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NOT SO FAST, MY FRIEND: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE RACE DISPARITY IN PROMOTIONS AMONG COLLEGE FOOTBALL COACHES

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To better understand persistent racial inequality in occupational mobility, we examine the influence of race and social capital on the promotions of 320 assistant college football coaches. The results from quantitative analyses demonstrate that social capital matters a great deal for promotions, but its impact is contingent on the race of the respondent. Specifically, network connections to heterogeneous contacts (racially heterophilous ties, weak ties, and high-status ties) appear to be more effective for black coaches than for white coaches. The findings underscore the importance and complexity of the relationships between race, social capital, and occupational mobility.

Networks of social relationships are useful for finding jobs and advancing careers (Granovetter 1974; Fernandez and Weinberg 1997; Lin 1999). Personal contacts impact the initial hiring process as well as within firm performance, promotion, and other posthire outcomes (Burt 1992; Castilla 2005; Kanter 1977; Kmec 2007; Marsden and Gorman 2001). In this way, social capital—that is, resources embedded in networks—has an important impact on labor

"Not so fast, my friend," is the signature catch phrase of ESPN college football analyst, Lee Corso. The authors thank Michael Schulman and Margaret Zahn for their helpful comments on a previous draft. Special thanks to Michael Sagas for providing access to the data used here.

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market outcomes (Lin 2001). However, access to and returns on social capital vary across social groups. Prior research on particularistic mobility patterns within the broader labor market shows that whites and racial minorities follow unique occupational trajectories and are subject to distinct rules for advancement (Baldi and McBrier 1997; Wilson et al. 1999). Specifically, these studies show that skill and performance indicators have a greater impact on advancement for subordinate groups in society than for white males. The implication is that social capital may play a more important role in advancement for white males than for other groups. Indeed, prior research has identified contingent effects of social capital on employment outcomes across racial groups (Ibarra 1995; Smith 2000). While these studies do not directly address the race-specific effects of social capital on promotions, the results imply that the types of network contacts and resources that are most effective for advancing the careers of white workers are often the least effective for minority workers.

The current investigation builds on these previous analyses by studying race differences in the impact of social capital on career advancement in a profession in which racial inequality is particularly acute: college football coaching. At present, only seven black coaches are in charge of the 119 major college football programs (i.e., NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision) entering the 2009 season. The scrutiny in the popular press over the lack of diversity on the sidelines of major college football programs has never been greater (see for example: Glier 2008; Rhoden 2008; Schlabach 2008; Thamel 2008). The most recent example that has drawn attention to this issue is the hiring of Gene Chizik at the University of Auburn—a white coach who was coming off of two seasons as head coach at Iowa State where he had a combined record of five wins and 19 losses (Thamel 2008). Auburn had interviewed, but did not offer the job to, Turner Gill—a black coach who turned a historically struggling program at the University of Buffalo into conference champions in only three seasons. Examples such as these draw attention to the role that social connections play in producing racial disparities in head coaching positions at the college level (Harrison and Yee 2006; Nyman 2005; Lederman 2006); however, few empirical studies have addressed the issue. Those studies that have conducted empirical analyses on mobility among college coaches (e.g., Loy and Sage 1978; Sagas and Cunningham 2005) have not yet explored the contingent influences of social capital on mobility outcomes for white and black coaches.

We examine data on 320 assistant football coaches at the NCAA Division I-A level and find that the effects of social capital on

promotions in the college coaching profession are, indeed, conditioned by race. In other words, similar types of network connections result in different promotion outcomes for blacks and whites. Specifically, the results show that, while access to homophilous (i.e., same race) contacts and strong ties are positively associated with the number of promotions received by white coaches, those same ties are the least effective for their black counterparts. Instead, a diverse set of weak-tied network resources offer the greatest opportunities for promotion among black coaches. Moreover, access to higher status contacts also appears to be a more important predictor of mobility among black coaches than among white coaches. These findings help to specify the differential processes by which social capital influences occupational attainment of whites and racial minorities.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CAREER ATTAINMENT

A large research literature has examined the role that social networks play in the labor market (e.g., Granovetter 1974; Lin 1999; Marsden and Gorman 2001). While the extent to which contacts influence employment outcomes remains an open question (see Mouw 2003), the bulk of the empirical evidence suggests that network contacts can provide a number of resources that individuals can draw on to improve their occupational standing (see Lin 2001). First, contacts provide valuable information that helps individuals take advantage of opportunities in firms and labor markets. Second, contacts can exert influence on decision makers that can be useful in hiring, promotion, task assignment, and other processes. Third, contacts can provide sponsorship and confer social status, enhancing the reputation of individuals and increasing their chances of occupational advancement. These resources represent the social capital that individuals may draw upon throughout the career attainment process (Lin 2001; Seibert et al. 2001).

During the last decade, social capital has been invoked as an explanation for unequal employment outcomes across various social groups. Fundamentally, social capital is linked to inequities in labor market outcomes through two processes (Lin 2001). First, "capital deficits" refer to the process by which differential access to social capital across groups leads to group differences in outcomes. In this way, social inequality is the result of differential investment in or opportunities for developing social capital. Researchers have identified deficits in the social resources that whites and African Americans

have available to them in labor markets and work organizations. Overall, blacks have smaller and less diverse social networks than whites (Marsden 1988). Blacks are often isolated from the networks of other workers within work organizations (Collins 1989), blocking their access to instrumental and social support networks (Smith and Calassanti 2005). These racial inequalities in social capital are likely to translate into racial inequality in occupational attainment (Lin 2000). Moreover, variation in social capital may also help to explain why racial inequality tends to be more pronounced in management and other positions with high pay and authority (Grodsky and Pager 2001; Huffman 2004; Smith 2002).

While this research is useful in its own right, an exclusive focus on capital deficits implies that social capital is like chicken soup—it's good for everyone (c.f., Portes 1998). But this interpretation masks the important contingencies associated with social capital. In other words, certain types of social resources and contacts are more or less useful depending on the actor and the social context. To truly understand the role that social capital plays in reproducing or ameliorating societal inequities, one must take these contingencies into account. Therefore, researchers should also consider the potential for "return deficits" (Lin 2001)—that similar types or amounts of social capital can produce different outcomes for different groups of individuals. Social inequality in such a situation results from differential returns to similar quality or quantity of social capital as a result of them mobilizing their social capital differently, contacts' differential efforts, or different institutional responses (Lin 2001).

Findings from the empirical research literature provide several examples of contingencies in the effects of social capital. Studies of the social networks of workers in various corporations suggest that homophilous networks provide substantial benefits for advantaged social group members, whereas heterophilous networks are most effective for disadvantaged groups (Ibarra 1995, 1997). Whites and males tend to have more homophilous networks than women and racial minorities. Moreover, homophily is strongest among white and male workers who were deemed by company officials to have the highest potential for advancement. This suggests that homophily may be a more important predictor of attainment for white males than for women and racial minorities. For white males, homophilous connections provide access to "old boy" networks, which facilitate entry into high-level positions. However, homophilous ties do not aid in the advancement of disadvantaged groups because they do not connect women and minorities to these high-level positions.

Prior research has identified contingent effects of other types of network connections as well. In particular, contact closeness or the strength of tie has undergone many empirical investigations. Granovetter (1973) first demonstrated that weak ties were more effective in helping people find quality employment because they are more likely to provide access to nonredundant information about job openings. Subsequent investigations have found that the benefits of weak ties are highly contingent. Lin and his colleagues (Lin 2001; Lin et al. 1981) have argued that weak ties are especially important for disadvantaged social groups because these ties allow people to reach beyond their close-knit social circles in order to access job opportunities outside of their disadvantaged social contexts. But there is a "ceiling effect," such that reaching up for better job information through weak ties becomes less effective the closer workers get to the top of the labor market pyramid. Among more advantaged workers, strong ties to contacts offer greater utility because they allow these workers to maintain their privileged position in the labor market (Lin 2001). Empirical support for this proposition has been mixed, with some studies showing weak tie benefits for low-SES workers (Lin et al. 1981) and others showing weak tie benefits for high-SES workers (Wegener 1991; Smith 2000). However, research on race differences does show that the positive effect of weak contact ties on wages is greater for black males than for white males (Smith 2000). This suggests that weak ties may be more advantageous for black workers than for white workers.

Furthermore, occupational status of network contacts is strongly and reliably associated with the statuses of the jobs to which people gain entry (Lin 1999). On average, white workers tend to have higher status contacts than black workers (McGuire 2000), which helps explain their lower rates of advancement. However, some evidence suggests that the status of network contacts may be more consequential for minority workers than for whites. Ibarra's (1995) research shows that the network status differences between "high potential" and other workers were greater among minorities than among whites. This suggests that contact status may have a greater impact on advancement for minorities than for whites. While not explicitly explored in prior research, the effect of network size on career advancement may also be moderated by race. Network size (or extensity) is generally considered to be a measure of the diversity of network resources (Lin 2001) and therefore should be especially consequential for the labor market outcomes of subordinate group members.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COLLEGE FOOTBALL COACHING

The college football coaching profession is an ideal context for studying social capital and racial inequality. First, racial inequality is particularly acute among college football coaches. The most recent data on race differences at the NCAA Bowl Subdivision level indicate that African Americans occupy around five percent of head coaching positions, 12 percent of coordinator positions, and 28 percent of assistant coaches (Lapchick 2009; Bartter 2007). These numbers are surprising considering that black athletes make up about 50 percent of the participants at the same level (Bartter 2007) and that former student-athletes make up the largest group of potential coaches (Everhart and Chelladurai 1998). Prior research also demonstrates that black coaches are underrepresented in higher status positions, have significantly fewer promotions, lower status, and less satisfaction in their coaching careers than white coaches, and perceive more barriers to head coaching opportunities in general and as a result of their race than white coaches (Anderson 1993; Sagas and Cunningham 2005; Cunningham et al. 2006).

Scholars have pointed to differences in individual investments in skills and experience (e.g., human capital) (Cunningham and Sagas 2002; Sagas and Cunningham 2005) and the structure of the labor market (e.g., contest vs. sponsored mobility and vacancy chain models) (Loy and Sage 1978; Smith and Abbot 1983) as major determinants of coaches' differential mobility. Although it is implied in this body of work, and emphasized in popular press accounts (Harrison and Yee 2006; Nyman 2005; Lederman 2006), the potential importance of coaches' social networks for explaining mobility in the college football coaching profession has enjoyed less attention in the academic literature. This is surprising given the structural features of this particular labor market context. College football coaching represents an occupational internal labor market, whereby mobility is primarily controlled by current job holders with few rules and regulations governing the market (Smith 1983; Smith and Abbott 1983). When informal rules and regulations govern mobility, social networks become more important determinants of mobility and thus more likely to produce inequality (Reskin 1993; Reskin and McBrier 2000). Inequality and segregation are more common in or across organizations that have less formal hiring and promotion policies (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993).

Prior research has found that human capital has minimal effects on coaches' mobility (Cunningham and Sagas 2002; Loy and Sage 1978) and racial differences in human capital contribute to, but do not fully explain, racial differences in mobility (Sagas and Cunningham 2005).

Disparities in social capital also help to explain racial inequality in the college football coaching profession. Given the prevalence of sponsored mobility, researchers have demonstrated that having a resource-rich network of higher status ties is important for promotion opportunities in the coaching profession (Loy and Sage 1978). Other research has found that racial homophily (or same-race ties) is significantly and positively related to coaching status and mobility (Sagas and Cunningham 2005). The authors concluded that black coaches would benefit from fostering more same race network ties and that having few opportunities for developing same-race ties represents a structural barrier to the career advancement of black coaches. These insights have helped to advance our understanding of the role that social capital plays in this context; however, much remains unknown about how social capital processes impact coaches mobility and particularly how it may have differential impacts for black and white coaches.

HYPOTHESES

To reiterate, the present study advances understanding of racial inequality in status attainment by examining the contingencies in the relationship between social capital and promotions across racial groups. We address a number of limitations in the extant literature, building specifically on the research of Ibarra (1995) and Smith (2000). First, Ibarra's study focused on perceptions of future advancement rather than on promotions. Also, her analysis was not designed to explain racial variation in job mobility because perceived future advancement was analyzed as an independent variable rather than an outcome. Furthermore, Ibarra compares whites not just to blacks but also to other minority groups such as Asians and Hispanics (most likely because of the small sample size of African Americans). The heterogeneity of the minority racial category creates a problem when attempting to assess differences between dominant and subordinate group members. Likewise, Smith's study focused on hourly wages of respondents' current jobs rather than on broader career patterns. Also, Smith was only able to examine the network characteristics of the contact that respondents used to search for their current job. By focusing only on a single contact and a single job rather than a broader set of network contacts and experiences, the analysis provides a limited test of how social capital influences careers. Moreover, her analysis does not assess social network processes in highly segregated occupational environments, where returns to social capital should be most likely to vary across social groups.

We overcome these limitations by directly examining how the effect of social capital on job mobility varies for blacks and whites within the context of college football coaching. Prior research on coaching has yet to examine such contingencies. As noted earlier, Sagas and Cunningham (2005) show that, on average, homophilous ties are associated with a greater number of promotions. However, Lin's (2001) social capital theory contends that subordinate groups benefit more from diversity in social relations. For white males, homophilous connections provide access to "old boy" networks, which facilitate entry into high-level positions. Whereas homophilous ties do not aid in the advancement of disadvantaged groups because they do not connect women and minorities to these high-level positions. For that reason, we expect to find that *homophilous ties are associated with significantly more promotions for white coaches than for black coaches* (H1). Following this logic, we expect to find additional contingencies in the effects of social capital on promotions. For example, weak ties may be more advantageous for black workers than for white workers since they provide access to a diverse set of social resources. Therefore, we hypothesize that *strong ties are associated with significantly more promotions for white coaches than for black coaches* (H2). Without access to high status contacts, minority workers are likely to remain isolated in peripheral organizational positions that offer little opportunity for advancement (Collins 1989). We therefore anticipate that *the relationship between high status contacts and promotions is significantly stronger for black coaches than for white coaches* (H3). Finally, a large network of contacts brings a wealth of resources for workers to draw upon, but those resources are likely to be most useful for African American workers who face greater impediments to advancement (i.e., discrimination and structural exclusion). Consequently, we expect that *the relationship between network size and promotions is significantly stronger for black coaches than for white coaches* (H4).

DATA AND METHODS

The data used in the analyses were collected in 2002 through a mail survey of each of the nine full-time assistant football coaches on every team at the Division I-A level (Sagas and Cunningham 2005). A total of 387 coaches returned the surveys, for a final response rate of 37.7 percent, which is typical of mail surveys of similar populations (see Cunningham et al. 2001). The sample is representative of the general population of coaches in terms of race (31.7% of the coaches in this sample are black compared to 26.7% of the overall population of

Division I-A assistant coaches; see DeHass 2003), and there were no significant differences between early and late respondents on any of the variables (Sagas and Cunningham 2005). The dataset provides the only known source of data on the social capital of assistant college football coaches at the highest level of the profession. The analyses are restricted to white and black respondents only and contains a final sample size of 320 coaches (218 white and 102 black) after 30 surveys were initially discarded due to incomplete responses, 26 coaches who reported they were in the "other" race category were eliminated, and 11 cases were lost due to listwise deletion.

MEASURES

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analyses. The dependent variable for our analyses is *promotions*, which is measured by a question asking coaches how many promotions they had experienced over their careers as college football coaches. Promotions were defined as "Any increases in level and/or significant increases in job responsibilities or job scope." Answer categories are coded on a seven-point scale (0, 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, 9–10, and 11 or more). We examine race differences with a dichotomous race variable (0 = white, 1 = black). Age is measured in years and is included in our initial regression model to replicate previous findings, but is subsequently removed due to its high collinearity with *coaching experience* (see below). Human capital indicators include measures of (1) *professional playing experience* (whether or not they played professional

Table 1. Descriptive statistics*

Variable	Mean	*SD*	Min.	Max.
Promotions	2.90	1.24	0.00	6.00
Black	0.32	—	0.00	1.00
Age	40.79	8.76	24.00	64.00
Played professionally	0.22	—	0.00	1.00
Graduate degree	0.48	—	0.00	1.00
Years coaching college	14.66	8.09	1.00	38.00
Organizational tenure	4.11	4.60	1.00	29.00
Race homophily	0.68	0.28	0.00	1.00
Proportion black	0.25	0.24	0.00	1.00
Strong ties	0.71	0.28	0.00	1.00
Higher status ties	0.65	0.28	0.00	1.00
Total contacts	6.03	3.34	1.00	12.00

*Reference category for black is "white"; for graduate degree is "no graduate degree"; and for played professionally is "did not play professionally."

football), (2) *educational attainment* (i.e., whether they have a graduate degree or not), (3) *coaching experience* (number of years they have coached college football), and (4) *organizational tenure* (number of years they have been employed in current athletic department).

Social capital measures were gathered through a name generator that asked for information on up to twelve people who "... have acted to help your career by speaking on your behalf, providing you with information, career opportunities, advice, or psychological support or with whom you have regularly spoken regarding difficulties at work, alternative job opportunities, or long-term goals." Based on this set of survey questions, we calculated four social network variables: (1) *race homophily* (proportion of contacts that are the same race as the respondent), (2) *higher status ties*[1] (proportion of contacts that are at a higher organizational level than the respondent), (3) *strong ties* (proportion of contacts to whom the respondent is "especially close"), and (4) *total contacts* (total number of contacts listed in the name generator up to 12).

These measures provide a partial description of the respondents' network of relations. As with similar egocentric data, the coaching dataset contains information about the dyadic relationships in which the coaches are directly involved, but contains no information about the relationship between network contacts or about structural positioning within a complete network (Quatman and Chelladurai 2008). Nonetheless, these data are useful for examining the kinds of contacts and resources embedded within social networks. Furthermore, while complete network data have been analyzed for bounded collectivities such as firms, the boundaries for a broader labor market are less clear, making the collection of complete network data in this context theoretically inappropriate and methodologically infeasible. In sum, these data serve as a valuable resource for examining the influence of race and social capital on promotions in the college coaching context.

RESULTS

We employ a series of OLS regression models to examine the effect of race on the number of promotions received by college coaches

[1]**The question regarding contact's status asked, "Is this person in a higher organizational level than you?" with the answer categories of (1) "Higher Level" and (2) "Same or Lower." As a result, the measure of contact status is based on the contact's position relative to the respondent, as opposed to an absolute measure of contact status.**

(see Table 2). Model 1 replicates Sagas and Cunningham's (2005) analyses of race and social capital effects on promotions. A coach's age is negatively related to the number of promotions received, whereas having a graduate degree and years of college coaching experience are positively associated with the number of promotions coaches have experienced over their careers. The effect of playing professional football on promotions is not statistically significant. Finally, the model reveals a significant and positive effect of racially homophilous ties on promotions. In other words, coaches with similar race contacts tend to receive significantly more promotions on average than coaches with different race contacts. Model 2 refines the initial model by including the full range of human capital and social capital variables. The results are generally the same as in model

Table 2. OLS regression predicting division 1A assistant football coaches' promotions*

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	1.767*	1.794*	2.00*
	(.098)	(.096)	(.110)
Black			−.675*
			(.183)
Age	−.035*		
	(.013)		
Played professionally	−.048	−.070	.033
	(.164)	(.161)	(.160)
Graduate degree	.295*	.249†	.212†
	(.134)	(.132)	(.129)
Years coaching college	.072*	.048*	.044*
	(.014)	(.009)	(.009)
Organizational tenure		−.046*	−.049*
		(.014)	(.014)
Race homophily	.694*	.716*	.059
	(.244)	(.243)	(.297)
Strong ties		.180	.237
		(.230)	(.226)
Higher status ties		−.069	−.087
		(.228)	(.223)
Total contacts		.042*	.038*
		(.019)	(.019)
Adjusted R^2	.161	.178	.210

*$N = 320$; Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses); *$p < .05$, †$p < .10$; All continuous variables (i.e., age, organizational tenure, college coaching experience, higher status ties, strong ties, race homophily, and total contacts) are centered on their mean.

one with two new variables predicted to have significant effects. Organizational tenure is negatively related to promotions, while the total number of contacts is positively associated with promotions. The race homophily variable remains significant, but the other social capital indicators (higher status ties and tie strength) are not statistically significant predictors of promotions. Model 3 includes race as a control variable and reveals that black coaches experience significantly fewer promotions over their careers than whites. After controlling for race, the effect of the proportion of racially homophilous contacts no longer has a significant effect on promotions. This finding suggests that the effects of homophilous ties are contingent on the race of the respondent.

To explore these potential contingencies in greater detail, we include a series of race by social capital interaction terms in the regression models (see Table 3). First, model 4 reveals a statistically significant negative interaction effect between race and the proportion of racially homophilous contacts in coaches' networks. Racially homophilous ties are negatively associated with upward mobility for black coaches, but positively associated with upward mobility for white coaches (see Figure 1a). This finding is consistent with our first hypothesis. Moreover, the results indicate that mobility is enhanced not through the presence of similar race ties, but rather through the absence of ties to black contacts. Indeed, Model 5 in Table 3 includes a measure of the proportion of contacts that are African American, which proves to be a negative and statistically significant predictor of promotions. The proportion of black contacts in coaches' networks partially mediates the relationship between race and promotions. Its inclusion reduces the magnitude of the Black coefficient by about 40 percent and increases the explained variance of the model (see the adjusted R^2 values).

The remaining models in Table 3 examine the potential for other conditional network effects by race. Model 6 identifies a significant negative interaction effect between race and the proportion of strong ties. A large proportion of strong ties is positively associated with upward mobility for whites, but negatively associated with mobility for blacks. Consistent with H2, whites do better in the coaching market with strong ties, while blacks are more likely to advance with weak ties. The results from model 7 reveal a marginally significant positive interaction effect between race and contacts' status, which supports H3. As illustrated in Figure 1b, the proportion of higher status ties has a positive effect on black coaches' promotions and a slightly negative effect on white coaches' promotions. Split sample analyses reveal that the

Table 3. OLS regression predicting division 1A assistant football coaches' promotions*

Independent variables	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Constant	1.897*	1.917*	1.991*	1.995*	2.003*
	(.115)	(.111)	(.109)	(.109)	(.110)
Black	−.797*	−.413*	−.637*	−.640*	−.674*
	(.186)	(.196)	(.182)	(.183)	(.183)
Played professionally	.004	.004	.059	.010	.035
	(.159)	(.158)	(.159)	(.160)	(.161)
Graduate degree	.226†	.233†	.204	.217†	.213†
	(.128)	(.127)	(.128)	(.129)	(.129)
Years coaching college	.043*	.043*	.043*	.045*	.044*
	(.008)	(.008)	(.008)	(.009)	(.009)
Organization tenure	−.050*	−.050*	−.049*	−.050*	−.049*
	(.014)	(.014)	(.014)	(.014)	(.014)
Race homophily	.893*	.087	.193	.125	.064
	(.412)	(.292)	(.298)	(.298)	(.300)
Strong ties	.314	.341	.649*	.232	.236
	(.225)	(.225)	(.271)	(.226)	(.227)
Higher status ties	−.152	−.166	−.085	−.391	−.085
	(.222)	(.221)	(.221)	(.278)	(.224)
Total contacts	.044*	.045*	.038*	.037*	.041†
	(.019)	(.019)	(.019)	(.019)	(.025)
Black *race homophily	–1.706*				
	(.590)				
Proportion black		–1.020*			
		(.301)			
Black *strong ties			–1.302*		
			(.484)		
Black *higher status ties				.853†	
				(.466)	
Black *total contacts					−.006
					(.039)
Adjusted R^2	.229	.236	.226	.216	.208

*$N = 320$; Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses); *$p < .05$; †$p < .10$; All continuous variables (i.e., organizational tenure, college coaching experience, higher status ties, strong ties, race homophily, and total contacts) are centered on their mean.

effect of higher status contacts on promotions is not significant among whites or blacks, only that the slope of the effect is different across race groups. Finally, the results do not support the final hypothesis in that no significant race differences were found in the effects of the number of contacts on promotions. A larger set of network contacts is similarly advantageous for both white and black coaches.

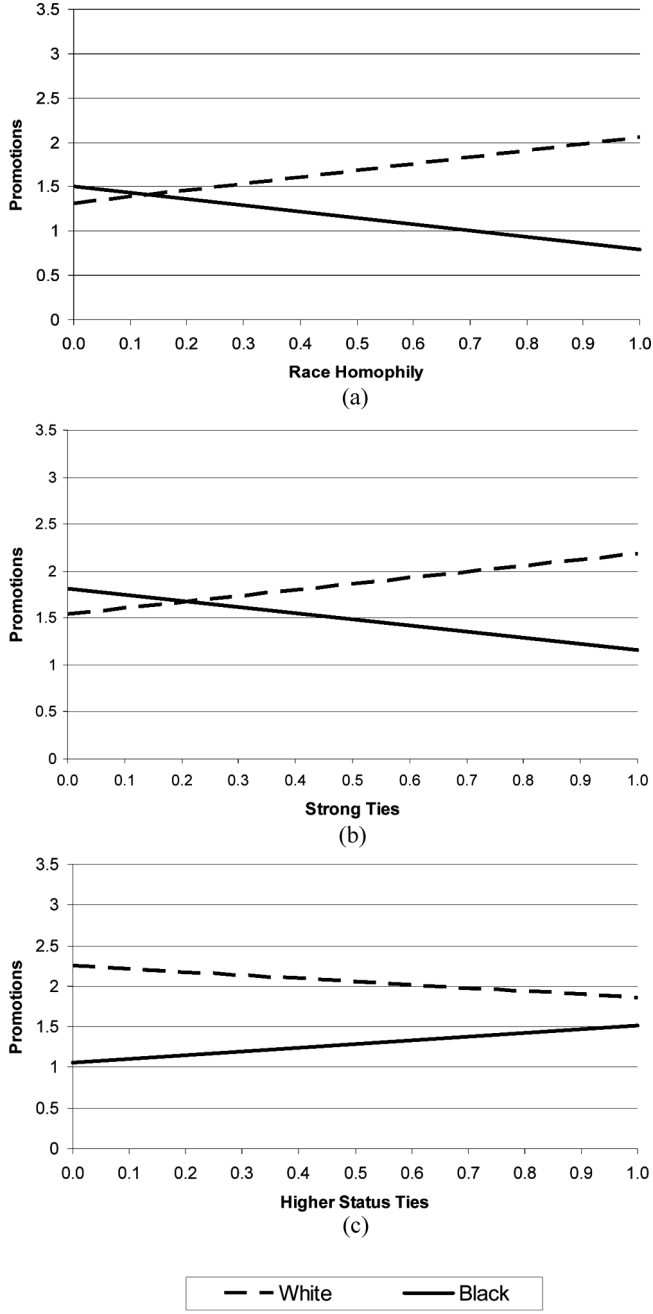

Figure 1. Significant race by social capital interaction effects on promotions.

DISCUSSION

Despite overall reductions in gender and race inequality during the last 40 years, many occupations remain highly segregated (Tomaskovic-Devey et al. 2006). In order to address problems of enduring occupational segregation, research needs to gain a better understanding of the factors and processes that enable these inequities to persist in these environments. To that end, the results of this study demonstrate that race and social capital play important roles in the promotion process, particularly in a highly segregated occupation such as college football coaching. Coaches generally benefit from having a large number of individuals who provide career help. However, the impact of social capital is contingent on race, as different types of contacts generate different mobility returns for black and white coaches. Specifically, access to heterophilous ties, weak ties, and high status contacts provide greater benefit to black coaches than to white coaches. These findings help to specify the ways in which social capital influences occupational attainment.

First, maintaining connections with homophilous contacts is associated with advancement for white coaches only. Black coaches with same race contacts report fewer promotions than black coaches with different race contacts. These findings contradict previous assertions that racial inequities within the coaching profession can be reduced through the development of same-race network contacts (Sagas and Cunningham 2005). Following such a strategy would likely promote racial inequality rather than reducing it. In the end, the presence of white contacts (and the absence of black contacts) appears to be more instrumental for advancement than race homophily. Because of the dearth of black coaches holding high-level coaching positions, access to white contacts is at a premium. Coaches who maintain networks composed primarily of black contacts are likely to remain relatively isolated from mobility opportunities. Black coaches in particular are commonly excluded from white coaching networks. In the coaching data analyzed here, 39 percent of white networks contain no black contacts. Furthermore, previous work on college basketball coaches shows that white head coaches employ a higher proportion of white assistants than black coaches (Cunningham and Sagas 2005). The exclusionary practices outlined here may be due to overtly discriminatory efforts on the part of whites to exclude black coaches (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993) or they could result from a more covert form of preferential treatment among whites for social network members (who happen to be overwhelmingly white). Regardless of the mechanism, the race composition of social networks is consequential for mobility among college coaches.

Second, the proportion of strong ties is another aspect of coaches' networks that has different effects for whites and blacks in our analyses. A large proportion of strong ties negatively affects black coaches' promotions and positively effects white coaches' promotions. This finding is consistent with prior research which has found the effect of tie strength on status attainment is dependent on one's initial level of prestige (Lin and Dumin 1986; Smith 2000; Wegener 1991). Weak ties are useful for spanning a broad range of social contacts and accessing nonredundant information (Granovetter 1973). Weak ties are, therefore, more beneficial for individuals in disadvantaged or isolated structural positions, which is often the case for African American coaches. Conversely, individuals in advantaged structural positions, such as white coaches, lack the need for bridging ties and, therefore, receive more benefit from drawing on strong ties to similar others (Lin 2001).

Third, we found that the proportion of higher status ties has different effects for whites and blacks in our analyses. Black coaches benefit more from having a large proportion of higher status ties than white coaches. This result makes sense in relation to Burt's (1998) study on senior managers in a large U.S. corporation. He found that access to high status contacts is more important for managers who lack legitimacy (in his case, women and entry-rank men) because they benefit most from borrowed social capital (i.e., borrowing the social capital of a person of higher status than them). Applying this logic to the current context, black assistant coaches have more to gain from high status contacts due to their lack of legitimacy within the profession. We consider these results preliminary due to the relative measurement of contact status in these data. Future research on college coaches should attempt to replicate this finding using an absolute measure of contact status within the profession.

The findings provide evidence of Lin's (2001) concept of "return deficits," where members of different social groups receive differential returns on similar quality or quantity of social capital. In particular, the promotions returns to different types of social network ties vary depending on the race of the coaches. Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to directly examine the processes leading to these differential returns. Black and white coaches may mobilize their networks differently, receive differential effort by members of their network, or face different organizational responses to their networks. Future research on coaching and other occupational environments would profit from further examination of the processes leading to the differential returns to contacts for members of different social groups.

Moreover, researchers should begin to move beyond examinations of average rates of promotion to focus on how structural differences

in the labor market interact with race and social capital to reproduce racial inequality. The coaching profession provides an excellent opportunity to study this issue. Previous research suggests that black coaches may get stacked into noncentral coaching positions that have lower potential for mobility (Anderson 1993). Racial segregation in position assignment in college football—with black players being overrepresented in non-central positions such as wide receiver—is perpetuated when athletes move into the coaching ranks. As a result of playing non-central positions, black athletes are often tracked into noncentral coaching positions that have less opportunity for advancement. Future research should explore the extent to which this tracking process inhibits race-specific social capital formation and maintenance and ultimately advancement in the profession.

Further specification of the causal relationships is also needed. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, the associations identified here could be explained by the causal influence of social capital on promotions or by selection into diverse occupational settings (see Mouw 2003). In other words, while white contacts may indeed facilitate upward mobility, it remains equally plausible that mobility itself provides opportunities for contact with white coaches. More likely is the possibility that both processes operate simultaneously. Clarifying this relationship will likely require longitudinal data with information on the timing and frequency of promotions. For example, Dufur (2000) examined a similar population of NCAA basketball coaches using retrospective career histories gathered primarily from media guides. Her analyses demonstrated that minority coaches on average are less likely to be on "successful" career paths (i.e., those leading to a head coaching job) and are slower to move up than white coaches. The use of similar data and analytical techniques could help researchers distinguish between selection and causation processes in the relationship between social capital and occupational mobility.

Nonetheless, this research is important because it contributes both to the understanding of racial inequality in college coaching and, more importantly, to the understanding of broader social stratification processes. Prior research on particularistic mobility demonstrates that advantaged and disadvantaged social groups display distinct criteria for advancement, though the focus has been on the differential impact of human capital characteristics (Baldi and McBrier 1997; Wilson et al. 1999). Here we find evidence of particularistic mobility with regards to social capital characteristics. Specifically, contacts that help individuals reach beyond their structural positioning within the labor market (heterogeneous ties, weak ties, and high-status contacts) provide the greatest opportunities for the

advancement of disadvantaged social groups. These ties are used to gain access to information, exert influence on hiring and promotion decisions, and to borrow status credentials to further occupational attainment (Lin 2001; Burt 1998). On the other side, these kinds of contacts have less use value for members of advantaged social groups, who instead can rely on contacts that are more homophilous in order to advance. These findings are useful not only because they provide insights into the processes involved in inequality reproduction, but also because they offer clues as to how racial disparities in the labor market can be overcome.

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