that \$3,000 combined with the amount of flight vouchers and hotel points I had accumulated over the years would be enough for me to finance all of my research travel. It was bittersweet to me that I was only able to schedule one face-to-face interview; however, I knew the savings would enable me to appropriate funds to other things. In order to honor my commitment of maintaining discretion

and anonymity to the participating coaches, aliases were created instead of using the real names of coaches.

### **Coach Richard**

When going to interview Coach Richard, I had to fly into an airport and then drive about 45 minutes to his campus. It was a fairly easy drive, and I made it on to their campus approximately 45 minutes before our scheduled interview time of 1:30 pm. It was fairly easy reaching his office, and upon arrival and informing his assistant who I was and that I had an appointment, she told me that he was still in meetings and would be with me shortly. Very hospitable, she gave me a tour around the football facility for about 30 minutes before walking me back to the office lobby. We conversed a little bit more, mostly small talk and then Coach Richard walked into the office lobby. My first impression upon introducing myself and shaking Coach Richard's hand was that he had very proper grammar (uncommon with most coaches I have met in my life), and he had a very firm handshake. Coach Richard escorted me into his office, and as I took a seat, I could not help but notice the pictures of his family all around his office. What stood out most to me as I scanned his bookcase were the many religious themed and coaching philosophy books and a Bible sitting on his desk. As he told me that he was in between meetings we jumped right into our interview.

I began by asking Coach Richard about his response that God has been his greatest source of motivation or inspiration. He said that nothing in life has happened without God and that every person that he has met in life was a result of God. He also stated that he would not have a family or education if it weren't for his faith in God. I then asked Coach Richard about

his professional football career. Coach Richard quickly told me again that God did not have it in his plans for him to play professional football. As indicated by his questionnaire responses and confirmed via interview, Faith was a very major part of Coach Richard's life.

Coach Richard was very resolute in saying that he felt the players on his team should get good grades. He said that education was a very important part of who he was as a student-athlete, and he expects the same for players on his team. He said getting good grades was very important to him, as it was taught to him by his parents to always do well academically so that it would create opportunities for him beyond sports. After graduating from college and coming to the realization that professional football was not in his future, Coach Richard was presented with an opportunity to become a graduate assistant coach, which is generally the entry-level official entry into coaching. Coach Richard felt that because of his leadership abilities and the relationship that he built with his college coaches, it was easy for him to transition into coaching.

Coach Richard mentioned joining the professional association as a medium that he got to know and develop rapport with other football coaches. He said that at coaching conventions, coaches get a chance to know coaches better, what type of men they are, and their respective coaching philosophies and styles. The coaches association provides him with additional networking and socialization opportunities that he otherwise would not have if he were not a member.

I asked Coach Richard about the impact working under a coach who was nationally known for his prolific offense had on his career. Coach Richard thought that experience was critical in him landing his first head-coaching job. As the team he was working for gained national attention, other schools around the country came and hired many of his fellow assistants away to coordinator and head coaching jobs. He felt that it was perfect timing in his career, and

again, all a part of God's plan. Another turning point mentioned by Coach Richard on his questionnaire was that he was demoted at a previous stop. Coach Richard said being demoted allowed him to revamp some things in his offensive playbook, get a better feel for timing when it comes to calling plays, and overall become a better coach based on the challenge of being demoted. As there is only one African American Head Football coach in Division I FBS history to have been fired from FBS job and hired at another one (Tyrone Willingham), I asked Coach Richard that if he were ever to be fired, did he think that he would be given another chance to be a head coach on the FBS level. Coach Richard stated that if it was a part of God's plan for that to happen, it would happen, and if it was not, then it would not. He conveyed that he always remained optimistic even after he was demoted that he would get another opportunity. Coach Richard said that in the unfortunate event that he was fired from a job, he has that same optimism.

The next few questions focused on Coach Richard's feelings concerning some coaches, specifically White coaches, being favored to be hired over African American coaches even if they were fired from a previous institution. Coach Richard felt that it says a lot for a coach and the things that particular coach has accomplished in his career to be considered. When I pressed him for an answer on if that unfairly eliminates other aspiring head coaches, specifically African Americans, Coach Richard suggested that coaching is not a fair deal and that he would always have faith in his coaching abilities. Coach Richard said that the right opportunity would present itself for any coach, regardless of color.

The final part of my interview concentrated on Coach Richard's character trait rankings. Coach Richard felt that after of having Faith, a head coach needed to be Honest and be an Effective Communicator. Coach Richard felt that fundamentally a coach needs to be honest and

that is a direct reflection of his faith. He also felt that it was necessary to convey to your players and staff policies, procedures, and even game plans in an effective manner. Coach Richard felt that being a parent influenced his coaching mannerisms in the fact that it makes him more patient when dealing with his players. My interview ended with Coach Richard and I exchanging pleasantries and him inviting me to tour his football program's athletic facilities.

### **Coach Brian**

My interview with interview Coach Brian began with me on hold for 15 minutes after I reached his office assistant. When Coach Brian came to the phone, he apologized to me for having to wait so long as he had an emergency situation with one of his players that he had to deal with immediately. I told Coach Brian that I completely understood and that I didn't mind waiting. Coach Brian said that since this study was for me (who just happened to be a friend of one of his staff members) he said that it was imperative for him to comply with my study. Since I knew Coach Brian was dealing with a player emergency, I suggested that we jump right into the interview. I began with asking Coach Brian about his salary, since his response about his salary not being commensurate with his peers was only because his school was poor. I thought that he would elaborate on his school being poor and maybe suggest that his school got a discount when it hired him. Coach Brian stated that basketball in his conference got a lot more notoriety and thus more funds to support those programs. Coach Brian said that it was a pleasure to return to his alma mater, and since he was born and raised in the same town, it made it easy to accept that job.

Jumping over to the topic of turning points, I asked Coach Brian what he thought was one of the monumental moments in him becoming a head coach. He mentioned that it was a

previous team that he worked for and a team in which he had the ability to work under an African American head coach. Coach Brian felt that since the school he was working at had a huge national following, combining the success that the team was having on the made for a special season and important turning point in his career. Coach Brian said he also paid close attention to how the head coached handled the media, fans, and the administration. He said that the mannerisms of the head coach shaped the way in which he conducts himself now. Coach Brian said that being a part of a winning program was a very important moment in his career.

Coach Brian mentioned that his dad was his biggest source of motivation and inspiration. He said that his dad taught him a lot about competition and his love of sports developed from his dad taking him to multiple sporting events. Coach Brian then said that he always wanted to be around the game of football but he knew that he was not talented enough to play professionally so he went right into coaching after college. Coach Brian said that his first graduate assistant coaching position had a tremendous effect on his career. Coach Brian felt that he was fortunate enough to learn under a defensive coordinator (now current head football coach for a National Football League) who acted as more than just a boss to him. Coach Brian said that this coach gave him his first opportunity to actually coach a position on the field and taught him that it required a lot of extra hours in order to be a successful coach. He was a great mentor for Coach Brian and taught him a lot about preparation and organization.

My telephone interview with Coach Brian ended with me asking Coach Brian about the role of faith in his career. Coach Brian responded by saying that nothing in life happens without God. But he did feel that people needed to get out and work because he felt that God rewards anyone who doesn't aspire to help themselves. He was thankful that God did give him the forum

to do what he loves to do, which is coach football. I thanked Coach Brian for his time and our interview concluded after about 10 minutes of talking.

### **Coach Jason**

The timing of my telephone interview Coach Jason came as a bit of a surprise to me. I left a message with my telephone number and a message stating that I had a few follow-up questions concerning his questionnaire with his executive assistant. I was at the park with my daughter on a Sunday afternoon when my cell phone rang with Coach Jason on the other line. Thankfully, my bookbag with my dissertation work was in my car nearby. I thanked Coach Jason for calling me back, and he apologized to me for calling on a Sunday but that he had some free time and decided to call. I told him that it was no problem at all, and I apologized to him for taking an unconventional route in reaching him in the first place (before Coach Jason responded to my survey, I sent him a message via Facebook encouraging his participation. I felt confident sending him this message because we had met some time ago and he told me if I ever needed anything to feel free to contact him). Coach Jason told me that he appreciated that resourcefulness and that it reminded him that he needed to stop neglecting a pile of paperwork (my survey included) on his desk.

I started our interview by asking for Coach Jason's clarification on the Character Trait portion of the questionnaire in which he felt that being an Effective Communicator and Honest were the most important characteristics for a head coach to have. Coach Jason said that the two traits go hand in hand to him. He felt that those two are the most critical characteristics that he or any other person to have. I asked Coach Jason if he felt the other characteristics that he



ranked the same (Faith and Good Motivator) hold equal importance. He said that they did hold equal importance to him.

I asked Coach Jason how he transitioned from playing football to coaching football since his questionnaire indicated that he did not play professional football. Coach Jason said that after college, he took a job coaching at a high school. Coach Jason mentioned that he had always had an interest in coaching and coaching in high school was a nice introduction to it. From coaching high school, Coach Jason said that he was fortunate enough to land a job at his alma mater. From his alma mater, Coach Jason said that he moved to a school out west, and it was there that a significant turning point in his career took place. Coach Jason said that he was able to recruit a top ranked national player to the school he was working for out west and that act gained a lot of attention from other coaches around the country. It raised his national profile as a coach and enabled him to land coaching positions at different colleges. It was his final stop as an assistant coach at a university on the East Coast that Coach Jason said his career really took off.

Coach Jason said that when he arrived at the school on the East Coast, not only did his salary increase; the talent of the players on the team was significantly better. As a coach, Coach Jason said that he only need to coach hard and continue to win games. The school on the East Coast already had a level of prestige that made it nationally known for producing a lot of NFL talent, and the school generally won a lot of football games on the field. In addition, Coach Jason knew that this school was known for having their coaches coach in the NFL, and that was right in line with one of his career goals. I asked Coach Jason if he ever had any aspirations to coach in college, and although he was receptive to the idea, he had always envisioned himself as a NFL head coach.

After coaching at the East Coast school, Coach Jason got a job in the NFL with a coach who was known for his prolific offense. Coach Jason mentioned this as an important move in his life. He had always wanted to coach in the NFL, albeit as a head coach, but this position offered him a chance to return to his hometown and coach in the NFL so he took it. Coaching the wide receivers, the team continued to put up outstanding offensive stats, and even won the Super Bowl, the ultimate title in professional football. This further raised the profile of each coach on the staff. Because of the raised profile, Coach Jason felt that when a local university came looking for a head football coach, he would be the perfect fit for that position. He was already active in the community and had a decent relationship with the university administration. Coach Jason felt with all of his career moves, he took advantage of the proper opportunities at the right time.

I then asked Coach Jason about the impact the AFCA and other professional associations had on his career. Coach Jason said that he was a lot more active in them when he was an assistant coach in college but not so much as in the NFL because their season was still going. He noted how they were a great place to network and talk about football, open jobs, and other random things going on in the profession. I asked specifically about the BCA, and Coach Jason said that before there was any formal Black Coaches and Administrators group, a lot of Black coaches just got together and talked informally. His network expanded a bit more because every year, more African American coaches would join into these informal socialization networks. I asked Coach Jason if he thought that White coaches had the same type of informal socialization networks, and he replied saying that he was certain that those networks existed for White coaches as well. Coach Jason said that those networks were not even an intentional attempt at

seclusion ... that it was more like going to a party and seeing a group of friends and naturally going over to speak with your friends.

I followed Coach Jason's comment up by asking if he thought that there was a same level of comfort when it comes to administrators hiring coaches who are their friends. Coach Jason apprehensively replied that he thinks it is the case. He quickly followed it up by saying that if something goes wrong with a coach as far as wins and losses and things off the field, hopefully the administration at that school would want to change some things up because it was not working with that coach and hopefully he or other African American coaches are the change that the administration is looking for. I asked Coach Jason if he thought if a coach left for another job, does he feel an administrator would go out and target the same type of coach that just left. Coach Jason said that although he has never been an administrator, he felt that all of them had their list of qualities that they look for in a head football coach, similar to what he has when looking for an assistant coach. He said that he just always wanted to have the necessary qualities that would enable him to be on those lists that the administrators had and warrant a phone call to gauge his interest in open jobs. Coach Jason felt that informal socialization has been very beneficial to his career in terms of teaching him how to run his program, the mistakes that they made, and hearing about open jobs.

I asked Coach Jason about his biggest successes and failures as an assistant coach. He said that winning the National Championship was by far his biggest success and having to tell a kid that he is no longer a part of the program has been his biggest failure. He felt that by having to get rid of a kid, he failed as a coach to make that kid a beneficial member to both the team and the university community, but at the end of the day, he has a responsibility to other members of the team and to his family to keep productive members on the team. I followed that up by asking

Coach Jason about the impact being a parent has had on him professionally. Coach Jason said that it has taught him patience and when players say or do things, he can look at it from a different perspective. Coach Jason said that he still has to discipline players accordingly, but being a parent has made him a little more empathetic and compassionate with his players.

I asked Coach Jason if he could single out any one person who has made an impact in his ascension to being a head coach. Coach Jason said that it was all the informal meetings that he used to have at the AFCA—the ability to interact with other coaches. He was able to interact with other assistant coaches and a few African American head coaches, guys who had made it to the perceived mountaintop of college football coaching. He said that those coaches were motivating to him because they had achieved the level of success that he wanted to achieve. I asked Coach Jason if he felt that if he were relieved from his duties at his current institution did he believe that he would be given another head coaching opportunity within 2 years. He was very candid and said that because of the size and pedigree of the school he did not think that he would be offered another head coaching position. He was not optimistic that he would get another head coaching job and thought that he may secure a job as a position coach or in the NFL.

I asked again if there were any other people or events that greatly affected his career and Coach Jason said that he could not stress the importance of moving from the school on the East Coast to working in the NFL. Coach Jason said that learning how the head coach of the NFL team ran the organization and getting familiar and ingrained into the local community had a tremendous effect on his career. The added familiarity of the community made transitioning from coaching in the NFL to being a head coach in college in the same community. Coach Jason also said that going to and graduating from college were major turning points in his life. My

telephone interview with Coach Jason ended with us exchanging pleasantries and him telling me to give him a call if I needed anything or if I ever came to town.

### **Coach William**

My telephone interview with Coach William came over a month after I finished my last telephone interview. Coach William's questionnaire was one of the final ones that I received in the mail, and I was pleasantly surprised that when I contacted his executive assistant, she said that she would block off about 10 or 15 minutes so that we could chat. Coach William first apologized to me for taking so long to respond to my questionnaire. He said that he was speaking on the phone with another member of my target population and had been asked had he participated. When Coach William told the other coach that he had not participated, the other coach advised him to participate, saying that it would only take about 10 minutes and would give him a refreshing look back on his career to this point. I told Coach William that I was thankful for the kind words that were spoken about my study and was happy that it had encouraged him to participate. Coach William said that my study really did make him sit down and think about all the people and events that had influenced his life and his career to this point. Being able to sit down and think about all the decisions that he made to get him to this point in his life gave him affirmation that he made the proper decisions.

I first asked Coach William if his current institution's academic reputation played a part in him applying to be a coach there. Coach William said that while he always aspired to be a head coach at any institution, the academic reputation and expectation levels at his new school were similar to the academic reputation and expectation levels at his previous institution, and it was a factor in him applying. The previous coach that Coach William worked for stressed

academics, and that fell right in line with what Coach William believed in. Coach William also said the ability to coach in the best football conference in the country also was enticing to him. I then asked Coach William if he felt the football success at his previous institution (led by an African American head coach) and the previous head coach at his new institution (also African American) had any impact on his hire. Coach William said that while he is not the administrator who makes those hiring decisions, he would hope that it was his successes as an assistant coach that were the determining factors in his hire and not his race. Coach William could not say with firm conviction if race played a role in his hire. Coach William did say that he knew that the previous head coach he worked for had a relationship with one of the administrators at his new school, so it would be safe to assume that he spoke on his behalf.

I asked Coach William if he thought it was more of a general network that impacted his hiring or was it specifically a network of African American coaches and administrators that affected his hire. Coach William said that throughout his career he has worked with and been comfortable with people of all races and that he thinks it is just his network in general and his hard work through the years that helped in him being hired as a head coach. Coach Williams also felt that the AFCA, NFL Minority Internships, and the NCAA Coaches Academies had a huge impact on his career. He got the opportunity to learn different offensive and defensive schemes, and he was introduced to a lot of the off-the-field issues that head coaches have to deal with that assistant coaches generally do not. He thought that those programs and associations were beneficial in the fact that they were practical and well organized and the content was valuable. Coach William further said that joining the AFCA was a great networking forum for he and other coaches and that joining the AFCA was one of the first pieces of advice that he was given as a young coach. Coach William talked about how he originally started out just knowing

a few coaches and gradually began to build his network out by meeting friends of friends. Coach William said that he could not emphasize enough the need for graduate assistants to get out and meet other coaches. It was something that he did as a graduate assistant and as an assistant coach. Coach William felt that it was not so much who you know, but who knows you.

I turned the tune of our conversation from professional organizations to the impact that family had on Coach William's career. Coach William said that the impact that family has had on his career was immeasurable. Coach William said that it started with his parents instilling the importance of education and hard work with him. Coach William stated that his parents put him in sports at an early age and sports reinforced a lot of the same values and discipline that were being taught to him at home. Coach William was thankful to his parents for the way that they raised him, and he tries to impart those same values in his family now. Coach William said that he tries to convey those same values to his players as well.

Coach William made a note on his questionnaire that he was a finalist for a national award. I asked Coach William what impact has that had on his career. Coach William felt that being nominated for that national award was big for his career. He said that again, it is not necessarily who you know, but who knows you. Although he did not win the award, it was evident to him that people recognized his hard work and skill set, and that he one of the top coaches in this profession. Coach William believes that administrators took notice and that it probably put him on some of their short lists of candidates. Coach William also felt that winning games at his previous institution was a big factor in his career trajectory. Coaches and other administrators take notice of programs that are winning consistently and that those administrators should want those coaches from successful programs helping to make their program successful. Coach William said that the culture at his previous institution, from the success generated on the

field, to the success in the classroom made it almost impossible for administrators around the country to ignore the assistant coaches at his previous institution (himself included).

The last question that I had for Coach William involved him ranking Faith as the ninth most important characteristic for a coach to have. Coach William said that while he had faith in God, he did not believe that having faith was a necessity when it comes to leading a team. Coach William said that since people have different ideals and beliefs, it was important for him not to press his own personal beliefs on his players, but to set up a structure to where if a player chose to pray before or after a game, he would have the time to do so or to do or whatever else he deemed necessary. For Coach William, he said that he felt there were other character traits that were far more important than faith for a head coach to have. My telephone interview with Coach William ended with me thanking him again for taking time out of his busy schedule to help me with my study. Coach William told me that he really enjoyed participating in my study and me forcing him to flashback to all the happenings in his life that brought him to this point in his career.

### **Preparing to Transition from interviews and profiles to Thematic Discovery**

After reviewing my notes from the four interviews, I was able to identify 15 different turning point themes. It was apparent to me that those themes were: Faith, Not being good enough to compete in professional sports, Former head coaches and administrators worked under, Graduating college and participation in sport in college, Becoming a graduate assistant, Joining professional associations, Being demoted, Being a parent, Being able to return and coach at his alma mater, Being able to take care of family, Recruiting a star player, Coaching for a winning program, Joining more prestigious programs and higher salaries, Becoming involved in



the local community, and Being nominated for national awards. Of the 15 turning point themes identified, eight were noted by multiple coaches: Faith, Not being good enough to compete professionally, Former coaches and administrators worked under, Joining professional organizations, Being a parent, Returning to coach at their alma mater, Family, and Winning championships (Appendix 10).

Similar to my thematic discovery for character traits, I wanted to group the 15 themes into sub-major themes. I targeted approximately 40% or six as the total number of sub-major themes I would try and group the identified themes into. I grouped the theme Being a parent and Family under the sub-major theme Family. I grouped Becoming a graduate assistant, Being demoted, and Former coaches/administrators worked for and under the sub-major theme Former coaches/administrators worked under. Winning championships, Not being good enough to compete professionally, Returning to coach at their alma mater, Recruiting a star player, Moving around and to better jobs, Being ingrained in the community, and Being nominated for national awards were grouped in the Random assignment category. Faith, Graduation from college and participation in sport, and Joining professional organizations remained as stand-alone sub-major themes (Table 8).

Table 8  
Sub-Major Themes Identified

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Sub-Major Theme 1	Faith
Sub-Major Theme 2	Graduation from college and participation in sport
Sub-Major Theme 3	Family
Sub-Major Theme 4	Former head coaches and administrators worked under
Sub-Major Theme 5	Joining professional associations
Sub-Major Theme 6	Random isolated themes

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I compared the results from the analysis of questionnaire and interview data to identify and categorize all the turning points that African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I FBS schools experienced during their ascension to their current position. I was able to identify specific turning points from both the questionnaires and the transcripts of the interviews. I kept a tally of the origin (questionnaire or interview) and type of the turning point to distinguish if any of the turning points were repeat mentions. A qualitative analysis of the data led to several emergent themes and emphasized the similarities of responses within the survey questionnaire and interview transcripts. Survey questionnaire data and interview results were inputted into SPSS and Microsoft Word, respectively. Survey questionnaire data and transcripts from interviews contributed to content used for analysis and reporting of study outcomes. This resulted in a comprehensive understanding of the research data. A constant comparative method and coding organized the theme sets.

I originally intended to use NVIVO software to help collect, organize, and analyze data from interviews and observations. However, after purchasing and installing the software, it proved to be an ineffective, inefficient, and most frustrating software program. I felt as if I was duplicating the work that I had done comparing interview transcripts and notes for turning points and common statements mentioned by the respondent population. Therefore, I eliminated using the NVIVO software in the theme development and organization.

Twelve different sub-major themes were identified from the results of the questionnaire and interviews with participants (I eliminated the random isolated sub-major theme category). Five of the themes were identified in both the questionnaires and interviews. Participant responses provided examples validating these major themes, patterns, and how these turning points affected their careers. These five themes were also mentioned by the most participants; either in the questionnaire, or in interviews. I decided that those would be the major turning point themes for this study based on the number of participants that mentioned these themes. These major themes are: Faith, Family, Graduation from college and participation in sport, Joining professional Associations, and Previous Coaches/Administrators worked under (Table 9).

Table 9  
Major Turning Point Themes

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Theme 1	Faith
Theme 2	Family
Theme 3	Graduation from college and participation in sport
Theme 4	Joining professional associations
Theme 5	Previous Coaches/Administrators worked for/under

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## **Thematic Discovery**

### **Theme One: Faith**

Five of the questionnaire respondents identified Faith in God as one of the main influencers of their careers. Faith in God was categorized as a Structural turning point as Faith was something that was integrated into their lives at an early age. Faith can also be categorized as a No-Control turning point as parents of these coaches ingrained Faith into them (Table 10). Coach Richard opined that Faith is his greatest source of motivation and inspiration. Because of his Faith, he believes that he is doing what he was meant to do. Coach Richard added that every person and every situation in which he has encountered in life is a direct result of his faith in God. “It all starts and ends with God” (Coach Richard interview, page 1, line 23-24). One questionnaire respondent response served as the lone outlier, as he ranked Faith as the ninth (second least important) characteristic for a head coach to have. Researchers cited in Chapter Two noted that professional identity development and coaching practices are impacted by faith (Duncan, 2012). As faith was a major theme identified in this study, previous literature remains consistent with the thought of current African American head football coaches.

### **Theme Two: Family**

Moustakas (1977) and Straus (1971) connect turning points to family experiences, which can in turn shape or alter a coach’s career. Five out of the nine questionnaire respondents identified Family as one of the main influencers and turning points in their careers. Family was considered a turning point that fell into the Total control, no-control, and structural categories (Table 10). Coach Richard noted in his interview his family has been an influence on how he treats his team and family is considered both a No-Control and Total Control turning point to him (Coach Richard interview, page 4, lines 164-165). Participant 2 noted on his questionnaire

that his father (No-Control & Structural turning points) and daughter (Total Control turning point) were both motivations and inspirations in his life. Coach Brian listed his father as biggest source of motivation and inspiration (Structural and No-Control turning points). As his primary motivator, Coach Brian's father took him to sporting events and forced he and his siblings to play sports. This influence by his father facilitated the love that he had for sports and his decision to play/work sports (Coach Brian interview page 2, lines 61-65). Coach Brian also mentioned his wife as major motivator and that getting married (Total Control turning point) was an influential decision in his career (Coach Brian interview page 2, line 71). Questionnaire Participant 6 also listed his father as his greatest source of motivation and the individual who encouraged him to become a football coach (No control and Structural turning points). Coach Jason said that his family as an inspirational influence in his career (Total Control turning point). Being married and having children has influenced Coach Jason's career and in how he manages his team; he exercises more patience dealing with issues that may arise (Coach Jason interview page 4, lines 160-164). Coach William listed his parents and the structure they provided as a major influence in his life (Structural turning point) (Coach William interview page 3, lines 117-122).

### **Theme Three: Graduation from College and Participation in Sport**

Each of the nine coaches listed graduation from college (Structural turning point) and participation in sport (Total Control turning point) as significant events in their lives, which contributed to their ascension to their ascension to Head Football Coach. Coaches Richard, Brian, and Jason all said that not being good enough as a player in his sport (No control and Total Control turning points) also contributed to them transitioning to the coaching profession sooner (Coach Richard interview page 1, lines 26; 28-32; Coach Brian interview page 2, lines

69-70; Coach Jason interview page 1, lines 39-40) (Table 10). Participants 4 noted on his questionnaire that he needed a job once he graduated college and turned to coaching high school football and teaching to satisfy that need. Coach Jason echoed those same sentiments as he said he always had an interest in coaching, and there was an available position at a local high school (Coach Jason interview, page 1, lines 40-41). Coach Richard stated the fact that he excelled academically in college while playing football directly affects how he interacts with his current team: if he can make good grades and participate in sport, then so can they (Coach Richard interview, page 1, lines 34-36. As cited in Chapter Two, Fitzgerald and Sagaria (1994) and Brooks and Althouse (1993) stated that the minimum requirements for an African American head coach are a bachelor's degree and participation in sport in college. Many coaches learn technical and practical experiences of football through their playing careers (Butcher, 2012). However, contrary to the stacking theory, position played in college was not mentioned by survey respondents as a help or hindrance (Bimper & Harrison, 2012; Finch et al., 2010;).

#### **Theme Four: Joining Professional Associations**

Seven of the questionnaire respondents listed joining a coaches association as an important event in their ascension to head football coach (Total Control turning point) (Table 10). Kram (1996) noted that professional identity is developed through the exploration of multiple selves, relationships, or organizations. He also posited that these environments allow individual professional identities to serve as an integral part in shaping their careers. Participant 2 listed on his questionnaire that the informal networking opportunities that the coaches association were important in his career. Coach Richard mentioned during his interview that the AFCA convention and its schedule allowed for coaches to attend meetings and seminars to perfect their craft and socialize with other coaches and administrators (Structural turning point)

(Coach Richard interview, page 2, lines 75-81). Coach Jason said that the AFCA and the BCA as influential in his career because of the networking and organizational structure that those organizations provide (Total Control and Structural turning points). It also gave him a chance to get together with other African American coaches that he knew, meet new ones, and expand his network (Coach Jason interview, page 3, lines 117-120). Coach William noted that joining the AFCA was one of the first pieces of advice that he was given as a young coach (Coach William interview, page 2, lines 79-80). Coach William lauded the structure and the familiarity of the AFCA convention (Structural turning point). He noted that the structure of the seminars mandated that coaches who asked a question or made a comment introduce themselves and the school that they were affiliated with in order to promote coaches getting acquainted with one another (Structural, No-Control, and Total Control turning points) (Coach William interview pages 2-3, lines 92-95). Coach William also advised that every coach become involved in the professional associations, as it is important to expand both who you know and who knows you (Coach William interview, page 3, lines 113-114).

#### **Theme Five: Previous Coaches/Administrators Worked Under**

Eight of the nine questionnaire respondents specifically listed previous head coaches and administrators that they have worked under as significant individuals in their lives and their trajectory to becoming a head football coach. This is parallel to the underlying theory and literature that coaches needed to be exposed to the right networks and connections in order to be considered and hired to be a head football coach at the Division I FBS level (Brooks & Althouse, 2000; Voight, 2006). These previous coaches and administrators provided both Structural and Total Control turning points for the survey respondents (Total Control). Coach Richard noted the first head coach that he worked for as a specifically significant individual in his coaching

ascension. Coach Richard noted how thankful he was to be hired, and it was an easy transition for him to work for a program and coach that he played under during his stay in college (Coach Richard interview, page 1, lines 44-45). Coach Richard also noted the importance of working for a head coach with a reputation for a high-powered offense. He specifically said how learning that high-powered offensive system used by the head coach helped him land his first head coaching position (Structural turning point) (Coach Richard interview page 3, lines 98-99). Participant 2 cited on his questionnaire that the head coach he worked under in his last stint prior to becoming a head coach himself as a significant individual in his coaching career. He also specifically mentioned the Athletics Director and an Assistant Athletic Director as individuals who were influential in his career development. The policies and procedures that these individuals had in place assisted Participant 2 in how he developed and his own policies and procedures once he became a head football coach (Structural and No-control turning points).

Coach Brian stated in his interview that it was not just the head coaches that he worked under who provided inspiration and motivation for him but often the coordinator. While he praised the mentorship and structure that he received from a previous head coach he worked under (Structural turning point), Coach Brian revealed in how a coordinator gave him the opportunity to get hands on with coaching on the field (Total control turning point) (Coach Brian interview page 2, lines 73-80). Coach Brian also praised the preparation and organization of the coordinator and has in turned used some of those same policies and procedures with his current team (Structural turning point). Participant 4 noted on his questionnaire that his high school coach whom he first worked for and the last head coach he was employed by in college before becoming a head football coach as influential members in his coaching career. He emphasized the importance of structure and leadership roles that the last head coach he worked for put he and



other coaches in (Structural, Total control, and No-Control turning points). He noted that it prepared him for more opportunities. Questionnaire Participant 5 found motivation and inspiration from the previous head coach at the institution that he succeeded, as well as a former head coach of the same institution. From the head coach he succeeded, delegation of responsibilities and organization were taught to each of his fellow assistant coaches (Structural and No-Control turning points). From the former head coach of the same institution, Participant 5 was inspired by his success, grace, and the respect that he had earned and still given (Total Control turning point). Participant 5 was also mentored by a former administrator at his institution who taught him how to handle staff and make tough but smart decisions (Total Control and Structural turning points).

Coach Jason stated in his interview that the opportunity to work with and learn from one of the more brilliant offensive minds in the National Football League as an important turning point in his career (Structural, Total Control, and No-Control turning points) (Coach Jason interview page 2, lines 81-86). Similar to Coach Richard, learning a high-powered offensive system led to Coach Jason to landing his first head-coaching job. Questionnaire Participant 8 mentioned the first head coach that he worked under as having a significant impact on his career. That head coach was there to share his coaching experiences, expectations, and philosophies with Participant 8 (Structural turning points). Coach William listed the high school head coach that he worked under, as well as 2 other collegiate head coaches that he worked under as providing support, inspiration, and motivation in his coaching career (Total Control turning point). The most recent head coach that Coach William worked under allowed him to work on budget issues, and other facets of running a football team that are usually handled by just the head football coach (Structural and No-control turning points).

Table 10  
Major Turning Point Themes and Type

Theme	Type
Faith	Structural, No Control
Family	Structural, No-Control, Total Control
Graduation from college and participation in sport	Structural, Total Control, No Control
Joining professional associations	Total Control
Previous coaches/administrators worked for/under	Structural, Total Control

### Summary

Chapter Five communicated the accounts of the turning points experienced by four African American head football coaches and how the turning points affected their lives and career trajectories in the coaching profession. I was able to find a connection and commonalities between the turning points experienced by these coaches and group them into six sub-major themes (Table 8). Finally, this after reviewing both the questionnaires and coaching interviews, I designated and explained five major themes African American head coaches identified and how these major turning points affected the lives and their career trajectories in the coaching profession (Table 9). These five major themes were turning points that were identified most often by questionnaire and interview responses. Chapter Six will include a summary of major findings, implications, and recommendations for future research and researcher reflections.

## **CHAPTER SIX: TURNING THE CORNER WITH TURNING POINTS**

Many studies have been conducted to try and explain the lack of African Americans as head football coaches at NCAA Division I FBS schools. While these studies have looked at critical race, stacking, and other theories to explain the dismal hiring records, none have explored the turning points of African American coaches as an explanation to this quandary. This study identified and brought clarity to the turning points African American head coaches experienced during their ascension to the position of head football coach. Additionally, this study identified traits and characteristics that coaches felt were necessary for a head coach to possess. The five major themes established from the questionnaires and interviews suggest a blueprint for African American assistant coaches to mirror in hopes of achieving the same career successes as the current African American head football coaches. The five major themes established also provide an opportunity for current athletic administrators to increase their attempts at expanding their networks to include more African Americans as strong candidates for potential head football coach open positions.

This study identified and explained the turning points African American head football coaches at Division I FBS schools faced during their career. Twelve sub-major turning point themes were identified from the questionnaires and interviews. From the 12 sub-major themes, five major themes were identified. The five major turning point themes were: Faith, Family, Graduation from college and participation in sport, Joining professional associations, and Previous coaches/administrators worked for and under. Coaches felt that these five turning points had the most impact on their careers, as each theme was integral in them ascending to their current position.

The results of this study provide specific examples of how each of these turning points supported the study participants in their careers. Faith and family were identified primarily as Structural and No-Control turning points, as coaches felt the support of their families and the embedding of Faith in their lives at an early age are facets of their identity and how they conduct themselves and run their football teams. Graduation from college and participation in sport, as well as Joining professional associations, were primarily listed as Total Control and Structural turning points. While choosing to participate in sport is a total control turning point, coaches noted that graduation from college was a catalyst for their careers, consistent with literature presented in Chapter Two (Thompson, 2013). Joining professional associations was believed to be an integral part of identity developing and a premier forum for networking with peers and possibly getting exposed to new networks. This exposure to new networks is thought to heighten employment opportunities. Astin (1984) noted that the more involved a coach becomes in his or her profession, the more likely he or she will be to prosper. Joining professional organizations is the primary method for coaches to become more involved and increase their network. As one coach noted, “it is important to expand both who you know and who knows you.” Previous coaches/administrators worked for and under was categorized as a Total Control, Structural, and No-Control turning point. Coaches noted the influence previous coaches and administrators had on their careers. From a standpoint of how the programs were run structurally, to enhancing their off-the-field skills in areas such as budgeting and branding, to exposing the participants to different and innovative schemes on the field, coaches felt that previous coaches and administrators worked for and under was the most significant turning point theme. Taormina (2009) postulated that socialization in athletic organizations is the principal method in which individuals become ingrained in or connected to an organization. Simple affiliation with a

certain head coaches was also thought to be associated with more promotions, more mobility, and better outcomes. Sage (1973) noted that coaching socialization stems from amateur coaches interacting and learning the skills and values from older and more experienced coaches.

Using turning points as the theoretical framework captured specific moments, events, and people in the lives of African American head coaches in relation to their career trajectory. While turning points do delineate individual happenings (the “what”), identifying specific turning points do not capture the “why” certain things happened, or the effect that turning points have had on each coach. Only the individual coach can elaborate or make sense of the turning point’s affect on his or her life and career. Additionally, only the individual coach can state the length and magnitude of each turning point. Can turning points fully explain the lack of African American head coaches at NCAA Division I FBS schools? No. However, identifying turning points in this study did demonstrate that there are commonalities in experiences and people by African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I FBS schools. Bringing these experiences to the forefront will serve to help aspiring head coaches by informing them that there are other coaches who have gone through similar situations. Identifying turning points show other aspiring head coaches the path that current African American head coaches took to achieve their level of success and that it can be emulated.

### **Recommendations**

This study found knowledge of the turning points experienced by African American head coaches is a professional networking challenge for African American assistant head coaches and recommends specific approaches for assistant coaches and administrators to use in altering current hiring practices. A series of recommendations for closer examination by assistant

coaches interested in becoming a head football coach at the NCAA Division I FBS level and for administrators looking to hire an African American as a Head Football coach were generated, followed by suggestions for future research studies.

**Recommendation #1: Implement a Version of the NFL’s “Rooney Rule”**

While the NCAA lacks the authority to mandate campus-hiring practices, the primary purpose of the NCAA is to establish rules and policies in which its member institutions must follow. The NFL’s Rooney Rule mandates that each team interview at least one minority candidate for every head coach and general manager position. If teams fail to comply, a fine is imposed. A similar policy instituted at NCAA member institutions is recommended for all hires of head coaches and senior level administrators. While some institutions may argue that this may place an added financial strain on the university, the NCAA appropriates funds to each of its member institutions and could increase the amount of appropriations to augment any extra costs.

**Recommendation #2: Assistant Coaches Start Attending the NACDA Convention**

The National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) serves as the professional association for those in the field of athletics administration. It also serves as a vehicle for networking and the exchange of information to others in the profession. I recommend that assistant coaches register for and attend the annual NACDA convention, as this will also provide them with networking opportunities with current and future athletic administrators. Attending the NACDA convention will also enable coaches to attend workshops and sessions in areas such as budgeting, managing personnel, and other facets of athletics that would benefit them as a head coach.

### **Recommendation #3: Athletic Administrators Start Attending the AFCA Convention**

The AFCA is the only national organization with the sole purpose of improving football coaches through ongoing education, interaction, and networking. The AFCA annual convention spans 4 days and usually has more than 6,000 coaches in attendance. Athletic administrators who attend the AFCA are put in an optimum atmosphere to network with African American assistant coaches, getting to know more about the characteristics and traits that they possess in the hopes that those are the same characteristics that the administrators look for when making hiring decisions. Attending the AFCA convention also enables administrators to attend workshops and seminars and learn more about some of the challenges that assistant coaches face.

### **Recommendation #4: Participation in and Increased participation in the NCAA and NFL Coaches Academy by Athletic Administrators and Assistant Coaches, Respectively**

The NCAA and NFL Coaches Academy annually gathers 30 NCAA assistant coaches and 30 former NFL players who have aspirations of being a head coach for a 3-day academy to expand their knowledge and insight into the world of intercollegiate football coaching. During this academy, the NCAA Leadership Development staff and the NFL Player engagement staff educate and train participants in areas that encourage effective coaching, student athlete well-being, effective communication with campus and community leaders, and building culture focused on student athletes success both on and off the field. Increased participation by assistant coaches provides a forum where they can learn skills needed to be a successful head coach that they might not be exposed to in their current scope of employment. Participation in this academy by administrators provides them with an environment to interact with assistant coaches and gain insight about each of these coaches' personality and professional characteristics.

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

The results of this study offer opportunities for further exploration. The suggestions for future research come as a result of the five major and 9 sub-major themes found in Tables 9 and 8. The suggestions for future research are also from another demographic that was not explored during this study: non-White, non-African American head football coaches. A growing number of student athletes participating in football are neither White, nor African American. Is there is discrepancy with the percentage of non-White, non-African American head coaches and players? A future study exploring this demographic could provide valuable insight to this topic.

A future study looking at the turning points in relation to the career trajectories of current assistant coaches (White and non-White) could also provide valuable insight. Comparing two coaches of dissimilar race and ethnic background and charting their career trajectories and specific turning points could give us a better understanding and hopefully be used to address any real or perceived barriers faced by either demographic as they progress through their careers. Determining if exposure to certain networks benefits one race over another would also help to further understand hiring decisions.

As Faith was a recurring theme identified by coaches in this study, I recommend a future study exploring Faith as a part of the turning point theoretical framework. In addition to African American head football coaches at Division I FBS schools, I recommend Faith be explored as a turning point in the lives of all coaches and administrators. This study found that Faith is an important characteristic to for coaches to possess, and that being Faith based was pivotal for most coaches.

Finally, a future study examining former African American head football coaches at NCAA Division I FBS schools could prove to be very beneficial as well. Once an institution no



longer employs a coach, those coaches could perhaps give insight on some of the challenges that they may have faced while they were employed as head football coach. Did they receive the same resources as their predecessor or successor? Was there any increased pressure to succeed? I believe a study involving former African American head football coaches at Division I FBS schools would provide an invaluable perspective into turning points and the challenges faced by African American in this industry.

### **Reflections**

I wanted to tell a story--- that is, the stories of the 13 African American Head Football Coaches at NCAA Division I FBS schools. I wanted the stories to highlight significant events and people in the lives of these coaches in the hope that future aspiring head football coaches would find inspiration and solace in the event they faced these any of the same situations. I wanted administrators at Division I FBS schools to look outside of the traditional networks that they consult in the hiring process and give strong consideration to African American candidates. I also intended to find any commonalities and/or discords in those turning points between African American head coaches. While the career paths and character traits for each of these coaches is different, there are harmonies and turning points that link the plights and ultimately the success of these coaches. Examining the turning points would serve to elucidate (or not) the disparity of African American head football coaches; were African American coaches exposed to the same networks and connections that their White counterparts were? Were African American coaches educated enough? Did African American coaches possess the personalities and characteristics suitable to college presidents, athletic directors, and other hiring decision makers?

This study sought to gather perspectives from African American coaches who had reached the level of head football coach at NCAA Division I FBS schools.

The guiding assumption for this study was that African American coaches were not exposed to the proper networks and contacts, thus delaying or eliminating the turning points that would aid in their ascension to being a head football coach at a Division I FBS school. My original thought going into this study was that for such a delicate and dignified population, individuals would be eager participants of my study, and that my only concern would be finding the time for them to participate. I really thought that a participant might mention race as a factor related to them experiencing (or not experiencing certain turning points). But, I have been around athletics, specifically football, long enough and should have known that I was going to get a lot of coach-speak. Football is a very unique fraternity and is often referred to as a man's game for men. Within those parameters, there really is not any room for the perceived "weak." If you are tired, you are weak. If you cannot push yourself harder, you are weak. If you COMPLAIN, you are weak. And that is where race plays a factor. These coaches would not and did not express any frustration or sentiment that race was a factor in them—a direct result of not wanting to be seen as a complainer.

There was, however, plenty of frustration on my end. I had a firm confirmation from one coach that he would participate in my study only for him to back out. When I spoke to him on the telephone, he gave me plenty of valid reasons on why he could not participate. I understood them all, but a lot of the information that he shared with me during our telephone conversation would have had an enormous effect on my study. Not so much with creating new major themes, but more so with the challenges and roadblocks that he faced in his career. While I was not surprised by some of the challenges that he faced, it was more of a revelation to me that I should

be a lot more leery of some of the administrators and power brokers in college football that I choose to admire. This coach confided in me that the words and statements spoken in public are often in stark contrast to their true feelings about people or situations.

As mentioned in the Positionality section in Chapter One, I have been employed in college athletics for over 15 years and have been afforded the opportunity to meet and work with hundreds of football coaches on both the collegiate and professional levels. I questioned why there were so few African American head coaches. I questioned whether, when given the opportunity to be a head coach, if African American head coaches were given the same resources as White coaches. I questioned why there was increased mobility and higher success for White coaches who had been terminated as opposed to African American coaches who had been terminated. I questioned the credentials of African American coaches. As an aspiring administrator, I questioned my own credentials. I questioned my access to networks and contacts of the decision makers. Was I good enough?

While the participants in this study held true to the notion that they “put their head down, coached really hard, recruited hard, and had faith” that their hard work was rewarded with a head coaching opportunity, they did lend credence to the concept that developing the proper networks was vital to their mobility as a head coach. They too believe in the notion of meritocracy, and in the end, everything they would be rewarded accordingly. Most of the survey respondents had a feeling of gratitude that they had finally reached the plateau of being a head football coach and not as reflective of the journey that it had taken them to get there. Two coaches expressed that they thought there were more qualified candidates for the head coach position, and were somewhat surprised that the less qualified candidate (the respondent) got the job.

## One Final Turning Point

As I reach the end of my dissertation, I too am reaching a turning point in my life: the culmination of my academic career. With a terminal degree in hand, there will be no more class for me to attend, no more tests to take. Papers will only be written if I feel compelled to continue researching and have a desire to publish. I think about the impact that this degree will have on myself, my family, and all those around me. Am I afraid of what's next? Absolutely not. But I am curious as to what the next chapter in my life will entail. How will *this* degree help me with achieving my personal and career goals? With learning about the turning points that these coaches experienced, often, I felt my own experiences in their stories. There were numerous commonalities in their stories and my own. Each of the major themes that they identified, I could identify with them as well. I too subscribe to the notion of putting my head down and working hard with the hopes that meritocracy will lead me to where I want to be. While these coaches have reached the level in which they wanted to reach, who is to say that they will remain there? What turning points in their current positions will they face? I will always embrace any challenge in life. This academic program was a challenge to me, a huge one at that. But as I do with any thing in life, I persevere, I remain resilient, and I win. While this particular phase and turning point in my life is over and uncertainty is on the horizon, one phrase sums up my feelings on the next segment in my life: "I'm excited."

## **APPENDIX A: NCAA FBS COACHING TURNOVER 2013-2014**

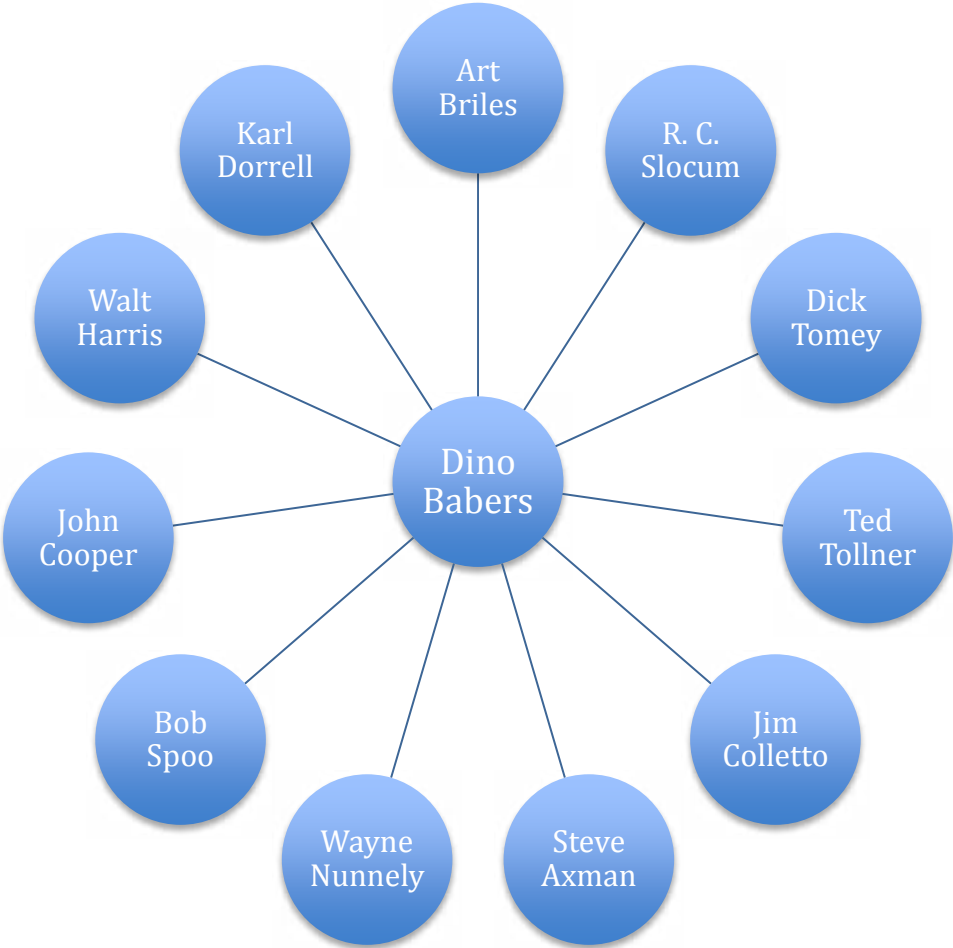
Old Coach	School	Reason for Change	New Coach
Bryan Harsin	Arkansas State	Resigned	Blake Anderson
Rich Ellerson	Army	Fired	Jeff Monken
Chris Peterson	Boise State	Resigned	Bryan Harsin
Dave Clawson	Bowling Green	Resigned	<i>Dino Babers</i>
Paul Pasqualoni	Connecticut	Fired	Bob Diaco
<i>Ron English</i>	Eastern Michigan	Fired	Chris Creighton
Carl Peline	Florida Atlantic	Resigned	Charlie Partridge
<i>Charlie Strong</i>	Louisville	Resigned	Bobby Petrino
Don Treadwell	Miami (OH)	Fired	Chuck Martin
Lane Kiffin	USC	Fired	Steve Sarkisian
Mack Brown	Texas	Resigned	<i>Charlie Strong</i>
Charley Moinar	UMASS	Fired	Mark Whipple
Bill O'Brien	Penn State	Resigned	<i>James Franklin</i>
Jim Grobe	Wake Forest	Resigned	Dave Clawson
Steve Sarkisian	Washington	Resigned	Chris Peterson
Dave Christensen	Wyoming	Fired	Craig Bohl
Bobby Petrino	Western Kentucky	Resigned	Jeff Brohm
<i>Garrick McGee</i>	UAB	Resigned	Bill Clark
<i>James Franklin</i>	Vanderbilt	Resigned	<i>Derek Mason</i>
Jeff Monken	Georgia Southern	Resigned	Willie Fritz

*Denotes African American Head Coaches*

*(CFP Staff, 2014; Thamel, 2013)*

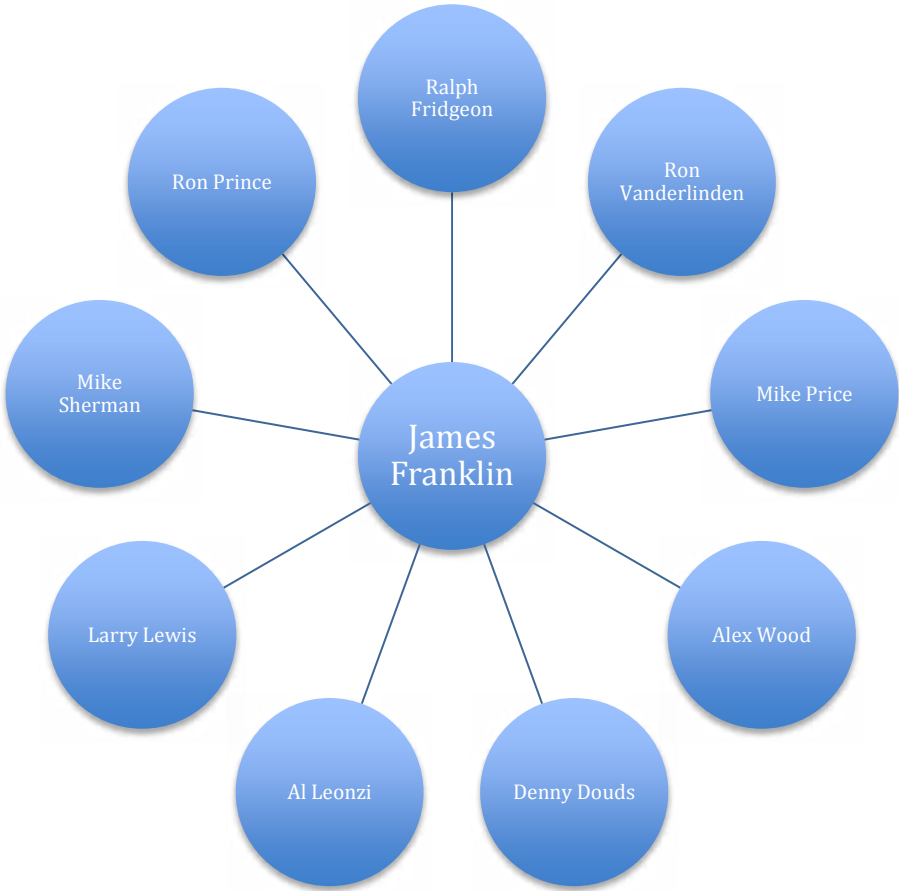
**APPENDIX B: COACHING ROOTS OF DIVISION I FBS AFRICAN  
AMERICAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACHES**

Dino Babers, Bowling Green State University

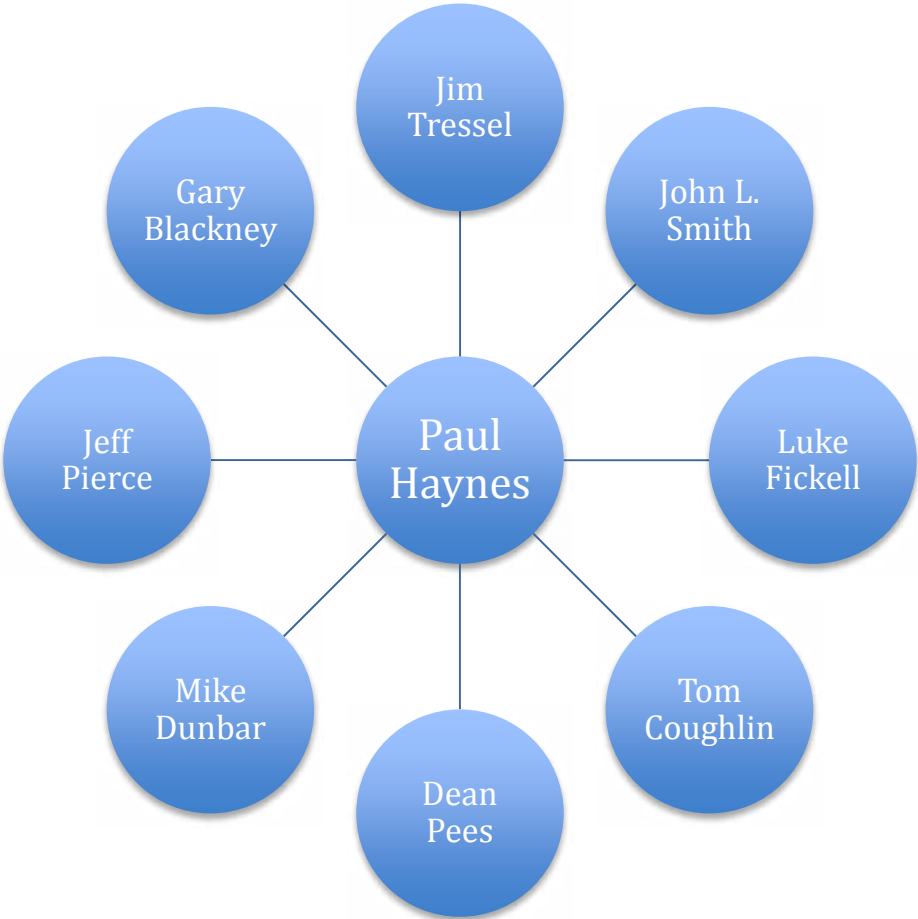


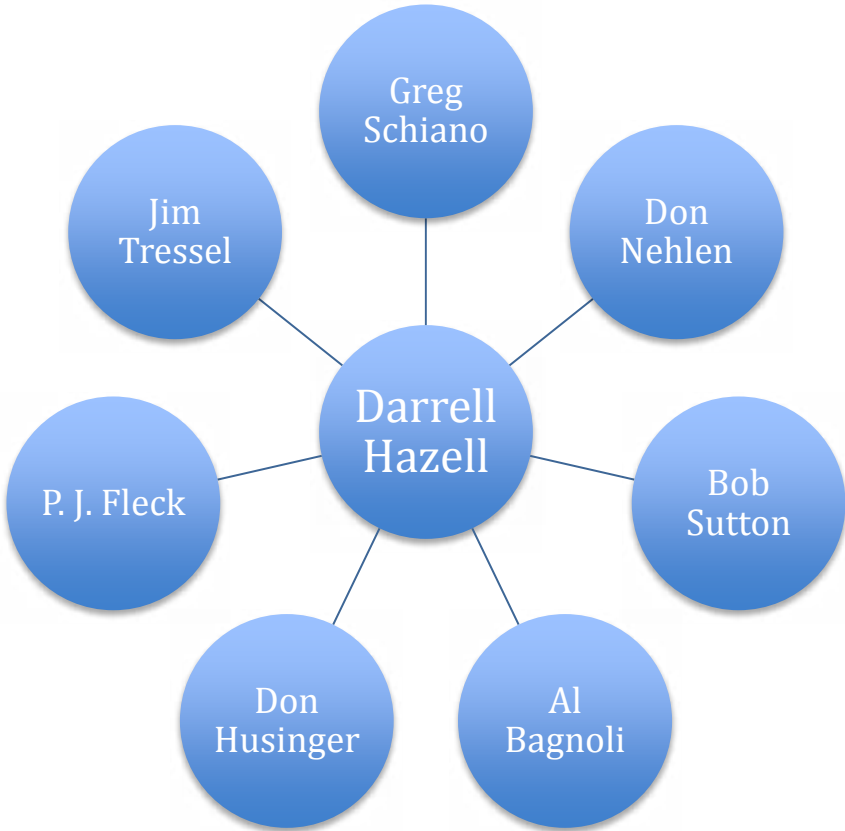


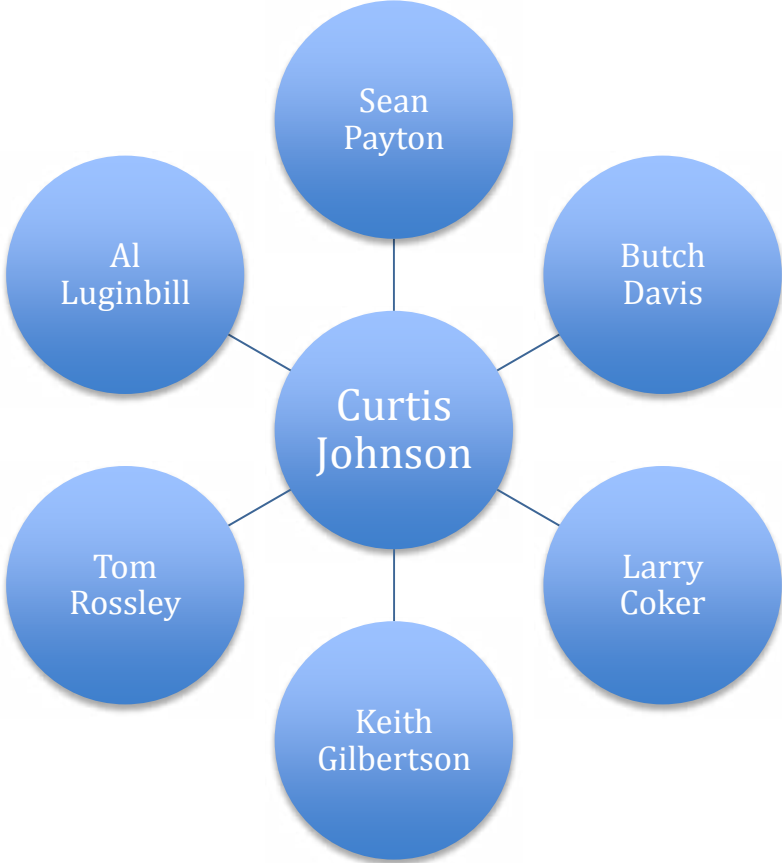
James Franklin, Penn State University



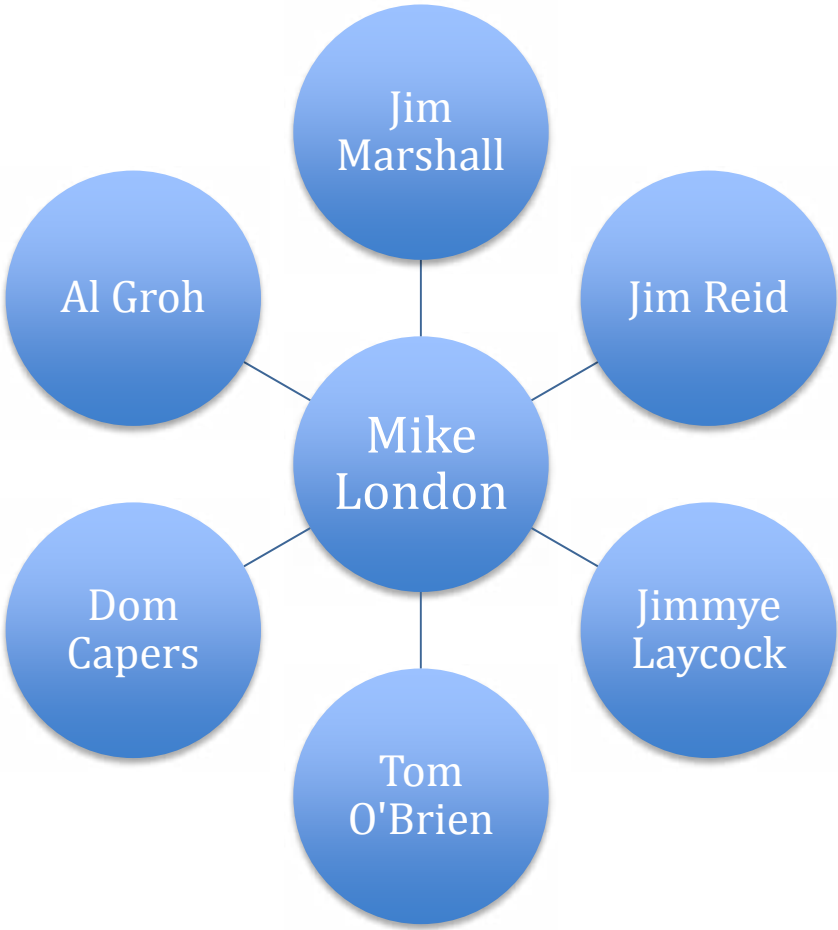
Paul Haynes, Kent State University



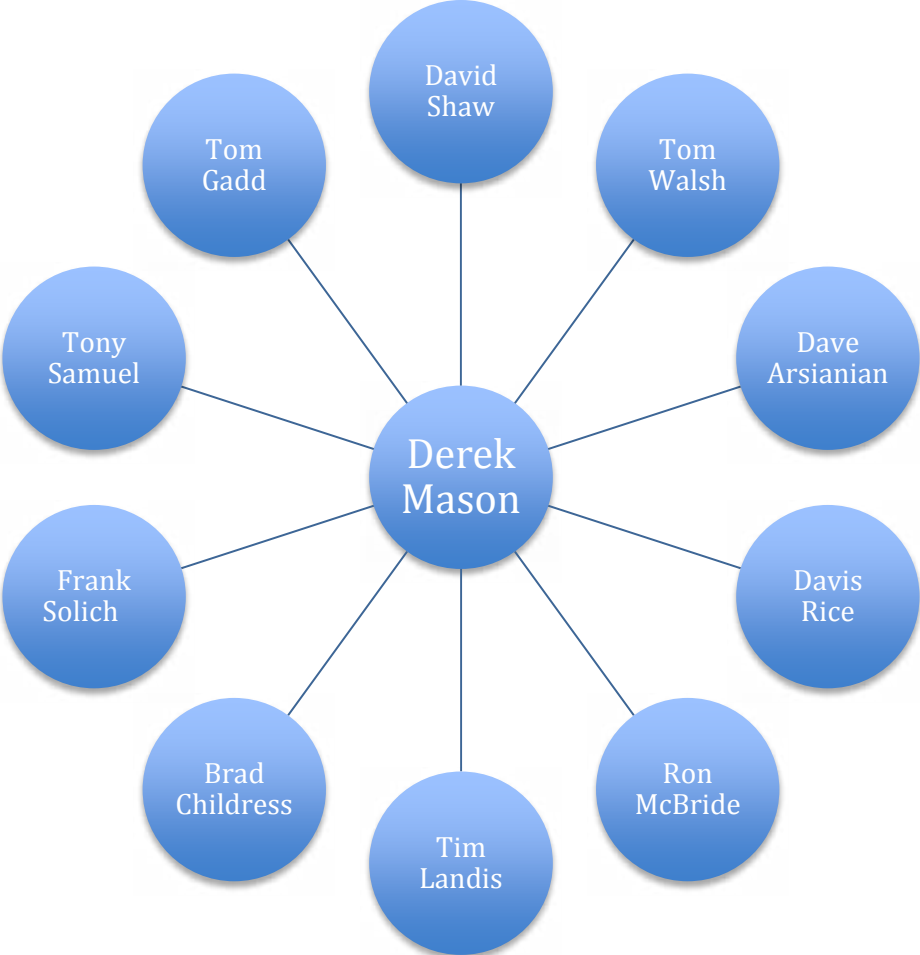




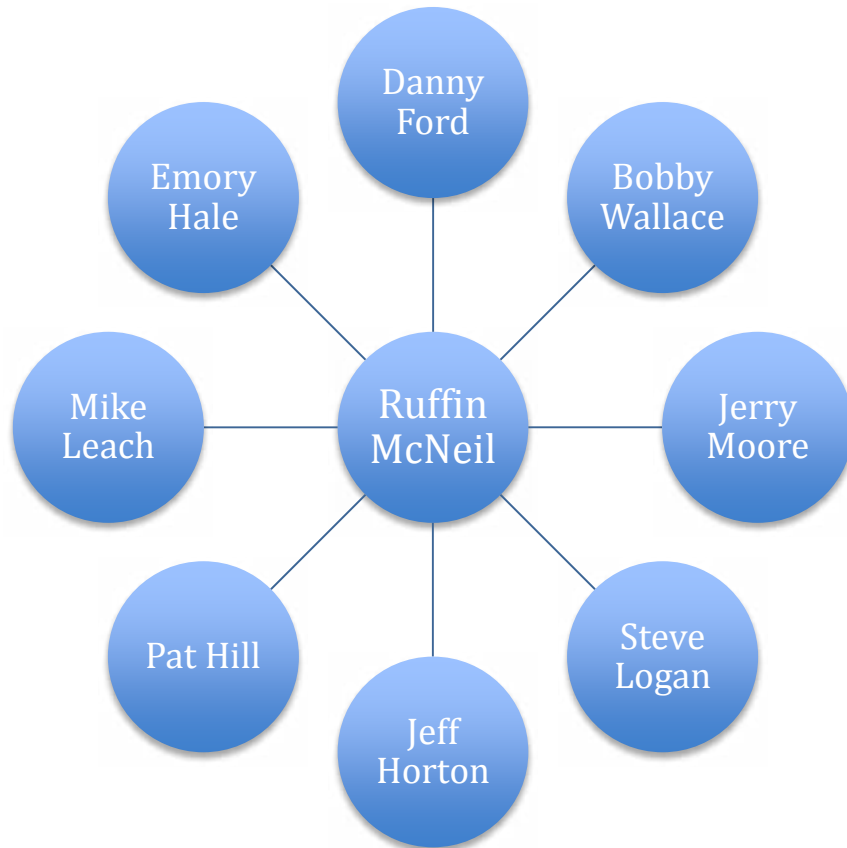
Mike London, University of Virginia



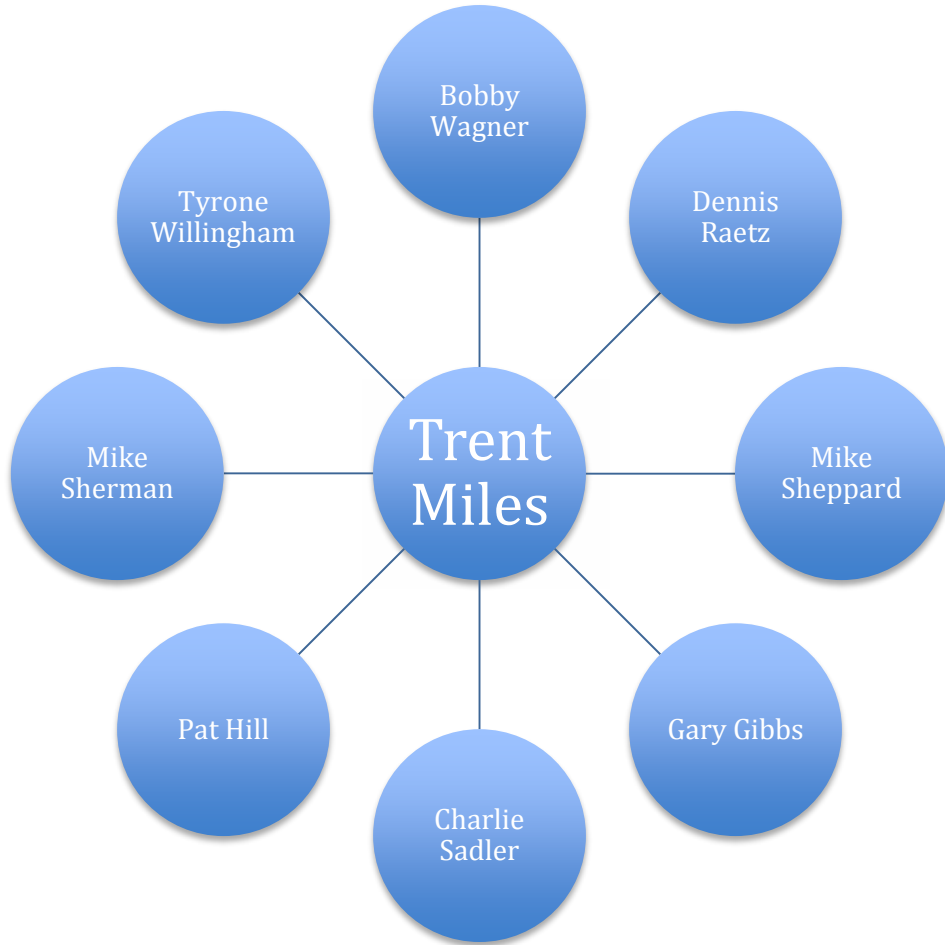
Derek Mason, Vanderbilt University



Ruffin McNeil, East Carolina University

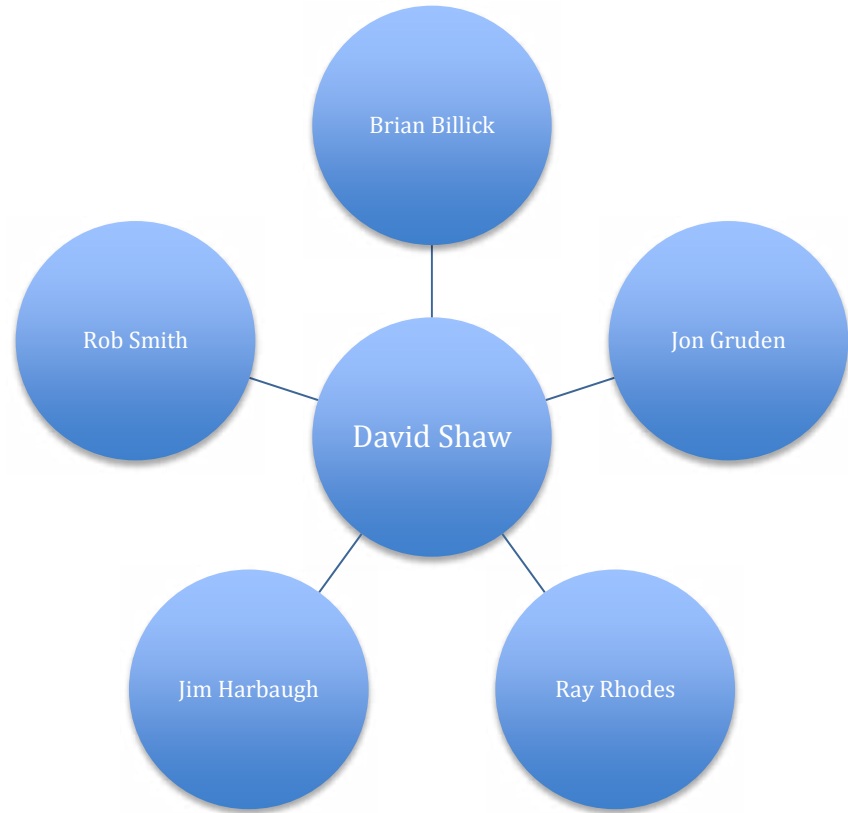


Trent Miles, Georgia State University

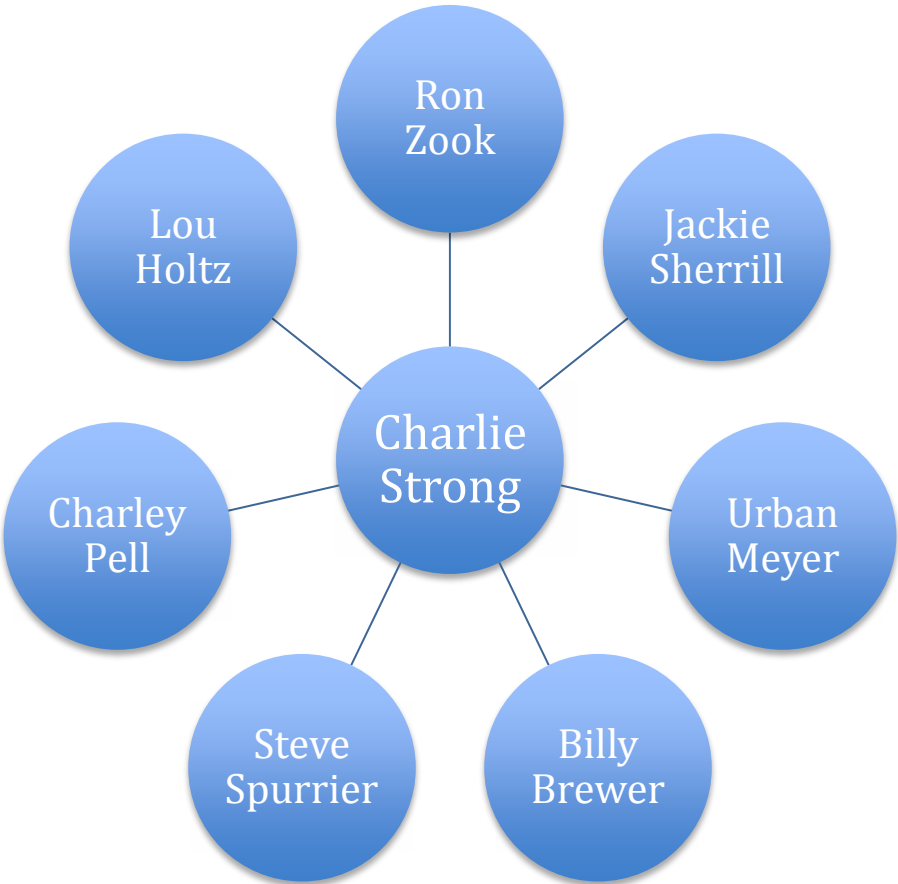


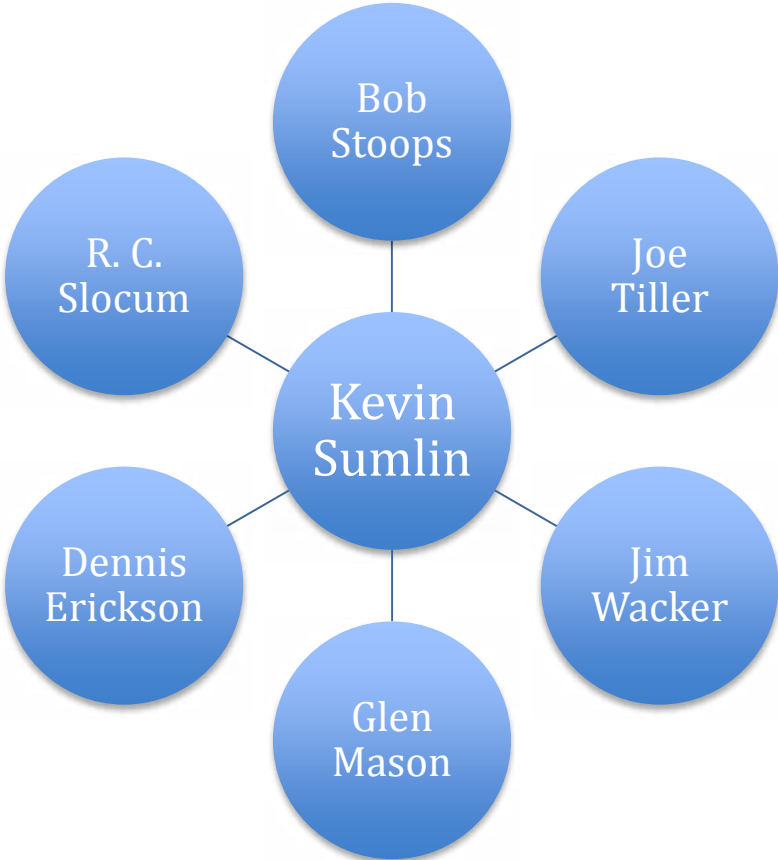


David Shaw, Stanford University

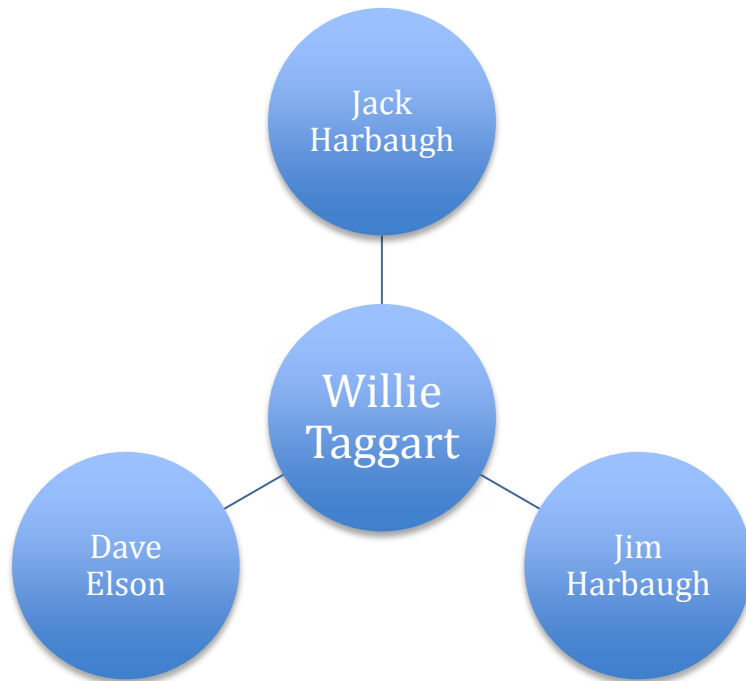


Charlie Strong, University of Texas





Willie Taggart, University of South Florida



## **APPENDIX C: FIRST REQUEST LETTER TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

December 29, 2014

Thaddeus Rivers  
University of Central Florida  
14845 Royal Poinciana Drive  
Orlando, FL 32828

Dear Sir

My name is Thaddeus Rivers and I am a student at the University of Central Florida. I am requesting your participation in my doctoral studies in Higher Education and Policy Studies at the University of Central Florida. The title of my dissertation is:

**AFRICAN AMERICAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACHES AT DIVISION I FBS  
SCHOOLS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON CAREER TRAJECTORIES AND  
TURNING POINTS**

The purpose of my research is to examine the influential people and moments in the lives of African American head football coaches, and their ascension to the position of Head Football Coach at Division I FBS schools. How African American Head Football Coaches perceive their ascension to their current position, and those events/people that were influential will hopefully be of interest and benefit to (a) assistant football coaches who aspire to be head coaches, (b) employers who may seek to hire assistant football coaches, and (c) others studying career trajectories of football coaches.

Your participation will significantly enhance the validity of this study. Be assured that your responses will be strictly confidential. Please return your completed survey in the postage paid envelope as soon as possible. Interview appointments will be made once the questionnaire is coded. Thank you for taking part in this study, and continued success in this and future seasons.

Cordially,

Thaddeus Rivers

Enclosure

**APPENDIX D: CAREER TRAJECTORY AND TURNING POINTS  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PART I. PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

1. Age:     21 – 25                       36 - 40                       51-55  
                  26 – 30                       41 - 45                       56+  
                  31 – 35                       46 – 50
2. Marital Status  
 Single                       Married                       Divorced
3. Do you have children?  
 Yes                       No
4. How long have you been employed at your current institution?  
 0 – 4 years                       9 – 12 years                       17 – 20 years  
 5 – 8 years                       13 – 16 years                       20 + years

**PART II. EDUCATIONAL & ATHLETIC BACKGROUND**

5. What type of college/university did you attend?  
 Public P.W.I.                       Private P.W.I.  
 Public HBCU                       Private HBCU                       Other
6. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?  
 Some College                       College graduate  
 Some post graduate work                       Post graduate degree



7. Did you play any collegiate sports?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

8. Did you earn any athletic honors while playing collegiate sports? If so, which ones?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      \_\_\_\_\_ N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Were you drafted or signed as a free agent by either the NFL or CFL?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

10. Did you make a professional team(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

11. How long did you play professionally?

\_\_\_\_\_ 0 – 4 years                      \_\_\_\_\_ 9 – 12 years                      \_\_\_\_\_ 17 – 20 years

\_\_\_\_\_ 5 – 8 years                      \_\_\_\_\_ 13 – 16 years                      \_\_\_\_\_ 20 + years

\_\_\_\_\_ I did not play professional football

12. Did you earn any honors playing professional football? If so, which ones?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      \_\_\_\_\_ N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**PART III. CAREER INFLUENCERS**

13. Who has been your greatest source of motivation or inspiration?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Were there any individuals who inspired you or encouraged you to become a football coach?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No      If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. How did you come about joining the coaching profession?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Have you ever been encouraged to join any professional associations?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

17. Were you exposed to any social activities that helped or hindered your career? If so, what were they and how did they affect you?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Was there any particular coach or administrator at your previous institution(s) who gave extra effort in helping you to get acclimated or accustomed to the organizational culture? If so, who and how?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

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19. Do you feel your salary and compensation package at your first head-coaching job was commensurate with your peers? If no, why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

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20. Was there a coach, mentor, or other person(s) who influenced your ascension in the coaching profession? If so, who and where?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

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21. Was there any particular event(s) that influenced your ascension to Head Football Coach? If so, what, where, and how?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

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22. Do you feel anything (personal or professional) delayed your ascension to being named Head Football Coach? If so, what?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

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23. Rank the following characteristics you feel are most important for a Head Football Coach to possess. Rate them as #(1) being the most important, and # (10) being the least important.

_____ Leadership	_____ Effective Communicator	_____ Strategist
_____ Media savvy	_____ Disciplinarian	_____ Organized
_____ Honest	_____ Good Motivator	_____ Flexible
_____ Faith		

## **PART IV: FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this interview is to gather information that identifies turning points and career trajectories of African American Head Football Coaches at NCAA FBS schools.

**Description:** For participant interviews, the researcher interviews African American head coaches as a follow-up to questionnaires already completed by participants. The interview should take at least 30 minutes but no longer than 3 hours.

**Script:** Thank you for coming today and for your participation in my study. The purpose of this study is to examine the turning points and career trajectories of African American Head Coaches at NCAA FBS schools. Your responses are completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone. The data I collect will remain confidential. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time. You can choose to leave or not answer any questions asked should you feel uncomfortable at any time during our discussion of your experiences. If you do not have any questions, let's begin.

### **Identities**

1. Describe some of the tasks you perform in a typical day of coaching.
2. Describe how those activities affected your coaching abilities.
3. Which characteristics do you feel are most important for head football coaches?
4. Has being a parent affected your coaching philosophy? If so, how?

### **Socialization**

5. Who did you meet in your career that was most helpful, informative, or acted as a mentor?
6. What specifically did that person(s) do that was so influential?
7. Do you feel compelled to mentor assistant coaches in the profession?
8. If so, what information/knowledge do you impart on them?
9. What professional organizations were most influential to your career?
10. How influential has informal socialization been on your career?

### **Career Trajectories**

11. What do you define as a career turning point?
12. Describe the challenges you have faced in your ascension to your current position?
13. Do you feel that if you are unsuccessful at this particular institution, you will receive an immediate (within 2 years) opportunity to be successful at a different institution?

14. What has been your biggest success as an assistant coach?
15. What has been your biggest failure as an assistant coach?
16. What has been your biggest success as a head coach?
17. What has been your biggest failure as a head coach?
18. Is/are there any thing(s) that you would do differently (outside of game strategy) during your ascension to head coach?

Thank you again for your time and for your participation in this study. I will be sending you a copy of the transcript of this interview for your review. If I have any follow-up questions concerning our interview, I will contact you with them.

## **APPENDIX E: UCF IRB LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
 Office of Research & Commercialization  
 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
 Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
 Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

**Approval of Exempt Human Research**

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**  
 To: **Thaddeus A. Rivers**  
 Date: **December 29, 2014**

Dear Researcher:

On 12/29/2014, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
 Project Title: AFRICAN-AMERICAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACHES AT  
 DIVISION I FBS SCHOOLS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON  
 TURNING POINTS  
 Investigator: Thaddeus A Rivers  
 IRB Number: SBE-14-10839  
 Funding Agency:  
 Grant Title:  
 Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 12/29/2014 11:51:21 AM EST

IRB Coordinator



## **APPENDIX F: SAMPLE FIELD NOTES**

Strong grip  
Well spoken  
Pictures of Friday  
Books, books, books  
Bible

Great presence - owns any room

God! What him within in the  
School Coach Tony

Nothing without God

Pro FB not meant to be

Great spirit

Coaches told him he's a good leader

AFCA - met a lot of ppl  
↳ got more sophomores through years

Mommy was perfect thing / God's plan

Getting started hurt, disappointed  
wife kept him up

CID# 9	Career Influencers (People)	Career Influencers (Actions)	Turning Point Type
		Graduating College	Structured
	Parents <sup>EVERYTHING</sup>		Structured
	High School Coaches	Encouraged him athletically	Structured Total Control
	Willie Shaw	<del>Willie Shaw</del> <del>Head coach</del> Head coach challenged him	Total control to be better coach
	David Shaw	- Former head coach he worked under	Structured
	H. S. math teacher	- After graduating college encouraged him to teach/coach	Total control Structured
		NCAA Coaches Academy NFL Minority Internships	- Structured - Total Control
		Finalist for Brayley Award	- No control
		Winning conf. titles Going to 4 BCS Bowls	Total control

NOT too long on Faith

Networking

**APPENDIX G: QUESTIONNAIRE THEMES AS IDENTIFIED BY  
RESPONDENTS: STAGE 1**

TURNING POINT	PARTICIPANT WHO IDENTIFIED IT
Graduating College	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Previous coaches and administrators worked for and under	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9
Family	2, 3, 6, 9
Faith	1, 2, 5
Joining professional associations	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
Winning conference championships and on other levels of play	2, 9
Becoming a graduate assistant	1, 3
Lack of athletic ability/not being good enough for the next level	7
Their former high school coach	4, 9
Becoming a high school coach	4, 9
Mentors from around the country	5, 9
Getting immersed in the community	3
Previous head coaching interviews	2
Coaches that they admired from afar	5
Becoming a coordinator (offensive/defensive)	5
Returning to coach at alma mater	3
Learning to deal with credit/blame as a coordinator	5
Being demoted	1

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Near death experience	2
Post graduate degree	1, 8

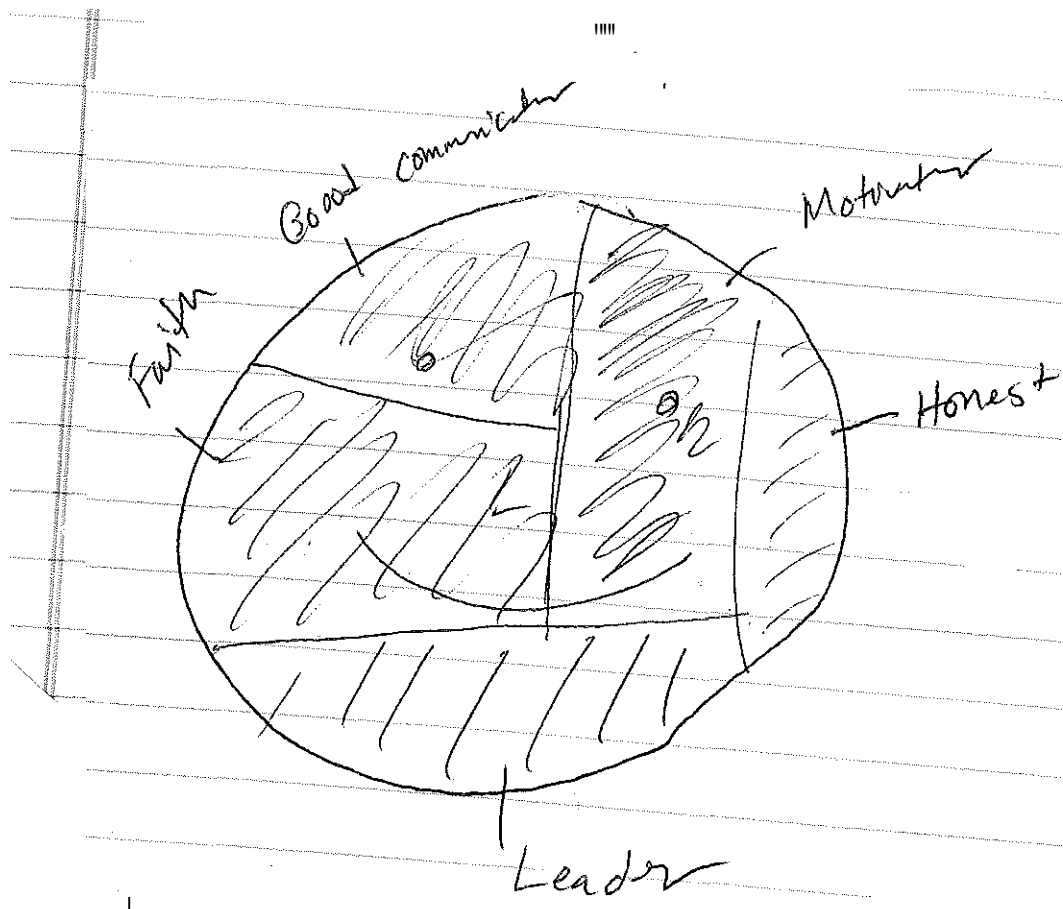
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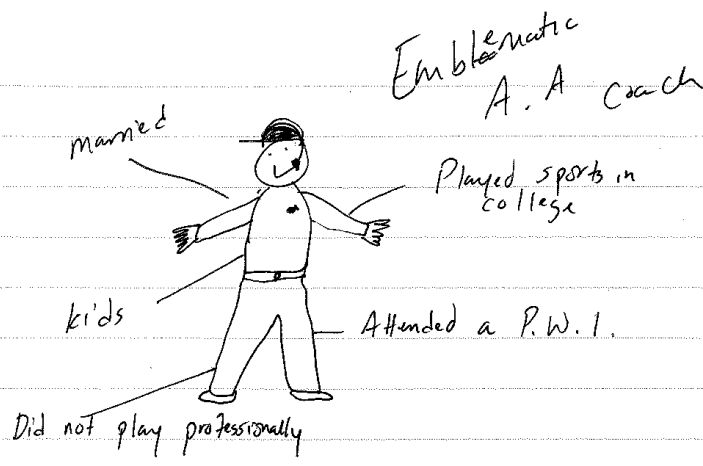
## **APPENDIX H: SUB-MAJOR THEME GROUPS**

SUB-MAJOR THEME	CONTRIBUTING THEME(S)
Graduating College and participation in sport	Graduation from college and participation in sport; Earning a post graduate degree; Their former high school coach
Previous coaches and administrators worked for and under	Previous coaches and administrators worked for and under; Becoming a graduate assistant; Mentors from around the country; Being demoted; Becoming a coordinator; Learning to deal with the credit/blame as a coordinator
Family	Family
Faith	Faith
Joining professional Associations	Joining professional organizations
Winning conference championships and on other levels of play	Winning conference championships and on other levels of play
Becoming a high school coach	Becoming a high school coach
Random Assignment	Not being good enough to play professionally; Getting immersed in the community; Returning to coach at alma mater; A near death experience; Coaches admired from afar; Previous head coaching interviews



**APPENDIX I: THE EMBLEMATIC DIVISION I FBS AFRICAN  
AMERICAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACH SKETCHES**





JPEG silhouette??

Graphic designer - Call Chuck/Evan

Personality traits or demographics??

The Emblematic African-American Football Coach

- Married with children
- 41-55 years old
- College graduate from a PWI
- Played sports in college
- Not drafted professionally

MISSING CHARACTERISTICS

Phenomenology  
 in your head  
 on how this  
 'emblematic'  
 fracture emerged?

What inspires the  
 fit?  
 PRO  
 CONS

PROCESS

**APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW TURNING POINT THEMES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS**

<b>TURNING POINT</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT WHO IDENTIFIED IT</b>
Faith	Coach Richard, Coach Brian, Coach William
Not good enough to compete professionally	Coach Richard, Coach Brian
Former coaches/administrators worked under	Coach Richard, Coach Brian, Coach Jason, Coach William
Graduating college and participation in sport	Coach Richard
Becoming a graduate assistant	Coach Brian
Joining professional associations	Coach Richard, Coach Jason, Coach William
Being demoted	Coach Richard
Being a parent	Coach Richard, Coach William
Returning to coach at alma mater	Coach Brian, Coach Jason
Family	Coach Brian, Coach Jason, Coach William
Recruiting a star player	Coach Jason
Winning championships	Coach Jason, Coach William
Moving around and getting better/higher paying jobs	Coach Jason
Becoming ingrained in the local community	Coach Jason
Being recognized for national awards	Coach William

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