

It takes a village to raise a child: The role of social capital in promoting academic success for African American men at a Black college.

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Abstract

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were created to provide educational opportunities for African Americans when other higher education venues restricted their participation. HBCUs are credited with nurturing and producing leaders who embraced W. E. B. Du Bois's concept of the "Talented Tenth," and exhibiting fortitude in advancing social equality for all. Over the years, as legalized segregation was overturned and efforts were made to expand opportunities for African Americans, some have questioned

the continuing need for HBCUs. A study of 11 African American men attending a public, urban HBCU, indicated that the university's rich supply of social capital (a direct consequence of its mission and history) makes it a unique fixture in the landscape of higher education, one whose special features have not been replicated by historically White institutions.

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Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have served an important role in promoting access to higher education for African Americans when other venues were closed to them. During their inception, HBCUs were far from equal in terms of infrastructure, resources, and operating budgets; these inequities persist to the present day (Anderson, 1988; Brown & Davis, 2001; Brown, Donahoo, & Bertrand, 2001; Diewry & Doermann, 2004). Despite the lack of resources, HBCUs have a rich legacy of producing charismatic leaders (for example,

W. E. B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Ella Baker, Barbara Jordan, and Stokely Carmichael) who valiantly advocated for societal change for all and served as positive role models to many African Americans. Black colleges also provide a rich source of social networks to students, fostering an empowering educational climate. However, as legislative and programmatic initiatives have made it possible for African Americans to gain access to Historically White Institutions (HWIs), HBCUs have seen their enrollments drop drastically. At present, they enroll 16% of African Americans at the undergraduate level (Provasnik, Shafer, & Snyder, 2004). Furthermore, as governmental constituencies seek to eradicate de jure segregation by promoting student integration and eliminating program duplication (i.e., *Adams v. Richardson*, 1973; *United States v. Fordice*, 1992), some scholars fear that HBCUs may disappear (Blake, 1991; Brown & Davis, 2001; Days, 1992; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994).

The significance of HBCUs cannot be understated. At present, these institutions award nearly one-fifth of all bachelor degrees to African Americans. HBCUs also award 20% of all first professional degrees (Hoffman, Liagas, & Snyder, 2003). According to Allen (1992), these enrollment and degree statistics are significant, especially given that HBCUs represent only 3% of the nation's institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, despite

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It takes a village to raise a child: The role of social capital in promoting academic success for African American men at a Black college, stress simulates imperfect agrobiogeotsez.

The compulsive gambler's spiral of options and involvement, in accordance with the principle of uncertainty, the conversion rate is unstable.

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