OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS
VOLUME VI

EXAMINING OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS:
Access, Opportunity, Social Capital and Leadership in the NFL

Principal Investigator and Lead Researcher:
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at University of Central Florida

A report presented by the National Football League.
We would like to dedicate the 2017 Diversity and Inclusion Good Business Report to the late Mr. Dan Rooney for a legacy of creating access and opportunity for ethnic minority groups.

"We’re pleased that the level of diversity at the Head Coach and General Manager position continues to grow, in large part, due to the success of the Rooney Rule. The Rooney Rule reflects the continued commitment of the NFL to diversity and inclusion, and it is part of Ambassador Rooney’s enduring legacy."

- Robert Gulliver
As the NFL continues to lead the sports industry in promoting diversity in hiring, there are several considerations that play a role in our long-term success. Hiring a person to run a team, to coach a position, to oversee training, scouting, conditioning, or any other matter of club operations—front office or on the field—is a human science, involving talent, trust, relationship, personality and many more both tangible and intangible factors. We are learning from our progress, and building a model for developing a sustainable diverse talent pool. The Occupational Mobility Report documents our efforts—both our successes and our challenges—and assists us in achieving a future where diversity makes the best better and the sum of the parts is greater than the whole.

One of the challenges we face is the line between the intended results of rules and policies, such as the Rooney Rule, and the ratio of qualified talent versus positions given our specialized workforce. This line is often blurred because of the natural tendency to view hiring from the lens of optics while assuming that skill, talent, ability, and trust and the other factors of hiring are equal. For example, the Rooney Rule doesn’t take into account that opportunities are limited because there are people in the front office, coaching, and ownership who are actually doing a great job and are very capable and deserving of consideration for openings.

The fact of the matter is that private entities, such as our 32 Clubs, cannot be shamed or forced into hiring someone. The Rooney Rule provides a point of entry, but to solve the long-term conundrum of opportunities verses the number of teams that can provide those opportunities, development of highly qualified individuals is imperative. That’s why our partnership with Historic Black Colleges and Universities through the MEAC and SWAC is so very strategic. HBCUs specifically, and the NCAA generally, represent fertile ground to develop a qualified and sustainable pipeline of diverse candidates for our specialized workforce. There are great opportunities among these ranks because there is actual leverage for fairness in hiring practice through the public domain of the NCAA, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Title IX protections.

It is through these partnerships, as exemplified with the HBCUs, that the NFL can offer internships, symposia, resources, fellowships, and other educational efforts to augment our long-term strategic development and expansion of a qualified and diverse workforce. Each year, the Occupational Mobility Report provides insight on our efforts to improve and assists us in evolving our go-forward strategies to develop and emphasize the characteristics, talents and skills needed for a diverse workplace.

MESSAGE FROM LEAD AUTHOR OF THE REPORT, DR. C. KEITH HARRISON

In February 2012, Mr. Troy Vincent, called to see if my team could do a systemic and annual report related to the occupational mobility of the NFL in terms of head coaching vacancies. While the annual report celebrates its five-year anniversary, it has been expanded to include coordinators and general managers. The data indicate that progress has been made as 6 ethnic minority coaches have been hired since the first report was published in 2013 (including two recent hires). You can only improve what you measure and data-driven decisions continue to be a key movement that industry leaders value and prioritize when it comes to inclusion, diversity, and good business.

As we look to the future, there are still challenges as we strive toward equality. Hiring decisions are still subjective and in part based on implicit bias, trust, and just straight up nepotism in some instances. Two recent hires indicate that leaders in high places will take chances and break normative patterns which is good news for majority and minority leaders that seek to become coordinators, head coaches, and general managers. For example, John Lynch was given a six-year contract by the San Francisco 49ers with zero front office experience. Steve Sarkisian was given a second chance after some personal and health issues not only by the University of Alabama as a special assistant—but eventually calling the offensive plays in the national championship game versus Clemson on January 9, 2017. Sarkisian is now the offensive coordinator of the Atlanta Falcons the Super Bowl runner-ups and NFC champions.

In the final analysis, I highlight these two case examples of Lynch and Sarkisian, because their paths should motivate scholars and practitioners to continue to examine what is true equality and how does one’s “mobility opportunity scale” expand regardless of their qualifications, experiences, skin color, and human mistakes? A quote by Chris Rock about the historical/traditional status quo (white males) sums up what I think the challenge is for ethnic minorities in the NFL and in other leagues at the professional and collegiate level: “I want the license to be able to come back (after making mistakes) and learn (gain experience and wisdom).”

Progress has been made the last five years of these empirical and data-based reports. I thank the NFL for the opportunity that my team has been given to bridge theory with practice each year we publish the occupational mobility project.
In 1921, Fritz Pollard became the first person of color hired as a head coach of a professional football team. Pollard, an African American, coached the Akron Pros and Hammond Pros from 1921-1925. Employment opportunities in professional football were limited following the 1919 St. Louis Gunners strike. When Pollard took the head coaching job with the Akron Pros in 1921, it would be over 40 years before another person of color would serve as the head coach of a professional football team (and over 60 years before the next African American head coach). Tom Fears, who is Latino, became the first ethnic minority head coach hired in the modern NFL era in 1967. Art Shell became the first African American head coach in the modern NFL era when he was hired by the Los Angeles Raiders in 1989. From January 1963 to February 2017, there have been only 17 different African American head coaches and three Latino head coaches in the NFL. As of February 2017, eight head coaches of color led NFL teams as compared with 24 White NFL head coaches. Five of the eight current NFL head coaches of color have been hired since January 2014. This NFL Diversity & Inclusion research report series began analyzing data on occupational mobility patterns and making data-driven policy and best practices recommendations commencing at the start of the 2012 NFL regular season.

Based on the findings of the current study, attention must focus on retention, career progression, continued access and “life after being a head coach” in addition to the noteworthy focus of the Rooney Rule on initial entry/access for ethnic minorities. The findings of the current study indicate that, historically, NFL teams have been reluctant to hire a person of color for a head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator position after a person of color has previously separated from a head coach position in the NFL. For example, 163 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only 15 African American and 1 Latino head coach opportunity. Since 1963, 23 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a second NFL head coach opportunity. Of those who have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first head coach opportunity. In 1963, 23 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only 15 African American and 1 Latino head coach opportunity. Since 1963, 23 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a second NFL head coach opportunity. Of those who have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first head coach opportunity.

However, the hiring of Lovie Smith and Jim Caldwell as “second opportunity” NFL head coaches in 2014 along with the hiring of Hue Jackson as a “second opportunity” NFL head coach in January 2016 serve as indicators of improvement and hope. As of February 2017, ten out of the 20 total head coaches of color from 1963-2017 have earned a second head coach of an NFL team. A primary NFL team position coach—for example, quarterbacks coach, wide receivers coach, tight ends coach, running backs coach, offensive line coach, linebackers coach, defensive line coach and defensive backs (secondary) coach. The current empirical research study aims to address the following research questions:

1. Do coaches and other leaders of color within the NFL face actual and perceived access barriers with respect to occupational mobility patterns?
2. What factors and variables impact and influence the occupational mobility patterns of coaches and other leaders of color within the NFL?
3. What are examples of practical and innovative strategies with respect to improving career opportunities for coaches and other leaders of color within the NFL?

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS

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Castilla, & Moore, 2000). Day and McDonald (2010) analyzed the “differential processes by which social capital influences occupational attainment of whites and racial minorities” with respect to collegiate football coaches and found that people of color often lack the social capital resources (i.e., resources embedded in networks) needed to facilitate occupational advancement (p. 140). Day and McDonald (2018) found that same race contacts and strong ties are positively associated with the number of promotions received by White coaches; however, those same ties were found to be the least effective for African American coaches because “a diverse set of weak-tied network resources offer the greatest opportunities for promotion among Black coaches . . . access to higher status contacts also appears to be a more important predictor of mobility among Black coaches than among white coaches” (p. 140).

Scholars such as Maume (1999) and Wilson et al. (1999) have found that individuals of color must invest more in personal relationships, attaining advanced education degrees, and accumulating substantial relevant work experience before job advancement prospects become equivalent to the promotion opportunities of White individuals. Rossette et al. (2008) developed a theory-based argument with respect to whether variables such as “institutional inequality” (Davis & Moore, 1945, p. 243; see also Acker, 2006) and “membership in powerful coaching families” (Greene, 2012, p. 131) have more of an impact in the hiring and evaluation processes than do the substantive skill sets of individuals.

Sagas and Cunningham (2005) analyzed social capital of college football coaches with respect to network size, strength of ties/relationships, racial similarity within network, contacts in higher levels of organization, and inter-organizational ties. Sagas and Cunningham (2005) in part found that “White coaches have more opportunities to accrue occupational experience because they are more likely to occupy positions” (p. 791). Sagas and Cunningham (2005) also highlighted past research that has indicated cross-race networking ties are typically weaker (i.e., less effective) than matching-race networking connections; however, candidates of color typically have a “much smaller set of ‘similar others’ from whom to develop professional relationships” (p. 791). This reality is significant as Sagas and Cunningham (2005) explained that the “lack of same-race ties among Black coaches thus can be detrimental to the development and success of Black coaches” (p. 791). In a similar empirical research study, Cunningham and Sagas (2005) analyzed the notion of access disparities in coaching positions in college football. They found that the predominance of same-race hiring practices, personnel decisions in college athletics are often influenced by “who you know who is racially similar” (p. 157).

Kilduff et al. (2016) recently extended the social network research literature with an empirical investigation related to the career mobility impact of aspiring NFL head coach candidates (i.e., “acolytes”) developing “advantageous connections” with high-reputation industry leaders (e.g., NFL head coaches such as Bill Belichick and Mike Tomlin). These scholars investigated the occupational mobility patterns of 1,298 NFL head coaches and position coaches from 1980-2010 to determine the long-term significance of initially beneficial workplace ties between acolytes and high-reputation leaders. Kilduff et al. (2016) concluded, “affiliation with a successful leader can facilitate or damage career progress, even in an industry in which quantitative indicators of performance are routinely used to assess outcomes” (p. 371). Kilduff et al. (2016) observed that “high-reputation social connections can be considered not just as signals of underlying quality but also as ‘lenses that potentially distort individuals’ qualities both beneficially (in terms of enhancing the value of prior performance) and detrimentally (in terms of ex post settling up)” (pp. 369-70). One of the primary practical implications of the research study was as follows: “The results concerning NFL promotions indicate an industry system in which social connections, rather than just skills and abilities, enable people to move into positions such as head coach” (p. 370).

Seebruck and Savage (2013) examined how an assistant coach’s race and the race of his supervisor (the head coach) interact to affect occupational mobility. Seebruck and Savage (2013) found that African American collegiate basketball assistant coaches working under African American head coaches (“black homophily”) were significantly disadvantaged with respect to the probability of earning a head coaching position; results indicated that while homophily (same race connection) is neither advantageous nor disadvantageous for White job candidates, it is disadvantageous for African American job candidates. As explained by Seebruck and Savage (2013), “this racially based disadvantage makes it difficult for minority job candidates to break through the glass ceiling and has real-world financial implications . . . effort should be directed at ensuring that white coaches continue to hire and sponsor capable minority assistant coaches” (pp. 75, 98).

This research study investigated data regarding NFL head coach demographics, tenure, and occupational mobility patterns from 1963-2017. This time period is used because 1963 serves as the first year that the NFL began to track relevant data on head coach mobility patterns. Based on the NFL archival human resource database on head coaches, these data were analyzed to determine occupational mobility patterns. Interim head coaches were not included in the data set with respect to determining the total number of people who have held head coaching positions in the NFL from 1963-2017. This study also contains data regarding NFL offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator and general manager demographics as well as tenure and mobility patterns from the start of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) to kickoff at Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017). This study also highlights mobility patterns of head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers during the approximate one-year period from the day following Super Bowl 50 (February 8, 2016) to kickoff at Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017). A specific emphasis is placed on the occupational mobility patterns of offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators because these two positions have historically functioned as the primary occupational pipelines for NFL head coaches. This study also highlights additional key head coach “pipeline positions” such as quarterbacks coach, linebackers coach and defensive backs (secondary) coach.

A comprehensive database of descriptive data was developed to analyze the career paths, occupational tenure and occupational mobility patterns of current NFL position coaches in conjunction with examining opportunities for these position coaches to earn promotions to coordinator or head coach positions. In addition, this study integrates descriptive data from recent relevant research conducted by the NFL related to occupational mobility and job success determinants of NFL head coaches.

Researchers verified the number of vacancies filled and individual separations, trajectories and occupational patterns of NFL head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers based on data provided by the NFL. For example, if an individual was a head coach for multiple NFL teams, this study counts that coach one time in the data set because this study focuses on an analysis of access, opportunity and coaching mobility (i.e., the number of individuals who have held head coach positions) instead of the total number of head coach vacancies from 1963-2017. This analytical framework was also applied to the occupational mobility patterns of offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers from 2012-2017.

The next section of this report presents the findings and results related to an extensive descriptive analysis on the occupational mobility patterns of over 300 current NFL head coaches, general managers, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and position coaches.
FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Between February 8, 2016 (day following Super Bowl 50) and February 5, 2017, NFL teams hired a total of 30 head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers. White individuals were hired for 22 of these positions. Only seven different men of color were hired for these 30 positions, as Anthony Lynn was hired as both an offensive coordinator and head coach during the data collection period. In addition, during this same time period 26 of the 32 head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers who were fired, resigned, promoted or otherwise “mutually parted ways” with an NFL team were White individuals.

Tables 1-4 and Figures 1-5 provide a summary overview of key findings and results of the research study. The remainder of this section expands on the quantitative findings highlighted in Tables 1-4 and Figures 1-5. In addition, this section presents additional findings with respect to the occupational mobility patterns of select NFL position coaches.

HEAD COACH CAREER PIPELINES & MULTIPLE HEAD COACH OPPORTUNITIES

As illustrated above in Figure 1, after separating from a first head coach position, ten different coaches of color (50 percent of the 20 total head coaches of color from 1963-2017) have received (and accepted) a second head coach opportunity in the NFL since 1963. After separating from a first head coach position, 53 White individuals have received (and accepted) a second head coach opportunity since 1963. Doug Marrone recently earned a second head coach opportunity in January 2017.

As illustrated above in Figure 2, after separating from a second head coach position, only one coach of color, Tom Flores, has received (and accepted) a third opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. Fourteen White coaches have received (and accepted) a third opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. For example, Wade Phillips has been a full-time NFL head coach for three NFL teams (Denver Broncos, Buffalo Bills and Dallas Cowboys)\(^4\). In January 2017, Phillips was named defensive coordinator of the Los Angeles Rams—this is the ninth NFL defensive coordinator opportunity for Phillips. In addition, two White coaches (Bill Parcells and Marty Schottenheimer) earned a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. Not a single person of color has earned a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>NAME OF FORMER HEAD COACH</th>
<th>RACE OF FORMER HEAD COACH</th>
<th>NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR FORMER HEAD COACH</th>
<th>NAME OF NEW HEAD COACH</th>
<th>RACE OF NEW HEAD COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo Bills</td>
<td>Rex Ryan</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>NFL Television Analyst at ESPN</td>
<td>Sean McDermott</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Broncos</td>
<td>Gary Kubiak</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Vance Joseph</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacksonville Jaguars</td>
<td>Gus Bradley</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Defensive Coordinator, Los Angeles Chargers</td>
<td>Doug Marrone</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Chargers</td>
<td>Mike McCoy</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Offensive Coordinator, Denver Broncos</td>
<td>Anthony Lynn</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Rams</td>
<td>Jeff Fisher</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>No new position as of February 5, 2017</td>
<td>Sean McVay</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco 49ers*</td>
<td>Chip Kelly</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>No new position as of February 5, 2017</td>
<td>Kyle Shanahan</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data range for data: February 8, 2016 (day following Super Bowl 50) to February 5, 2017 (date of Super Bowl LII). This position was included in the data for this Volume VI report at the request of the NFL even though Shanahan was hired the day after Super Bowl LII which took place on February 5, 2017.

As the above Table 1 illustrates, between February 8, 2016 (day following Super Bowl 50) and February 5, 2017 (day of Super Bowl LII), NFL teams hired four White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired two head coaches of color (Vance Joseph and Anthony Lynn). In addition, between the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017), NFL teams hired 29 White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired six head coaches of color. Five of these head coaches of color remain current NFL head coaches. Lovie Smith served as head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers during the 2014-2015 NFL seasons.

Six current NFL head coaches have been hired since Super Bowl 50 (February 8, 2016). Five of these six head coaches are first time NFL head coaches (Vance Joseph, Anthony Lynn, Sean McVay, Sean McDermott, and Kyle Shanahan). Only one of the six recently hired NFL head coaches (Doug Marrone) has prior NFL head coaching experience. New Jacksonville Jaguars head coach Doug Marrone previously served as head coach of the Buffalo Bills during the 2013-2014 NFL seasons.

Three of the six recently hired head coaches (Lynn, McVay, and Shanahan) were most recently offensive coordinators of another NFL team. In addition, one of the recently hired head coaches (Marrone) was most recently the assistant head coach / offensive line coach of the same team to which he was named a head coach. Overall, four of the six recently hired head coaches (Lynn, Marrone, McVay, and Shanahan) have previous experience as an NFL offensive coordinator. The other two recently hired head coaches (Vance Joseph and Sean McDermott) were most recently defensive coordinators of another NFL team.

\(^4\) Wade Phillips was also interim head coach of the New Orleans Saints (1995), Atlanta Falcons (2003), and Houston Texans (2013).
As illustrated above in Figure 3, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017), seven White individuals and three African American individuals received a second head coach opportunity after separating (that is, being fired, resigning or otherwise “parting ways”) from a first head coach position during this time period. John Fox and Mike Mularkey are the only two coaches who received a third NFL head coach opportunity during this same time period. In addition, one individual (Jim Harbaugh) received a head coach opportunity at the college level after separating from his first NFL head coach position, and one individual (Lovie Smith) received a head coach opportunity at the college level after separating from his second NFL head coach position.

During this same time period between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017), seven White individuals and two African American individuals received an opportunity to be an offensive coordinator after separating from a first head coach position. Also during this same time period, four White individuals and one African American individual received an opportunity to be an NFL defensive coordinator after separating from a first head coach position. In January 2017, former first time NFL head coach Mike McCoy was named new offensive coordinator of the Denver Broncos. Also in January 2017, former first time NFL head coach Gus Bradley was named new defensive coordinator of the Los Angeles Chargers.

Findings in the current research study also revealed 17 African American individuals have been head coaches in the NFL since 1963. Seven African American individuals have held interim head coach positions (i.e., these individuals were head coaches for a part of an NFL season) but were not offered the head coach position for the following full NFL season. In January 2015, Todd Bowles became the first African American leader named to a head coach position after previously serving as an interim head coach earlier in his career. Bowles served as interim head coach for three games with the Miami Dolphins during the 2011-2012 NFL season. In January 2017, Anthony Lynn became the second African American leader named to a head coach position after previously serving as an interim head coach earlier in his career; Lynn served as interim head coach for one game with the Buffalo Bills during the 2016-2017 NFL season.

In addition, only seven NFL teams have hired two different African American head coaches from 1963-2017. For example, in January 2016 Hue Jackson became the second African American head coach in the history of the Cleveland Browns; Romeo Crennel was the head coach of the Cleveland Browns from 2005-2008. Also, with the hiring of Lovie Smith in 2014, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers became the first NFL team to hire three African American head coaches (Tony Dungy, Raheem Morris and Lovie Smith). The Buccaneers fired Smith in January 2016. In addition, the Indianapolis Colts became the first (and only) NFL team to hire African American head coaches back-to-back when the Colts hired Jim Caldwell to succeed Tony Dungy in 2009.

### TABLE 2: OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2016-2017)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>NAME OF FORMER DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR</th>
<th>RACE OF FORMER DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR</th>
<th>NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR</th>
<th>NAME OF NEW OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR</th>
<th>RACE OF NEW OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Falcons</td>
<td>Kyle Shanahan</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Head Coach, San Francisco 49ers</td>
<td>Steve Sarkisian</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore Ravens</td>
<td>Marc Trestman</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>No new position as of February 5, 2017</td>
<td>Marty Mornhinweg</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo Bills</td>
<td>Greg Roman</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Senior Offensive Assistant / Tight Ends Coach, Baltimore Ravens</td>
<td>Anthony Lynn</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo Bills</td>
<td>Anthony Lynn</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Head Coach, Los Angeles Chargers</td>
<td>Rick Dennison</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Broncos</td>
<td>Rick Dennison</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Offensive Coordinator, Buffalo Bills</td>
<td>Mike McCoy</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston Texans+</td>
<td>George Godsey</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>No new position as of February 5, 2017</td>
<td>No new offensive coordinator</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacksonville Jaguars</td>
<td>Greg Olson</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Quarterbacks Coach, Los Angeles Rams</td>
<td>Nathaniel Hackett</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Rams</td>
<td>Rob Boras</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Tight Ends Coach, Buffalo Bills</td>
<td>Matt LaFleur</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Vikings</td>
<td>Norv Turner</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>No new position as of February 5, 2017</td>
<td>Pat Shurmur</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Jets</td>
<td>Chan Gailey</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>John Morton</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland Raiders</td>
<td>Bill Musgrave</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Quarterbacks Coach, Denver Broncos</td>
<td>Geep Chyst</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco 49ers+</td>
<td>Curtis Modkins</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Running Backs Coach, Chicago Bears</td>
<td>No new offensive coordinator</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Redskins</td>
<td>Sean McCoy</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Head Coach, Los Angeles Rams</td>
<td>Matt Cavanaugh</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data range for data: February 6, 2016 (day following Super Bowl 50) to February 5, 2017 (data of Super Bowl LI)

5 Based on internal NFL research data. NFL teams hired 73 head coaches during the previous eleven-year period from 2006-2016. Only eleven of these 73 head coach vacancies (15 percent) were filled by men of color.
As the above Tables 2 and 3 illustrate, between February 8, 2016 (day following Super Bowl 50) and February 5, 2017 (day of Super Bowl LI), NFL teams hired ten White offensive coordinators and one offensive coordinator of color. Anthony Lynn, the one offensive coordinator of color hired during this time period (in February 2017). During the same approximate one year time period, NFL teams hired six White defensive coordinators and five defensive coordinators of color. Five of the eleven defensive coordinators hired between the day after Super Bowl 50 (February 8, 2016) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017) held the quarterbacks coach position with an NFL team immediately before being named offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Four of the eleven defensive coordinators hired between the day after Super Bowl 50 (February 8, 2016) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017) are currently holding an NFL defensive coordinator position for the third or greater time (Leslie Frazier, Greg Manusky, Wade Phillips, and Gregg Williams). In January 2017, Gus Bradley received an opportunity to work as an NFL defensive coordinator for the second time when hired by the Los Angeles Chargers. The remaining six defensive coordinators are first time NFL defensive coordinators (Matt Burke, Marquand Manuel, Mike Vrabel, Steve Wilks, Joe Woods, and Robert Saleh). All four recently hired African American defensive coordinators (Leslie Frazier, Marquand Manuel, Steve Wilks, and Joe Woods) served as defensive backs (secondary coaches) immediately before earning their current NFL defensive coordinator opportunity. Robert Saleh, a Muslim American, most recently served as an NFL linebacks coach before earning the defensive coordinator position with the San Francisco 49ers in February 2017.

As illustrated above in Figure 1 of this report, after separating from a first head coach position, 26 White individuals have held offensive coordinator positions and 25 White individuals have held defensive coordinator positions since 1963. For example, Mike McCoy was recently named offensive coordinator of the Denver Broncos after previously serving as head coach of the Los Angeles Chargers (2013-2016). In addition, Gus Bradley was recently named defensive coordinator of the Los Angeles Chargers after previously serving as head coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars (2012-2016). After separating from a first head coach position, three coaches of color (Tom Fears, Jim Caldwell and Hue Jackson) have held the offensive coordinator position and two coaches of color (Romeo Crennel and Leslie Frazier) have been defensive coordinators.
As illustrated above in Figure 4 and Figure 5, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017), 24 White individuals have received a second opportunity to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team. During this same time period, only three men of color received a similar "second-chance" opportunity to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator. In addition, during this same time period, 30 White individuals received a "third or greater chance" to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator, whereas only nine men of color received a similar "third or greater chance" to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator.

As the above Table 4 illustrates, between February 8, 2016 (day following Super Bowl 50) and February 5, 2017 (day of Super Bowl LI), NFL teams hired two White general managers. During that same time period, NFL teams hired zero general managers of color. Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017), NFL teams hired 18 new general managers. Sixteen of the 18 general managers are White individuals. Ray Farmer, who is African American, was hired as general manager of the Cleveland Browns in February 2014. In addition, Chris Grier, who is African American, was hired as general manager of the Miami Dolphins in January 2016. As of February 2017, there were six African American general managers in the NFL as compared with 25 White general managers.1

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**Note:** The data in this study does not include individuals who hold "general manager equivalent" positions (for example, individuals who are responsible for "controlling the draft board" but do not have the job title "general manager"). For instance, in January 2017 the Jacksonville Jaguars hired Tom Coughlin as Executive Vice President of Football Operations.

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**Table 4: General Manager Mobility Patterns (2016-2017)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>NAME OF FORMER GENERAL MANAGER</th>
<th>RACE OF FORMER GENERAL MANAGER</th>
<th>NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL MANAGER</th>
<th>NAME OF NEW GENERAL MANAGER</th>
<th>RACE OF NEW GENERAL MANAGER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis Colts</td>
<td>Ryan Grigson</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>No new position as of February 5, 2017</td>
<td>Chris Ballard</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco 49ers</td>
<td>Trent Baalke</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>No new position as of February 5, 2017</td>
<td>John Lynch</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Date range for data: February 8, 2016 (day following Super Bowl 50) to February 5, 2017 (date of Super Bowl LI)

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6 In January 2016, the Cleveland Browns promoted Sashi Brown, an African American executive, from general counsel executive vice president of football operations. The Browns also named former New York Mets baseball operations executive Paul DePodesta to the newly created position of Chief Strategy Officer. The Browns subsequently hired Andrew Berry, an African American individual, as the team’s new vice president of player personnel. Berry reports to DePodesta and Brown. The Browns decided not to hire a new general manager.
NFL POSITION COACHES—THE PRIMARY PIPELINES FOR ASPIRING HEAD COACH CANDIDATES

Quarterbacks Coaches: As of February 2017, only two quarterbacks coaches were African American individuals (Byron Leftwich and David Culley). Leftwich and Culley were both hired as first time NFL quarterbacks coaches in 2017. Five current NFL offensive coordinators worked as an NFL quarterbacks coach immediately prior to earning the opportunity to work as an NFL offensive coordinator. The quarterbacks coach position is one of the primary occupational mobility pipelines to work as an NFL offensive coordinator. In addition, twenty current NFL coordinators have previously worked as an NFL offensive coordinator, and one current NFL quarterbacks coach previously served as an NFL head coach.

Running backs Coaches: As of February 2017, twenty-seven NFL running backs coaches were African American individuals and one running backs coach was an American Samoan individual (Kennedy Polamalu). However, zero current NFL offensive coordinators worked as an NFL running backs coach immediately prior to earning the opportunity to work as an NFL offensive coordinator. Fourteen of the 27 African American running backs coaches have held that coaching position for at least three NFL seasons; the average stint/tenure for current African American running backs coaches is 2.7 years. In addition, three of the 27 African American running backs coaches have previously worked as an NFL offensive coordinator. No current NFL running backs coach has previously worked as an NFL head coach.

Wide Receivers Coaches: As of February 2017, seventeen NFL wide receivers coaches were African American individuals and one wide receivers coach was a Polynesian American leader. The average stint/tenure for current African American wide receivers coaches is 1.6 years. In addition, only three current NFL offensive coordinators worked as an NFL wide receivers coach immediately prior to earning the opportunity to work as an NFL offensive coordinator. None of the 18 current wide receivers coaches of color previously served as an NFL offensive coordinator. Raheem Morris is the only current African American wide receivers coach who has previous NFL head coach experience.

Tight Ends Coaches: As of February 2017, five NFL tight ends coaches were African American individuals. The average stint/tenure for current African American tight ends coaches is seven years. Only one current NFL offensive coordinator worked as an NFL tight ends coach immediately prior to earning the opportunity to work as an NFL offensive coordinator. In addition, none of the five current African American tight ends coaches previously served as an NFL offensive coordinator, as compared with six of the current White tight ends coaches who have previously worked as an NFL offensive coordinator.

Offensive Line Coaches: As of February 2017, two NFL offensive line coaches were African American individuals. The average stint/tenure for current African American offensive line coaches is four years. Only one current NFL offensive coordinator worked as an NFL offensive line coach immediately prior to earning the opportunity to work as an NFL offensive coordinator. In addition, neither of the two current African American offensive line coaches previously served as an NFL offensive coordinator, as compared with seven of the current White offensive line coaches who have previously worked as an NFL offensive coordinator.

Defensive Line Coaches: As of February 2017, seventeen NFL defensive line coaches were African American individuals. The average stint/tenure for current African American defensive line coaches is 3.5 years. Three current NFL defensive coordinators (two White defensive coordinators and one African American defensive coordinator) worked as an NFL defensive line coach immediately prior to earning an opportunity to work as an NFL defensive coordinator. In addition, none of the 17 current African American defensive line coaches have previously held an NFL defensive coordinator position.

Linebackers Coaches: As of February 2017, seven NFL linebackers coaches were African American individuals. The average stint/tenure for current African American linebackers coaches is two years. Eleven current NFL defensive coordinators (eight White defensive coordinators, two African American defensive coordinators, and one Muslim American defensive coordinator) worked as an NFL linebackers coach immediately prior to earning the opportunity to work as an NFL defensive coordinator. In addition, nine current White linebackers coaches have previously worked as an NFL defensive coordinator, as compared with one African American linebackers coach (Frank Bush) who has previously worked as an NFL defensive coordinator.

Defensive Backs Coaches: As of February 2017, twenty-one NFL defensive backs (secondary) coaches were African American individuals. The average stint/tenure for current African American defensive backs (secondary) coaches is 2.3 years. Nine current NFL defensive coordinators (three White defensive coordinators and six African American defensive coordinators) worked as an NFL defensive backs (secondary) coach immediately prior to earning the opportunity to work as an NFL defensive coordinator. The above data indicate linebackers and defensive backs (secondary) coach positions function as two primary occupational mobility pipelines to work as an NFL defensive coordinator.

ADDITIONAL KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Recent research by the NFL found that first time NFL coaches hired during the eleven-year period between 2006-2016 who had less than five years of coordinator experience succeeded at a rate of 19 percent (that is, six of the 31 coaches had a career coaching record above 500 or coached in the playoffs more than once). This NFL research study also found that first time NFL coaches hired between 2006-2016 who had five or more years of coordinator experience succeeded at a rate of 73 percent (that is, 11 of the 15 coaches had a career coaching record above 500 or coached in the playoffs more than once).

Three of the four first time coaches in January 2016 had three years or less of coordinator experience (Adam Gase, Ben McAdoo and Doug Pederson). Bo Kocetter had nine years of previous NFL coordinator experience before becoming the head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The combined winning percentage during the 2016-2017 NFL regular season for the teams coached by Gase, McAdoo and Pederson was 58.3 percent. Gase and McAdoo coached their respective teams to the NFL playoffs. The initial coaching success of Gase and McAdoo is an encouraging sign for the ability of first time head coaches without extensive previous NFL coordinator experience to lead an NFL team. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers, coached by Kocetter, finished the 2016-2017 NFL regular season with a 9-7 record; however the Buccaneers did not make the playoffs. Kocetter’s relative initial success as a first time head coach also underscores the importance and impact of extensive previous NFL coordinator experience.

Five of the most recently hired head coaches are first time NFL head coaches. Also, three of the five recently hired first time coaches have three years or less of coordinator experience (Joseph, Lynn, and McVay). Shanahan and McDermott each have at least eight years of previous NFL coordinator experience. Based on the recent NFL research discussed above, Shanahan and McDermott are better prepared and positioned to succeed as first time NFL head coaches as compared with Joseph, Lynn, and McVay as a result of Shanahan’s and McDermott’s extensive prior experience as NFL coordinators.

Recent research by the NFL also found that, during the eleven-year period between 2006-2016, second time head coaches who had winning records during their first stint as an NFL head coach succeeded at a rate of 45 percent. Conversely, second time head coaches who had losing records during their first stint as an NFL head coach only succeeded at a rate of 33 percent.

Two of the seven head coaches hired during or shortly after the 2015-2016 NFL regular season were second time NFL head coaches. Before becoming head coach of the Cleveland Browns in January 2016, Hue Jackson previously coached the Oakland Raiders to an 8-8 record during the 2011 NFL regular season. Likewise, before becoming head coach of the San Francisco 49ers in January 2016, Chip Kelly served as head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles from 2013-2015 and coached the team to a combined record of 26-21 during his three years as head coach. During the 2016-2017 NFL regular season, Jackson coached the Browns to a 1-15 record and Kelly coached the 49ers to a 2-14 record. One of the most recently hired head coaches is a second time NFL head coach. Doug Marrone, recently hired by the Jacksonville Jaguars, previously coached the Buffalo Bills to a combined 15-17 record during the 2013-2014 NFL regular season. The recent NFL research discussed above forecasts a 33 percent success rate for Marrone in his leadership role as new head coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

7 Harold Goodwin, current offensive coordinator of the Arizona Cardinals, is also responsible for coaching the offensive line.
Several of the recently separated NFL head coaches subsequently received a new coaching opportunity in a key position. For example, Gus Bradley was named defensive coordinator of the Los Angeles Chargers and Mike McCoy was named offensive coordinator of the Denver Broncos.

Recent research by the NFL revealed 23 out of 73 (32 percent) NFL head coaches hired during the eleven-year period from 2006-2016 were former NFL head coaches. Four of these 23 “second or greater opportunity” head coaches hired during this eleven-year period were men of color. These findings demonstrate that in order to be hired as a head coach in the NFL oftentimes the perceived most valuable career background is previous experience as an NFL head coach (beyond the head coordinator) since these six men of color had defensive coaching backgrounds. These findings demonstrate another instance of the reshuffling effect with respect to limiting the overall number of opportunities for prospective first time NFL head coaches.

Findings in this Volume VI research report also indicate a prevalence of the reshuffling effect with respect to the same individuals repeatedly hired for NFL team coordinator positions, which prevents new talent from entering key head coach pipelines. For example, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017), 54 White individuals have received at least a second opportunity to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team. Only twelve men of color have received a similar “second or greater” opportunity during the same time period. None of the twelve “second or greater chances” were men of color hired as defensive coordinators. Twenty-four White individuals have received a second opportunity to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team since the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017). During this same time period, only three men of color received a similar “second-chance” opportunity to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator. During this same time period, 30 White individuals received a “third or greater chance” to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team, whereas only nine men of color received a similar “third or greater” chance to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator. While it is somewhat encouraging that 37 percent (19 out of 52) of the defensive coordinators hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season are coordinators of color, only 12 percent (7 out of 60) of the offensive coordinators hired during this same time period have been coordinators of color.

Social Capital and Implicit Bias—The Importance of Trust and Perceived Competence

In addition to increasing the number of qualified candidates who interview for each open coordinator, head coaching or general manager position, it is imperative that a qualified candidate’s work experience is perceived as qualified by the individuals who make the hiring decisions. A qualified candidate’s job prospects will be impacted by intangible factors such as trust and perceived competence in addition to tangible factors such as actual performance in past coaching or coordinator position(s). The findings in the current study reiterate the need to develop and implement bias-lessening processes and procedures with respect to the hiring process for head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers. The findings in the current study underscore the importance of color in leadership opportunities in the NFL. The findings in the current study underscore the importance of color in leadership opportunities in the NFL. The findings in the current study underscore the importance of color in leadership opportunities in the NFL. The key is to develop strategies and implement practices and processes that provide more candidates of color with a realistic opportunity to be a head coach in the NFL. As explained by scholars such as Kilidu et al. (2011), Lockwood and McDonald (2010), and Sagas and Cunningham (2005), it is imperative to create a systemic approach that facilitates both strong and weak networking ties amongst leadership candidates of color in addition to increasing opportunities for rising industry stars to develop meaningful connections with “higher status” African American and black leaders within and outside of NFL teams and at the NFL leadership office.

The findings of the current study support the power of social capital, as ten out of the twenty total head coaches of color from 1963-2017 have had a second opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. The key is to develop strategies and implement practices and processes that provide more candidates of color with a realistic opportunity to be a head coach in the NFL. As explained by scholars such as Kilidu et al. (2011), Lockwood and McDonald (2010), and Sagas and Cunningham (2005), it is imperative to create a systemic approach that facilitates both strong and weak networking ties amongst leadership candidates of color in addition to increasing opportunities for rising industry stars to develop meaningful connections with “higher status” African American and black leaders within and outside of NFL teams and at the NFL leadership office. As explained by Kay et al. (2009), NFL leadership candidates of color “will have to do more than simply overcome the obstacles inherent in how the current social system is structured; they will also have to alter how people think it should be structured” (p. 421-22).
The Rooney Rule may enable a person of color to have an opportunity to secure that initial head coach position, but intangible factors such as trust and perceived competence may have even more of an impact on future occupational mobility (second and third coaching or coordinator opportunities). Rider et al. (2016) expounded, “A decade after the Rooney Rule’s implementation, within-job racial disparity clearly persists” (p. 40). Therefore, in addition to working to increase the number of people of color who make hiring decisions (team owners and general managers), it is imperative to work on improving “the perception of competence” of sport business professionals of color (Shropshire, 1996, p. 129-30). Stated differently, even if there is an increase in general managers of color and team owners, negative race consciousness associated with the coaching and coordinating capabilities of candidates of color may still exist and persist (see Shropshire, 1996).

For instance, Day (2015) applied the particularistic mobility thesis to examine race-based occupational mobility differences that result from “subjective aspects of work, such as upper level managers’ (mis)perceptions, stereotypes, and biased evaluations of workers’ managerial abilities” (p. 25). Day concluded that, “if coaches are hired into executive positions based on their perceived intangible traits (for example, loyalty, leadership abilities, and work effort), in addition to their real or perceived professional experience and technical expertise, the particularistic manipulation of these traits and skills will likely lead to more numerous and less constricted promotion opportunities for White coaches than for Black coaches” (p. 25).

### Occupational Mobility and Job Tenure—Change as the Consistent Constant

This research study also analyzed the tenure/stint (i.e., length of time in current positions) of all current NFL head coaches, offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators. For current NFL offensive coordinators, the average length of time is 1.7 years in the current position. Twenty-five current NFL offensive coordinators have been in their current position for two NFL seasons or fewer. Only six NFL offensive coordinators have been in their current position for three or more NFL seasons (Darrell Bevell, Pete Cermichia, Harold Goodwin, Todd Haley, Josh McDaniels, and Mike Shula). The data is very similar for defensive coordinators; the average length of time is 1.7 years in the current position. Twenty-eight current NFL defensive coordinators have been in their current position for two NFL seasons or fewer. Only four NFL defensive coordinators have been in their current position for four or more NFL seasons (Dom Capers, Matt Patricia, Dean Pees, and Bob Sutton).

As of kickoff at Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017), three African American men held an offensive coordinator position with an NFL team. The average tenure/stint in the current position is 1.2 years. Each of the ten current NFL offensive coordinators of color has three or fewer NFL seasons of experience in his current offensive position. Edgar Bennett has two NFL seasons of experience in his current offensive coordinator position with the Green Bay Packers. Harold Goodwin has four NFL seasons of experience in his current offensive coordinator position with the Arizona Cardinals. The Titans, Packers and Cardinals—teams led by one of the three current African American offensive coordinators—had a combined record of 26-21-1 during the 2016-2017 NFL regular season.

The average tenure/stint in the current position for the ten current men of color in defensive coordinator positions is 1.2 years. Each of the ten current NFL defensive coordinators of color has three or fewer NFL seasons of experience in his current defensive position. The Falcons, Bills, Panthers, Broncos, and 49ers—five NFL teams who recently hired defensive coordinators of color in January/February 2017—had a combined record of 35-45 during the most recently completed 2016-2017 NFL regular season. The combined win/loss record for teams coached by one of the other five current African American defensive coordinators was 44-35-1 during the 2016-2017 NFL regular season.

### Sorting, Stacking & Performance-Reward Bias—Access Barriers to Leadership Positions

The above data indicate that coaches of color are often “sorted” and “stacked” into position coach roles such as running backs coaches, wide receivers coaches and defensive line coaches with minimal likelihood of ever earning an opportunity to work as an offensive or defensive coordinator of an NFL team; NFL coordinator experience is essential with respect to NFL head coach prospects. The defensive backs (secondary) coach position presently functions as one of the more viable occupational mobility paths for coaches of color in the NFL. Rider et al. (2016) hypothesized that “stacking” and “sorting” allocative mechanisms directly impact the occupational mobility of people of color and create racial disparities in leadership. As explained by Rider et al. (2016), the ‘entry point ‘sorting’ mechanism suggests that racial minorities are initially allocated at hiring to positions with lesser upward mobility prospects than are white employees. The post-entry ‘stacking’ mechanism implies that racial minorities are allocated to such marginalized positions after hiring’ (p. 9). Race-based sorting at the time of hire implies that “racial minorities’ first jobs will typically be in positions associated with lesser chances of attaining a leadership position (i.e., leadership prospects)” (Rider et al., 2016, p. 11).

Post-hire stacking in inferior positions ‘produce(s) racial disparity in organizational leadership by allocating minorities to positions that are peripheral to the organization’s central mission and consequently do not provide position-holders with opportunities to develop the skills or visibility necessary for career advancement… racial minorities will typically hold positions associated with lesser chances of attaining a leadership position’ (Rider et al., 2016, pp. 11, 12). Rider et al. (2016) found that “performance-reward biases strongly influences promotions to coordinator positions but does not influence promotions to head coaching positions” (p. 37). In other words, a primary occupational mobility access barrier for coaches of color exists at the coordinator level. For example, the vast majority of African American offensive position coaches oversee running backs or wide receivers whereas only two African American coaches currently hold the quarterbacks coach position (i.e., a primary pipeline to become an offensive coordinator).

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Professor Claire McCarty Kilian and colleagues (2005) examined the research literature on corporate leadership diversity initiatives and found “interventions that have been successful in removing barriers to the success of women and people of color in corporate environments have not been afforded the same attention as the barriers themselves” (p. 159). Similar to the empirical research of McCarty Kilian et al., this research report “goes beyond the barriers to focus on successful interventions” (p. 159). The following recommendations are based in part on existing empirical research that examines solutions to access barriers for ethnic minorities.

It is essential to continue the development of more informal while simultaneously formal settings for ethnic minorities to connect with decision makers in the NFL with respect to head coach, offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator, general manager and other executive leadership roles.

There must continue to be a business case for diversity and inclusion when it relates to the NFL expanding the candidate pipeline and pool of applicants for head coach, offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator, general manager and other senior executive roles at both the team and league levels. The research literature highlights that a business case for diversity is one of the best ways to position inclusion strategies for organizations seeking meaningful change and innovation.

There must continue to be more innovative and nuanced diversity and inclusion metrics that spotlight and make the hiring practices in the NFL even more transparent and informative.

There must be a celebration of the ‘wins of diversity and inclusion’ within the NFL. These victories of success should be branded so that these stories educate all stakeholders in a synergistic way so that everyone sees the value of diversity and inclusion goals, objectives and outcomes. A recent example took place during the 2017 Black History Month on NFL Network, as moments of successful nostalgia were captured both on the field and in leadership roles. Success stories were highlighted that included features of Willie Thrower becoming the first African American quarterback in the NFL, Doug Williams becoming the first African American head coach in 2004, and Tony Dungy winning the Super Bowl against his prodigy Lovie Smith. Other ethnic minority group achievements should be celebrated with these types of visual representations.

In addition, while three African American men currently serve as NFL offensive coordinators (Edgar Bennett, Harold Goodwin and Terry Robiskie), only one of these three coordinators (Robiskie) has offensive play calling responsibilities. The head coaches of the Green Bay Packers (Mike McCarthy) and Arizona Cardinals (Bruce Arians) have retained offensive play calling responsibilities. However, in June 2016 Arians empowered Harold Goodwin by providing Goodwin with the opportunity to manage the postseason play breakdown, pre-season play installation, pre-season practice scripts and calling plays to the quarterback during all pre-season practices. NFL head coaches, offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators are encouraged to develop similar strategic play calling opportunities during the pre-season so that individuals like Harold Goodwin are able to refine and broaden the aspiring head coach candidate skill set in key areas such as play calling mechanics, play cadence/pace, and managing specific game situations. NFL Player Engagement is also encouraged to develop “Coaching Development Clinics” for current and former NFL players; these clinics will provide current and former players with ongoing access to career development modules and resources as well as a mechanism to evaluate “coaching readiness.” The Coaching Development Clinics would also provide relevant information on the industry work experience and substantive skill sets required for head coach, coordinator and position coach opportunities within the NFL. Current and former players that successfully complete all modules and other requirements of the Coaching Development Clinics would receive an official accreditation from the NFL, which would function as another incremental positive differentiator during the interview process.

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Future research should also examine the nuances of the overall hiring process for general managers to better understand the factors, power dynamics and other variables that influence the hiring process. For example, it appears that new Atlanta Falcons head coach Kyle Shanahan was involved in the decision to hire new general manager John Lynch. Historically in the NFL, team owners and general managers have been responsible for hiring head coaches.

Future research should also examine the educational opportunities and interview “timing” strategies. Data on the career experience (and social capital) of each person of color that interviews for head coach, coordinator and general manager positions would provide insight on the perceived requisite prior experience essential for these leadership positions. This information would in turn assist aspiring head coaches of color to better understand when their “career body of work” might be viewed as most competitive for open positions.

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In addition, future research should further investigate the variables that influence the hiring process. Researchers did not have access to NFL team notes and records from job candidate interviews, which would have provided more extensive insight with respect to the hiring decision-making process. In addition, this research study did not track the entire career trajectory of each individual coach, coordinator and general manager examined in the study. The following recommendations for future research are made based on the findings in this research study.

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Future research should examine recent occupational mobility patterns of head coaches, offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) athletics programs to determine if similar occupational access barriers exist at the collegiate level. Research in this area should also analyze the number of NFL head coaches, coordinators and position coaches that have prior coaching experience at an FBS football program. This data could provide tremendous insight on the importance and value of aspiring NFL coaches gaining extensive experience at the collegiate level.

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