Previous critics have documented the damaging effects of the current exploitative sporting and education structures in the United States on Black males and the broader Black community. However, largely missing from scholarly literature and popular discourses on this topic is a comprehensive analysis of the heterogeneity among Black male athletes’ lived experiences and outcomes over their lifespans. From Exploitation Back to Empowerment: Black Male Holistic (Under)Development Through Sport and (Mis)Education by Joseph N. Cooper addresses three major issues: (1) the under theorization of Black male athletes’ socialization processes, (2) the preponderance of deficit-based theories on Black male athletes, and (3) the lack of expansive analyses of Black male athletes from diverse backgrounds. Grounded in empirical research, this text outlines five socialization models of Black male holistic (under) development through sport and (mis)education. The five socialization models include: (a) illusion of singular success model (ISSM), (b) elite athlete lottery model (EALM), (c) transition recovery model (TRM), (d) purposeful participation for expansive personal growth model (P2EPGM), and (e) holistic empowerment model (HEM). Using ecological, race-based, gender-based, psychological, and athletic-based theories, each of the proposed models incorporates critical sociological insights whereby multi-level system factors (sub, chrono, macro, exo, meso, and micro) along with various intersecting identities and additional background characteristics are taken into account. In addition, historical, sociocultural, political, and economic conditions are examined in relation to their influence on Black males’ socialization in and through sport and (mis)education. This nuanced analysis allows for the development of a systematic blueprint for Black male athletes’ holistic development and more importantly collective racial and cultural uplift.

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