Living the American Dream?

Second Generation Dominican High School Students in a Diverse

Suburban Community

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ABSTRACT

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My dissertation examines second generation Dominican high school students and their parents in a diverse, middle-class suburb. At a moment when immigrant families are arriving directly to suburban locations, and the number of second generation immigrants in our public schools is growing, it is important to examine how they are making sense of their experiences in this new context. In my study, I consider how one sub-group of Latinx high school students, with at least one parent born in the Dominican Republic, are experiencing a new place. Specifically, I look at their experiences within their community, school and family influence their assimilation processes, their ideas about future success, and the role of education in reaching that success. I also explore how the parents' experiences in this community inform their definitions of success for their children and the role that education plays in achieving it, and how those beliefs affect their children. I examine the parents' accounts through in-depth interviews and the students' accounts through pre and post in-depth interviews two years apart, as well as photo elicitation interviews.

I found that the location of this suburb, adjacent to an ethnic enclave, provides a context that supports the process of selective acculturation, whereby the students are learning English and American customs while also developing and maintaining their Dominican cultural practices, including speaking Spanish. I also uncovered nuances to their understanding of the role of education in securing future success, through the use of open-ended questions. I found that the students with college-educated parents were more cautious about believing in the American Dream, and the idea that education guarantees success. Despite this, all of the families

in the study approached education in similar ways, a style typically attributed to low-income families. And lastly, I found that the families lacked the social and cultural capital to gain educational advantages, specifically in the college application process. My study challenges the assumption that immigrant families arriving to middle-class suburbs are equipped to take advantage of the resources that their place of residence can afford them. Living in this type of place signals an achievement of the American Dream, but we have to question whether their children will be able to maintain it.

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Dedication

To my mother, Maria Isabel, and father, Ramiro, who left their home countries in search of the American Dream, and inspired me to pursue mine.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to challenge and expand prevailing theories on the assimilation of immigrants into U.S. society. Sociologists first developed the traditional assimilation theory based on European immigrants. Once our immigrant pool diversified, they developed segmented assimilation theory, which accounted for the variety of outcomes they were finding based on the experiences of poor immigrants located within urban cities (Gans, 1992; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993). More recently, however, many researchers have questioned how common the three types are, and whether they are actually predictive of social mobility (Gans, 2007; Waters, Tran, Kasinitz & Mollenkopf, 2010), as well as if we were too quick to disregard straight-line assimilation (Alba & Nee, 2003; Perlmann, 2005; Waldinger & Feliciano, 2004). Now that the majority of immigrants can be found outside city centers in new locations (Logan, Alba & Zhang, 2002; Massey & Capoferro, 2008; Suro & Singer, 2002), we must explore whether this assimilation theory applies to people in these new contexts. Place is significant because it "affects our access to jobs and public services (especially education), our access to shopping and culture, our level of personal security, the availability of our medical services, and even the air we breathe" (Drier et al., 2004, p.4). Therefore, new locations are likely to have an effect on the lives of immigrants and could lead to the expansion or revision assimilation theories. By using place to frame the study of the adaptation of immigrants, I will assess the importance of place, and how variations in place matter. As Latinx people born in the U.S. to immigrant parents, the second generation, are outnumbering the foreign-born (Fry & Passel, 2009), I focus on this particular group of Latinx immigrants. In addition, so as to not gloss over the heterogeneity found under the label Latinx, I focus on

Dominican families, one of the largest immigrant groups in the Northeastern states (Itzigsohn, 2009).

Latinx Immigration

The United States is a nation founded by immigrants, but recently, Latinx people have become the largest immigrant group. In fact, the increase in the Hispanic population accounts for more than half of the growth in the total population of the United States between 2000 and 2010 (Humes, K.R., Jones, N.A., & Ramirez, R.R., 2011). Between those years, the Hispanic population grew by 43% (Humes et al., 2011). Of the 308.7 million people who resided in the United States in 2010, the Census reported that 50.5 million were of Hispanic or Latinx origin (Ennis, S.R., Rios-Vargas, M., & Albert, N.G., 2011). The number has now grown to 56.5 million in 2015, accounting for nearly 18% of the total U.S population (Flores, 2017). It is projected that by 2065, the number of Latinx people in the U.S. will grow to 107 million (Flores, 2017). Therefore, it is safe to say that what happens to Latinx people in the United States is of utmost importance for the country as a whole and its future.

Interestingly, the bulk of this growth has actually been in U.S.-born Latinx people, also termed the second generation. Births have been contributing more to the Latinx growth than immigration, marking an important shift in the make-up of the U.S. Latinx population. One in four newborns is Hispanic (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Between 2000 and 2010, 6.5 million Latinx people were newly arrived immigrants, whereas 9.6 million Latinx people were born in the U.S. (Flores, 2017). This trend appears to be continuing into the current decade with just 1.9 million Latinx people arriving, and 5 million Latinx births in the U.S. (Flores, 2017).

This will have a great impact on both our labor market and schools. From 2000 to 2020, the Latinx labor force is projected to increase by 77% through a combination of immigration and

native-born Latinx people reaching working age, in contrast to a 9% increase in the non-Hispanic labor force (Suro & Passel, 2003). Almost one-fourth of the labor force growth over these twenty years will be from the children of Latinx immigrants (Suro & Passel, 2003). A more recent projection for all immigrants suggests that between now and 2050, ninety-three percent of the growth of the nation's working-age population will be from immigrants and their U.S. born children (Pew Research Center, 2013). The majority of the Hispanic children in the U.S. (52%) are second generation, and are attending this country's public schools (Fry & Passel, 2009). The second generation Latinx people "are U.S. citizens by birth and will be the products of U.S. schools and, for those reasons alone, they will present a different character and have a different impact on the nation than their immigrant parents" (Suro & Passel, 2003). In fact, many characteristics (social, economic and demographic) vary greatly by generational status (Fry & Passel, 2009), so it is important to differentiate between them.

Second generation Latinx people have to navigate between the two worlds of American schools and their families' culture. Learning more about how they accomplish this, and the role that public schools play in this process, is critical; understanding how schools serve these children is even more imperative as Latinx people spread to new communities that have no previous experience serving a diverse population of students. Although we know a lot about the adaptation of second generation immigrants in large, urban settings, the traditional place of settlement, we know much less about the immigrants who arrive to other communities, and their experiences in these novel settings.

Latinx Children in Schools

Though adults who immigrate to this country tend to enter the workforce as soon as possible, and assimilate through their experiences in the community and workplace (Portes,

1994), their children, the second generation, assimilate through their experiences in their community and in the schools they attend. Given the growth in the number of Latinx people in the U.S., they have had and will continue to have a great presence in the public school system. From fall 2002 through fall 2012, the number of Latinx students enrolled during this period increased from 8.6 million to 12.1 million, and their share of public school enrollment increased from 18% to 24% (Kena, Musu-Gillette, Robinson, Wang, Rathbun, Zhang, Wilkinson-Flicker, Barmer, & Dunlop Velez, 2015). It is projected that in the year 2050, there will be more Latinx school-aged children than non-Latinx white children (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). They are already the largest racial/ethnic minority group in public schools in twenty-two states (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). The increase has not been isolated to any one region of the United States, as all four regions saw increases in the number of Latinx students enrolled in their public schools (Kena et al., 2015).

The trend of growing Latinx enrollments will only continue, because the age distribution of second generation Latinx people is heavily weighted towards the young. The median age is only fourteen, and about 38% of the Latinx second generation is younger than ten (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). It is projected that between 2000 and 2020, one in seven of the new students enrolling in U.S. schools will be a second generation Latinx student (Suro & Passel, 2003). In fact, they already constitute a majority (52%) of the Hispanic children in the nation (Fry & Passel, 2009).

Whereas the Latinx presence in schools is not a completely new phenomenon, the characteristics of Latinx students are changing. Although Mexicans still make up the majority of Latinx people, the percent of young Latinx people who identify Central or South America as their place of origin increases sharply from the third and higher generations at 3.9%, to the

second generation at 18.3%, and the first generation at 23.8%, suggesting that almost a quarter of newer Latinx immigrants are from places other than Mexico (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). While the Mexican share of Latinx immigrants peaked in 2008, it has been declining ever since (Flores, 2017). Therefore, it is imperative to continue the study of Latinx people and to differentiate among countries of origin, so that we do not gloss over the heterogeneity among this group.

Latinx Academic Achievement

The low academic achievement of Latinx students has been persistent enough for scholars to label the problem a crisis (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). The achievement gap between Latinx students and non-Latinx white students has been thoroughly documented, and the gap has stayed consistent over the last twenty years. Between 1992 and 2013, the White-Hispanic gap was not measurably different (25 points) in reading at grade four (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, MacFarland, KewalRamani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016). The same can be said in reading for students in grade twelve (22 points) across the same time period (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). Young Latinx people are less likely than all young people to be enrolled in high school or college, and overall, they have a very high high school dropout rate (17%), although that is mostly fueled by the foreign born, first generation that often enter the workforce upon arrival to the U.S., instead of enrolling in school (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Second generation Latinx youth still have a higher drop-out rate at 9%, compared to 6% for whites and 4% for Asians, but are comparable to the rate for blacks (9%) (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). In another report by the Pew Hispanic Center Fry (2010) states that much higher dropout rates were reported for native born Latinx people as a whole, which lumps together the second generation and higher. For foreign-born Latinx people, Fry (2010) states that 52% are high school dropouts, compared with 25% of native born Latinx people. Although the percentages vary across reports

depending on how dropouts are measured, it is still clear that Latinx students are lagging behind in education compared to other groups in the U.S. The dropout rate for Latinx students in 2013 continues to be higher than their fellow Black and White students (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016).

There are several factors prevalent in the Latinx population that can help explain why their achievement lags behind other students, as these characteristics have been previously linked to lower outcomes. For example, Latinx people account for 70% of all public school students who speak English with difficulty (Fry & Gonzales, 2008), and they also have higher poverty rates than students in general. Thirty percent of Latinx children under age 18 were living in poverty (based on the official poverty measure), compared to ten percent of White children (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). For Hispanic children enrolled in U.S. public schools, 34% have parents who have not completed high school, versus 7% of non-Hispanic students (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). This puts these students at a disadvantage in terms of their parents having experience with and knowledge about the U.S. public school system and higher education. Although being bilingual is advantageous, growing up in a linguistically isolated home can be a disadvantage in terms of getting the support and information needed to successfully navigate the American school system. Twenty-two percent of Hispanic public school students live in a household where English is not spoken every well, and Hispanic public school students are twelve times more likely as non-Hispanic students to live in a linguistically isolated home (Fry & Gonzales, 2008), greatly complicating interactions between families and schools.

Inequalities in educational participation and attainment persist at every level of schooling. In 2013, the college enrollment rate was 42 percent for White students ages 18 to 24, whereas it was 34 percent for Latinx students (Musu-Gillette, 2016). In addition, those second generation

Latinx students enrolled in college are only about half as likely to complete a bachelor's degree as are white college students (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009).

In much of the 20th century, when U.S. immigrants were mostly Europeans, the economy at the time provided many jobs that gave people with little education the opportunity to make enough to prosper. Nowadays, our bifurcated economy has many jobs at the bottom of the pay scale that require little education and many jobs at the top that require at least a four-year degree. Therefore, there is much more pressure on the current second generation, because they now have to cross a much larger educational gap to experience upward mobility. This requires not just a slight improvement on their parents' educational attainment, but a major leap forward to securing an advanced education (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). The configuration of poor educational outcomes, a growing population of Latinx students, and heightened skill demands in the economy poses challenges to the cherished myth of the American Dream.

The Suburbanization of Latinx People

The number of Latinx people in the suburbs has grown to the point where most Latinx people now reside outside of central cities (Frey, 2011). During the 1990s, the Latinx suburban population grew 71% and by the year 2000, 54% of all U.S. Latinx people resided in the suburbs (Suro & Singer, 2002). Massey & Tannen (2017) did an analysis over time that consisted of data for 287 metropolitan statistical areas of the U.S. From this, they reported that in 2010, 45% of Latinx people lived in suburbs, in contrast to only 29% in 1970. A different report states that in 2000, 59% of Latinx people in large metro areas lived in suburbs. Although there are discrepancies across studies, there is general agreement that more Latinx people live in suburbs today than ever before, and many are arriving directly to the suburbs (Massey & Capoferro, 2008; Logan, Alba & Zhang, 2002). Interestingly, a lot of this growth occurred in new Latinx

destinations that previously had very small Latinx populations, impacting communities that are not used to large influxes of immigrants. In absolute numbers, however, established Latinx metropolises such as New York and Los Angeles had the largest growth, although more so in the suburban areas surrounding these big cities. Three metro areas in particular, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, accounted for more than half of the growth among sixteen established Latinx metros, adding 3.9 additional Latinx people between 1980 and 2000 (Suro & Singer, 2002). In these large established Latinx metros, most of the growth (56%) occurred in the suburbs, and Suro and Singer (2002) suggest that "suburbs, particularly those on the periphery of these great gateways, are themselves becoming ports of entry where immigrants settle without ever having first stopped in the old urban barrios" while at the same time Latinx families "in search of the classic American suburban dream are also moving to the outskirts where housing is cheaper" (p. 11). Therefore, the suburbanization of Latinx people comes from a combination of new arrivals and internal migration.

This, in turn, has had a dramatic impact on who is educated in suburban public schools. In fact, two-thirds (3.4 million) of the public school enrollment growth of 5.1 million students from 1993-94 to 2006-07 occurred in suburban schools (Fry, 2009). Not only has suburban public school enrollment increased, but that increase has been dominated by non-white students. "The student population of America's suburban public schools has shot up by 3.4 million in the past decade and a half, and virtually all of this increase (99%) has been due to the enrollment of new Latinx, black and Asian students" (Fry, 2009, page i). Although suburbs were once considered mostly white enclaves, they are now becoming quite diverse. In 1993-94, suburban school districts educated a student population that was 28% non-white and in 2006-07, that number jumped to 41%, which is very close to the 44% non-white share of the nation's overall

public school student population (Fry, 2009). Between the years of 1993-94 and 2006-07, the Latinx share of suburban public school enrollment increased from 11% to 20% while the white student enrollment share decreased from 72% to 59% (Fry, 2009). Among the 2,281 suburban school districts that were in operation in both the 1993-94 and 2006-07 school years and had enrollments of at least 1,000 students, the minority student enrollment of the average district grew by 150% (Fry, 2009). Although some of this growth can be attributed to a few unusual districts that experienced extremely large increases, half of the 2,281 suburban school districts experienced a minority student growth of at least 93%, a near doubling of their minority student enrollment (Fry, 2009).

Why Dominicans?

Dominicans residing in a diverse suburb make a particularly interesting case study, as most of the research focused on this group has been in places where they make up the majority of the population, or where minorities are the majority (Louie, 2012). No study has looked at a group of Dominicans in a diverse, middle-class suburb. Given the heterogeneity of the people labeled Latinx, it is important to, at the very least, parcel out groups by country of origin, even though there is still variety within that group, as well. Although Mexicans make up the largest sub-group of Latinx people, they have a much longer history of immigration to the US, and are likely to have different experiences than the newer Latinx groups that arrived post-civil rights era (Louie, 2012). Dominicans are important to study because they are one of the largest immigrant groups in the East Coast, and they tend to arrive with low skill levels and few economic resources (Itzigsohn, 2009), presenting challenges to their upward mobility. In addition, "many Dominicans are seen as blacks my mainstream society and all are categorized as Latinos" (Itzigsohn, 2009, p. 5), which means they are unlikely to be an invisible minority in a diverse

suburban community. Their recent arrival into a middle-class suburb will surely be noticed by long-time residents, and influence how they are received.

Policy Implications

Unfortunately, the diversification of suburban schools has not led to a significant increase in the integration of white and non-white students. Suburban school district enrollments overall have diversified, but there has been only a modest increase in the racial and ethnic diversity at individual suburban schools (Fry, 2009; Reardon & Yun, 2001). In other words, school districts are more diverse, but students remain highly segregated across schools. Suburban Hispanic students are actually increasingly attending schools that have a large number of Hispanics, similar to the schools most Latinx students attend in cities. However, the typical city Latinx student still has fewer white classmates than does a peer who attends a suburban school (Fry, 2009). There is quite a variety of suburban schools being attended by Latinx students, some that resemble the majority Latinx schools found in the city, and others that are more diverse.

Given the Supreme Court ruling in *Parents Involved* on whether race can be used as a factor in school assignments, purposeful integration efforts based on students' race and ethnicity are extremely restricted. One of the few ways in which we may have meaningful integration is when it occurs naturally as immigrants spread into traditionally white communities. Although school desegregation research has typically focused on blacks and whites, it is important to conduct more research on Latinx people, as they are becoming as spatially isolated as Blacks in U.S. schools. This study will speak to the larger policy debate on integration by focusing on the experiences of Latinx students attending a naturally occurring diverse school. By exploring the assimilation process for second generation students within this new context, we will better understand what role schooling plays as they make sense of the role of education in their futures.

Theoretical Significance

The traditional understanding of immigrants' assimilation functions under the premise that the immigrant and each successive generation will assimilate and become more and more "American" (Portes, Parker & Cobas, 1980) This theory was based on the experiences of European immigrants in a growing and forgiving economy, but as immigrants began to diversify with changes in immigration policies, some sociologists argued that this theory no longer explained the outcomes of newer groups of immigrants. Segmented assimilation theory suggests three possible outcomes for the children of immigrants: complete assimilation into mainstream society (the traditional theory); advancement within an ethnic enclave; or incorporation into "the underclass" (Portes & Zhou, 1993). This expansion of assimilation theory is based on the experiences of poor immigrants in city settings. A new place of settlement, such as a suburb or rural community, would offer new and different opportunities to immigrants and their children, and it remains to be explored whether such a shift will lead to one of the previously theorized paths of assimilation, or whether a new path will be forged. It is plausible that suburban settlement, given the absence of strong ethnic enclaves and the ill effects of concentrated poverty, would lead to complete assimilation. Yet it seems highly unlikely that all immigrants in a different setting are moving down the path towards complete assimilation, given the variety of outcomes found in city settings. Even though there is disagreement around the different assimilation theories, it is still useful to examine the process of immigrant incorporation. Below, I will further discuss how looking at the theories of the acculturation process can also potentially be applied to suburban contexts.

Some immigration scholars have questioned whether the traditional outcome is even possible within one generation, and whether it is the ideal outcome at all, since complete

assimilation implies the loss of the home country's culture and language (Alba & Nee, 2003). Portes and Rumbaut (2001) have also argued that the best outcomes for second generation immigrants happen when they learn to juggle the two worlds of their family's culture and U.S. culture (what they call upward assimilation with biculturalism). On the other hand, it has been more recently argued that the theorized assimilation paths do not correlate with socioeconomic outcomes and mobility. Therefore, a new location gives us the opportunity to further explore the expansion of previously theorized assimilation paths, or even the possibility of identifying new ones.

Location has been part of several assimilation models, specifically in terms of who lives in the neighborhood where the immigrants settle. Portes and Zhou (1993) argue that being in a neighborhood with a strong co-ethnic presence can help support immigrants in positive ways, whereas settling in a neighborhood with poor native minorities such as African Americans can have negative effects and lead to poor outcomes. However, these theories consider location as nothing more than who lives in your neighborhood. There are in fact structural and cultural features to a place that inform all interactions happening within it. A few sociologists have addressed this with in-depth studies that focus on one context. In this study, I continue in the tradition of using a qualitative approach to "emplace" the research, and get at the social processes occurring in these places. By using place to frame the study, I allow for a deeper understanding of location and how it influences a person's trajectory in life. This study will extend research on assimilation to new locations in order to further develop these theories and to expand our understanding of the adaptation processes for immigrants.

Research Questions

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The assimilation process is a life-long journey that includes many aspects of a person's life, from language choices to deciding where to live and work. Long-term studies are required to truly study the outcomes of second generation students. However, we can begin to explore this process at different points in a person's life. A place to start is with a focus on how community, family and schools influence life choices. We can take an in-depth look at high school students who are old enough to reflect on their lives but are still in the midst of all the factors that shape their upbringing. This is also a good time in one's life trajectory to explore plans for the future, specifically in regards to education. This study will focus on youths' and their parents' views towards schooling as a means to adult success and their plans to pursue education after high school. This will include their opinions on how their experiences within their family, the community and the schools have shaped their outlook towards education.

The research questions are:

1. How do second generation Dominican high school students growing up in a diverse, middle-class suburb make sense of their experiences within their family, community and school?

   a. How do these experiences affect their assimilation into U.S. society?

   b. How do these experiences influence their ideas about future success, and the role of education in reaching it?

2. How do the parents of these students make sense of their experiences in this diverse, middle-class community?

   a. How do these experiences inform their definition of success for their children and the role that education plays in achieving it?

b. How do the parents' beliefs and actions around education affect their children's views of education?

Given the new context the children of Latinx immigrants are being raised in and the fact that there is much debate surrounding assimilation theories, this research will not only contribute to the sociological literature, but will help us better understand the role schools are playing in these children's lives, and the prospects for improving their chances of achieving upward social mobility or maintaining the status their parents have achieved.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter will begin by providing an overview of the sociological literature on immigrants, and the strengths and weaknesses of assimilation theories. Since existing assimilation theories do not provide an adequate framework for studying the children of immigrants in a new suburban context, I will show how incorporating place and the concept of habitus have the potential to be helpful in the study of immigrants and in the expansion of current assimilation theories.

Assimilation Theories

There has been no lack of academic interest in immigrants and their adaptation, beginning with the first large waves of immigrants from Europe. Theories on assimilation began with a narrow view of the desired outcome, and then expanded as the faces of immigrants changed, in terms of sending country, socio-economic status, and skin color. Since then, there have been many critiques of the leading theory, segmented assimilation. Some scholars have focused on the processes of acculturation under segmented assimilation, as a way to focus on how immigrants and their children incorporate into U.S. society. A new suburban location provides a different context within which to explore these processes.

Traditional Assimilation Theory: one outcome for everyone

Originally, assimilation theory assumed that all immigrants would eventually become "American," especially the second generation who would grow up here (Portes et al., 1980). In other words, researchers studied immigrants with the assumption that they would gradually adopt the values and norms of the host society, ending the process with complete integration and acceptance by the majority culture. Researchers depicted immigration "as a patterned sequence in which earlier cultural dissimilarity, poverty and discrimination gave way to gradual learning

of the new ways, economic advancement, and eventual acceptance by the majority" (Portes et al., 1980, p. 202). In New York City, this was demonstrated spatially, in that immigrants tended to arrive to ethnic enclaves, and as they assimilated, would move into other parts of the city or out to the suburbs.

This older literature focused more on the immigrants themselves, who were mostly adults, and so the assimilation process did not happen formally in schools for them. Through their daily life interactions in their neighborhoods and jobs, it was assumed that they would begin to learn the ways of the new society. Familiarity with the culture and language would lead to more success in the occupational marketplace, which increased the probability and speed of assimilation (Portes et al., 1980). The development of traditional assimilation theory was based mostly on first generation immigrants who arrived as adults and entered the labor force. This is because they were more visible, and their progress could be tracked through the labor market more easily (Portes, 1994). Very little research was done on their children, as it was assumed that they would be socialized to be "American" through their experiences in the public school system.

This traditional assimilation theory is problematic in several ways. First of all, it was developed in a specific economic context that no longer exists, although it has also been argued that it is not that different than what European immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th century experienced. It has been argued that low-skill jobs in manufacturing that provide a living wage are not a significant part of our economy anymore. How this relates to labor market opportunities for the immigrant parents will be discussed further below. Also, this theory was based on European Americans who were of similar phenotype to the host country's "native" born. Racism has been a strong force in the lives of newer immigrants because of the wider variety in skin

color and phenotype, leading to less acceptance of the newcomers. Traditional assimilation theory is useful in that it describes one possible path of adaptation for immigrants, but sociologists soon realized that not all immigrants were assimilating in this manner, and this called for an expansion of the theory. Since only one outcome was expected, location was not considered an important factor in determining immigrant outcomes.

Segmented assimilation: more than one outcome

As immigrants have become more diverse, in terms of race, socio-economic status and previous educational attainment, researchers have begun to see different patterns of assimilation emerging. In fact, it seemed that the traditional theory was no longer explaining the majority of new immigrants' experiences in American society, particularly for the children of immigrants, or the second generation. In 1992, Gans proposed the idea of a "second-generation decline" arguing that immigrant success was not automatic, and must therefore be further examined. He argued that the assumption that the second generation would continue to succeed needs to be questioned because of the changing nature of the immigrant population, and the changing context of the receiving economy. Gans questioned whether the children of poor immigrants would be able to enter the mainstream economy, especially those of darker skin color. He also questioned whether they would be willing to take the kinds of jobs that their parents had worked, as the second generation would not want to work long hours for low wages. Gans hypothesized that the second generation might experience a decline when they do not see options for themselves in the economy, therefore rejecting mainstream society.

Working off of Gans' (1992) idea, sociologists categorized the new adaptation processes into three categories, and labeled the new assimilation theory as "segmented assimilation," because of the variety of possible outcomes (Portes & Zhou, 1993). The first form of adaptation

is the traditional path discussed above. This "replicates the time-honored portrayal of growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle class" (Portes & Zhou, 1993, p.82).

The second theorized possibility in the assimilation process, often referred to as "downward assimilation" in the literature, is characterized by a move in the opposite direction towards permanent poverty and integration into the "underclass." According to the theory, immigrants that take this path resist the majority White culture and reject the values and norms of mainstream society. This makes them unable to advance economically, fueling their frustration and rejection of American society while also making them less acceptable to the host society. This path connects most closely to Gans' (1992) argument for second generation decline. For example, a study of Haitian immigrants who settled in a historically African American neighborhood found that they were often mistaken for Blacks and often treated in a negative way (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Because of generations of oppression and poverty, the African Americans in the neighborhood resented society, and this "rubbed off" on the Haitian immigrants, leading to downward assimilation.

The third form of adaptation involves rapid economic advancement within a tightly-knit immigrant community, known as an enclave. An enclave consists of small entrepreneurial endeavors that are deliberately located within a segregated community. The immigrants create an area of tight solidarity where they can share the same values and are able to advance economically within that area, without having to adapt to the majority culture or even interact with it. They isolate and insulate themselves from the larger society, but are still able to improve their lives and make a good living by providing fellow immigrants with goods and services specifically catered to them.

Although segmented assimilation theory has been helpful in broadening our ideas about immigrant outcomes, it is focused on the economic outcomes of assimilation, and therefore does not give us a complete picture of the process from the perspective of the immigrant, especially when it comes to views around education. Additionally, the theorized paths in segmented assimilation have come from research on immigrants in urban settings, and therefore leave us without much of a hypothesis as to how a suburban location might affect immigrant adaptation.

A Model for the Process of Segmented Assimilation

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) have since expanded segmented assimilation theory to include more about the process than just the outcomes. They categorize the process of acculturation, the first step in assimilation, across generations, based on whether the children and parents learn English and American customs, and whether the children and parents are part of an ethnic community. They emphasize that these types of acculturation do not lead to set outcomes, but are an important factor when looking at the assimilation process. Portes and Rumbaut's typology for acculturation is not talked about in terms of location, yet "insertion into the ethnic community" (a part of their model) by the parents and children would seem to be highly dependent on where the immigrant family settles, and whether that community exists, and is cohesive enough to provide benefits to the family. At the time the model was developed, it was common for immigrants to arrive to a community of their co-ethnics, but that is no longer the case, leaving us to wonder whether this process would happen in different settings. The importance of location is also true for the learning of English and American customs, especially for children, since exposure to mainstream culture would depend on where they go to school and who their peers are in the neighborhood and school.

Portes and Rumbaut's model for the assimilation process takes into account background factors of the first generation (parental human capital, modes of incorporation, and family structure), the intergenerational acculturation discussed above, and the following external obstacles: racial discrimination, bifurcated labor markets, and inner-city subcultures. They argue that external obstacles can be overcome with strong family and community support, including resources and networks.

By looking at different combinations of the rate of learning the English language and adopting American customs by both the parents and their children, and whether they are inserted into an ethnic community, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) present three types of acculturation: consonant, dissonant, and selective. Consonant acculturation is where both the parents and their children abandon their home language and culture at the same pace, and occurs when neither are inserted into a co-ethnic community. Dissonant acculturation is where the children of immigrants are acquiring English and becoming "American" much faster than their parents are. The children are not connected to their co-ethnic community, and it does not matter whether the parents are or are not, they are still considered to fall in the dissonant acculturation category. The third option, selective acculturation, is where the parents and their children are learning English and American customs at the same rate, while also retaining their home language and culture. The idea is that insertion into a strong co-ethnic community slows down the assimilation process, allowing for a maintenance of the home country's language and culture. The children usually become fluent in both English and their home language, as well, achieving full bilingualism.

The types of acculturation across generations described above are dependent on the relationships between parents, their children and their community. This model is highly dependent on place, as the presence of an enclave and its strength are key characteristics that

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determine the type of acculturation taking place. This made sense when most immigrants were arriving to enclaves, but given the new context of arrival, it needs to be reexamined. Given the variety in types of suburban communities, it remains to be explored how the process of acculturation plays out in different settings.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) argue that the best outcomes for second generation Latinx immigrants are seen for those who find a balance between American society and their cultural background, and learn how to navigate between the two worlds, what they call upward assimilation combined with biculturalism. This most often happens when immigrant parents and their children are going through the mode of selective acculturation. Once again, this is dependent on the presence of an ethnic enclave, as well as its strength, which we do not yet know how common it is in suburban locations.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) developed segmented assimilation theory to respond to three challenges they identified as different and unique to post-1965 immigrants: race, labor markets, and countercultures. Because newer immigrants are non-white, they will face additional challenges to assimilating into American culture as they encounter racism. As our economy has become more bifurcated, immigrant families have had a tougher time finding low-skill employment that provides a living wage. And finally, the presence of countercultures, which they argue are typically found in inner-cities, present an option for recent immigrants when they do not see a way to advance in society, fueling their social and economic marginalization. Although Portes and Rumbaut (2001) made a great theoretical advancement in how sociologists look at immigrant assimilation in terms of explaining diverging paths, we do not yet know how this model plays out in the variety of suburban settings that immigrants are now arriving to.

Many sociologists have criticized segmented assimilation, and their critiques will be explored in the following section.

Critiques of Segmented Assimilation

Some sociologists have questioned whether the assimilation path of post-1965 immigrants is that different from that of the European wave of immigrants in the early 20th century (Perlmann, 2005; Waldinger & Feliciano, 2004). For example, Waldinger and Feliciano questioned the prediction that segmented assimilation theory makes regarding the downward assimilation of the second generation. After comparing first and second generation Mexicans with African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and native whites, they found little evidence to support the downward assimilation of Mexicans, and instead, argue that their experience "is consistent with the earlier pattern, in which the children of immigrants progressed by moving ahead within the working class" (p. 395). Perlmann (2005) compared the European immigrants of the late 19th and early 20th century with current Mexican immigrants and found that their situations are not as different as previously thought. He argues that second generation Mexican immigrants are progressing, just more slowly than earlier waves of immigrants, and therefore might take more generations to attain economic assimilation.

Another major criticism of segmented assimilation theory emerged from Alba and Nee's (2003) work, where they argue we must reconsider what mainstream is, before we think about whether immigrants are assimilating into it or not. They argue that waves of immigrants are remaking the American mainstream, influencing and shaping what we consider to be American, as customs, cultures and languages intermix. They also question the pessimistic predictions of downward assimilation, as the authors discussed above do, arguing that the immigrants who arrive with little education are starting at the bottom of the labor market hierarchy, and therefore

their children have nowhere to go but up. Although this group of second generation immigrants, whose parents arrived with little human capital, is unlikely to advance to middle class status in one generation, they are making strides into becoming solidly working class. In addition, they are greatly improving on their parents' education level, and therefore it is likely that their children will also experience the benefits of this. Having found little support for downward assimilation or that connections to strong ethnic networks provide any kind of benefit to immigrants, Alba and Nee (2003) propose a new version of straight-line assimilation for post-1965 immigrants.

Lastly, there has been criticism of segmented assimilation theory that questions the connection between mobility and assimilation. Gans (2007) argues that they are independent processes, and therefore we must not assume that one accompanies the other. For example, Portes and Zhou's (1993) proposed that assimilation into the "underclass" would lead to downward mobility. However, by connecting that path with a downturn in the immigrants' socioeconomic status, they do not leave room for other mobility possibilities within that path. Since then, Waters and colleagues (2010) took an in-depth look at how the different acculturation types affect the socioeconomic mobility of second generation immigrants. First of all, they found that only ten percent of their respondents experienced dissonant acculturation, and another twenty percent experienced consonant acculturation. Therefore, the majority of their sample could be classified as undergoing selective acculturation. What is even more striking is their finding that "types of acculturation do not seem to matter much for socioeconomic outcomes among the second generation" (p. 18). In other words, they looked at a variety of measures of socioeconomic status, and found that acculturation type did not predict any of the outcomes. Although we can continue to use segmented assimilation theory and the types of

acculturation in the study of immigrants, we must be careful not to equate any path or type with a particular socioeconomic outcome.

Applying Segmented Assimilation Theory to a Suburban Context

Segmented assimilation theory, despite its many flaws, provides an interesting lens through which to consider the assimilation of immigrants in a previously unexplored suburban setting. In this new context, it remains unknown which assimilation outcome is more likely for second generation immigrants growing up there, or whether any of these paths is even likely or plausible. Consistent with what many researchers have found (Alba & Nee, 2003; Waldinger & Feliciano, 2004; Perlmann, 2005), the downward assimilation outcome seems unlikely in a high socioeconomic status community that has not experienced years of the negative effects of concentrated poverty. The advancement through a tight-knit community also seems unlikely, since many suburban communities have only just begun to experience diversification in their demographics, and there is probably not a large enough or established enough group to provide the kind of support needed for this assimilation outcome. This leaves the traditional assimilation outcome as the most likely option, although it may not be reached in just one generation.

A more useful concept for this study may be the types of acculturation described by Portes and Rumbaut (2001). Because the study design includes the parental perspective, I may be able to assess whether consonant, dissonant, or selective acculturation is taking place. Consonant acculturation is a possibility, as the families in this study are residing in a middle class suburb with a small percentage of co-ethnics, so the parents and children may be learning English and acquiring American customs at a similar pace, while abandoning the Spanish language and Dominican customs. Dissonant acculturation is also a possibility because the parents may not be learning English and American customs as quickly as their children, who are going to a school

where a majority of the students are native English speakers. As for the parents, they may or may not be connected to Washington Heights, the Dominican ethnic enclave, which still falls under the dissonant type of acculturation. And finally, it is also possible that the families in this study are undergoing selective acculturation, where the parents and their children are acquiring the English language and American customs at the same rate, while at the same time, staying connected to their Dominican heritage and maintaining their Spanish language skills. In this case, Washington Heights might prove to be a strong enough ethnic community to provide this support for the families in Bedford (the pseudonym for the community I studied), although I did not know if they moved from the city to the suburbs or if they have familial connections there, that would make this possible for them. Although the three types of acculturation are certainly plausible in the Bedford setting, dissonant acculturation has been found to be unlikely for most immigrants (Waters et al., 2010). Therefore, I expected that I would find evidence for either consonant or selective acculturation.

Bedford is a place where Dominican students are likely to be exposed to white middle class students, supporting the Dominican students' acquisition of the English language and American customs. There have been contradictory findings regarding the experiences of immigrant children when attending school with white children. Some recent studies have suggested that immigrant children who come from a disadvantaged background have lower achievement when in school with majority white middle-class children (Portes & Hao, 2004). On the other hand, Wells (2010) found that children of immigrants had higher expectations for their future than non-immigrant children when in a higher-ability environment. It is clear that research on the adaptation of the second generation must be extended to this new context so that

the possible outcomes that have been theorized either find further support or are expanded to include other options.

Another area that has been largely ignored in the literature is middle-class minorities, and more specifically, middle-class second-generation immigrants. One possible reason is that many reside in the suburbs, which we have already established are understudied when it comes to immigrants and their children. Neckerman, Carter, and Lee (1999) propose that:

> the minority middle classes share a minority culture of mobility, a set of cultural elements responsive to distinctive problems that usually accompany minority middle-class status, including problems of interracial encounters in public settings and inter-class relations within the minority community (p.2).

They argue that previous assimilation scholars have left out the minority middle class in the many paths of adaptation they have theorized about. Neckerman et al. discuss how middle-class blacks are able to interact with both their poor co-ethnics and the white middle-class. For example, they are able to switch between linguistic and interactional styles. This may be true for middle-class minorities such as second generation immigrants, who have to navigate both their home country culture and their majority white middle-class surroundings.

Bedford provides a particularly interesting suburban location to explore the segmented assimilation theory because of the large African American presence. The theory was first developed in response to the fact that recent immigrants were settling next to or in majority Black neighborhoods and integrating into the "underclass," rather than the mainstream. In Bedford, immigrants are settling in a community that is one-third middle class Blacks. Instead of having a negative impact, this setting provides the opportunity for immigrants to gain advantages through connections with the Black families that have managed to play the game well enough to have bought into this "good" community. In fact, I speculate that the Black families in this community have a higher level of education and income than the white families that have been

there much longer. Therefore, recent immigrants could potentially acquire social and cultural

capital from the Black families in Bedford. This brings to mind Neckerman and colleagues

(1999) work with middle-class Blacks, where they argue that that group has developed a

minority culture of mobility that has enabled them to operate successfully in both mainstream

and co-ethnic settings. Bedford provides a place to explore the presence of this minority culture

of mobility, as well as whether immigrants are integrating enough with the Blacks in the

community in order to acquire some of these skills. It is outside the scope of this study to address

the presence of this culture within the Black families in Bedford. However, based on the data

collected on Dominican families, they were not socializing and connecting with the Black

families in the community enough to enable them to gain advantages from their presence.

In-Depth Assimilation Research that Considers Context

Other scholars have gone more in-depth with smaller samples and have provided helpful

advances in the assimilation process, especially regarding immigrants' outlook towards

education. Assimilation theory and segmented assimilation theory were born from large-scale

survey data and follow-up interviews with smaller samples. However, the in-depth study of the

adaptation process has yielded more nuanced analyses of assimilation for immigrants. Several

sociological studies either focus on context or use a qualitative approach on a smaller sample to

get at the processes of assimilation.

For example, a study by Zhou and Bankston (1998) focused on the adaptation and

assimilation of Vietnamese immigrants in a Louisiana community. They begin to address the

importance of place by arguing that previous studies have looked at the role of the family and the

importance of the Vietnamese ethnicity, but have not given enough attention to the ethnic

community. They, however, focus on the community, its organization, and how it influences the

adaptation of the Vietnamese families. Zhou and Bankston also devote a chapter to education, and present models using Census data to argue that Vietnamese and Chinese children have lower dropout rates than native-born Blacks and whites, even if socioeconomic status is held constant, because of co-ethnic living. They argue that there is something about the Vietnamese culture maintained within a Vietnamese neighborhood that promotes academic achievement. However, this study did not delve into how children translated these strong community ties into academic achievement. Without interviewing the students, it is difficult to describe how the processes work. Additionally, although Zhou and Bankston focus on the importance of a strong Vietnamese community, spatial theory is not used explicitly to enhance their theoretical framework, which would be useful since they studied such a unique context (a non-traditional arrival city).

Another example of a study that includes the context of immigrant students without spatial theory is Louie's (2004) research on the children of Chinese immigrants. She examines "how race and class matter in the educational messages that the children of Chinese immigrants hear from their parents and in the paths that the children take to college" (Louie, 2004, p.xv). Louie compared low-SES students who grew up in the immigrant economic enclave of Chinatown with those residing in an affluent, mostly White suburb outside of New York City. Many of the suburban students had parents who attended college while the city enclave students did not. Because of the self-selection of immigrant families into different settings, we must always keep in mind differences, especially socioeconomic ones. What is most important is that Louie emphasizes how the locational context of their experiences growing up greatly influences how they make sense of their future plans.

In addition, Louie contributes to the debate on assimilation by critiquing the idea of segmented assimilation because it "does not shed much light on the processes by which Asian immigrant parents, regardless of their social location, come to see education as their children's ticket to success" (p.xxx). Louie speaks to the lack of research in education on how children make sense of their context. She states that "we know surprisingly little about how the children themselves situate the influence of the family in their schooling and how it fits with their own understandings of the social world they live in" (p.xvi). It is precisely this hole in the literature that Louie begins to address with her study of Chinese students, and that I continue to address with this study. Although she considers the process of how the students form their understandings, she interviewed the students during their college years, missing out on the opportunity to delve into how their community and high school context influence them during those formative years, leading up to college.

Louie's (2012) newer work focuses on successful Latinx immigrants in order to explain how they were able to reach that success, in the hopes of identifying what is needed to help more immigrants find a bright future. Her sample drew from Dominican and Columbian students enrolled in college, and included interviews with their parents. She argues that it took two things for these 1.5 and second generation immigrants to find success: "strong family care *combined* with powerful institutional and other nonfamily supports" (p.2). Once again, she brings the processes to the forefront, thereby highlighting how the social context shapes the students and their parents. Louie focuses on how immigrant parents and their children interact with institutions in ways that help the student achieve, and enroll in college. Her study is a useful point of comparison for mine, as the majority of the Dominican students in her sample were from

working-class backgrounds, and lived in segregated neighborhoods with the common problems caused by concentrated poverty.

Louie (2012) also criticizes segmented assimilation theory by emphasizing "the positive influence of cohesive coethnic communities and the negative effect of fragmented native minority neighborhoods" (p.15). She found that the students in her study benefited from connections to "upwardly mobile, urban native minorities" (p.15) that segmented assimilation ignores, similar to what Neckerman et al. (1999) argued. In addition, they benefited from programs that were created after the civil rights era to address inequalities. Louie's study will provide a point of comparison when it comes to looking at how the respondents in this study approached their college application process.

Carter (2005) focuses on Latinx and African American high school students in Yonkers, just north of New York City, in her in-depth study. She explores the students' understandings, but does not delve into the spatial context of their location and school, or how these interact with the students' understandings. Based on interviews and time spent with the students in their neighborhood, she concludes that the teachers and the schools do not reach out enough to connect with the students, and that this is why many of them disconnect from school. However, there is a weak connection between the students' location and the formation of their ideas or attitudes.

Carter (2005) contributes to the assimilation literature by observing variation in the "ideological dimension of the students' racial and ethnic identities" (p.27). She named these groups cultural mainstreamers, noncompliant believers, and cultural straddlers, which map onto the assimilation research categories of traditional assimilation, opposition and resistance, and accommodation without assimilation (what Portes and Rumbaut call upward assimilation

combined with biculturalism), respectively. Like other assimilation scholars, Carter argues that the cultural straddlers have the most positive outcomes in terms of academic achievement, further supporting the idea that traditional assimilation may not be the most ideal outcome.

The study that has been most influential in my design and approach was conducted by Lopez (2003) in Washington Heights, the Dominican enclave in New York City. She interviewed students of Caribbean descent, both Dominican and Haitian, who had attended a large public high school, regarding their educational trajectories and their incorporation into U.S. society. She focused on four key social spaces within which the young adults operated so that she could get at how the experiences in those social spaces influenced their outlooks and vantage point: the workplace, community, schools and family life. As Lopez explains, looking at the experiences of young adults in these public spaces is "the first step towards understanding their outlooks toward education" (p.15). She found that not only through their face-to-face interactions, but by just walking through their neighborhood and school, students formed a view of the role of education in their lives. For example, they would see most of the men in the neighborhood hanging around and not doing much, and shared with Lopez that this led them to believe they would also end up there, and so education was of no use to them. Based on this finding, it is important to expand the boundaries beyond the school and also include interactions and experiences in the larger community. Given that the location these young adults operated in was so influential in forming their world view and their outlook towards the role of education in their lives, it is imperative that this kind of research is extended to the new suburban context.

And lastly, the work of Itzigsohn (2009) provides an in-depth look at how a group of Dominicans was incorporating into the community of Providence, Rhode Island, a place that has been revitalized by recent immigrants, and where minorities make up the majority of the

population. He examined how first and second generation Dominicans were assimilating into the socioeconomic structure of Providence, and how their identities developed through this process. He argues that their experiences are shaped by the "class and racial faultlines" of American society, even as the immigrant families incorporate into the community (p.7). In other words, they are becoming a part of the US, but within the boundaries and constraints of a class and racial hierarchy. Itzigsohn's work is an important contribution to the literature on Dominicans, as it focuses on a place that has attracted Dominican immigrants directly from the island, after a local community was established in the 1960s.

Itzigsohn (2009) also criticizes segmented assimilation theory, arguing that "the process of acculturation leads in fact to new ethnoracial identities and communities," and that these communities "do not indicate a failure to assimilate," but instead, are "the result of the process of incorporation" (p.13). Segmented assimilation theory does not explain how his participants were achieving mobility, as they do not fit into any of the pre-determined paths. Although Itzigsohn's focus is on incorporation and identity development, and not education, it is a useful example of how studying a different context can provide new perspectives on an immigrant community. We need to continue exploring different places of settlement for immigrants, in order to gain a better understanding of how these groups are faring in US society. In the following section, I will argue that spatial theory would provide a useful framework for studying the children of immigrants in new locations.

Spatial Theory- A Focus on Place

Sociology as a discipline has been de-spatialized, yet at its core is the idea of bringing context into the investigation and analysis. Beginning with the Chicago School and the founding of urban sociology, the discipline was built around the idea that place is a significant and

influential factor in people's lives. From there, the subfields of sociology that have been spatially oriented are urban sociology, rural sociology, and demography (Lobao & Saenz, 2002). However, sociology soon moved away from being too context-specific due to fears about generalizability and the desire to be considered a more "scientific" discipline. Additionally, stratification, one of the key topics in sociology, has "neglected and (to some degree) resisted consideration of space," and so this has influenced the discipline as a whole (Lobao & Saenz, p.497).

In the 1980s, both rural and urban sociology debated whether space was critical to documenting differences between rural and urban communities, and whether it fit with the study of class and inequality (Lobao & Saenz, 2002). More recently, researchers have begun to incorporate the study of space into stratification theory, which has involved reexamining the study of stratification within sociology and considering ideas from other social sciences, especially geography (Lobao & Saenz, 2002). Lobao and Saenz (2002) give reasons for this shift. First, the role of human agency was brought to the forefront of the discipline, and with it, the study of social interaction which takes place in spatial settings. Second, sociology moved away from deductive theory to a "focus on the spatial and historical context in which relationships occur" (Labao & Saenz, p.499). All of these changes have led to the spatialization of stratification theories, and more generally, of the discipline of sociology.

Currently, if one were to start labeling studies that are sensitive to place, there would be many spread throughout all branches of sociological research. Gieryn (2000) argues that the significance of place "is measured by an enduring tradition of robust sociological studies of place that remains invisible only because it is rarely framed that way" (p.464). More recently, Lobao, Hooks, and Tickamyer (2007) argue that "a broad movement to spatialize sociology is

underway" (p.3). What sets spatialized studies apart from others is that they not only mention place, but that place is used to frame the study, considering both structural and cultural features of place (explained below). Additionally, they include perceptions and understandings of that place from the point of view of the people being studied (whether they reside the in the particular place of interest or not). Place is not just the setting of the study, but is considered "an agentic player in the game—a force with detectable and independent effects on social life" (Werlen, 1993). In fact, it is becoming more common for sociologists to "view geographic space alongside race, class, gender, age, and sexuality as an important source of differential access to resources and opportunities in the United States" (Lobao et al., 2007, p. 3). Although it is tempting to consider space as an agent due to its powerful influence, translating that idea into an empirical study is much more difficult. It is easier to understand how to spatialize a study when one considers place as another group status factor, like class, which has a real effect on a person's access to opportunities and resources.

There is some disagreement among scholars regarding the definitions of space and place, which comes partly from differences between disciplines such as sociology and geography. For example, Gieryn (2000) argues that place has three features: a geographic location, a material form (a group of things or objects in a particular location), and it is invested with meaning and value (socially constructed). Therefore, "space is what place becomes when the unique gathering of things, meanings, and values are sucked out" (Gieryn, 2000, p.465). Lobao et al. (2007) explain that "space is the more abstract concept insofar as it is 'everywhere,' while place, as a particular spatial setting, is located 'somewhere' (p.8). If space is the abstract concept, then it becomes "dehumanized" and therefore of less interest to sociologists than place, which focuses on the "symbolic meaning and emotional attachment that a social actor has for a specific

location" (Lobao et al., 2007, p.8). In addition to the objective features of a place, it is important to look at how the person makes sense of the place and internalizes those features, influencing how a person sees the world and their place within it.

Features of Place

Using the concept of place can seem abstract and difficult to quantify and operationalize, therefore identifying specific features of space can help to envision exactly how an empirical study could be spatialized. The field has struggled with this, despite many researchers calls to action to spatialize studies. In fact, other disciplines have been more direct and concrete in conceptualizing place. One such example that will be discussed below is the area of public health, in which researchers are interested in how place influences a person's health. Some public health researchers have argued that "place effects" are real because differential health outcomes cannot be completely explained by differences in individual characteristics.

One way to think about the parts of place is to consider two umbrella categories: structural features and cultural features. Structural features are concrete, tangible parts of a place and can include things like resources, political structure, and demographics. The cultural features of a place come from the structural parts and are important elements that should be considered separately when spatializing a study. For example, the aggregate poverty level is a structural feature of place. However, concentrated poverty can be thought of as producing cultural beliefs and practices. It generates a culture that has an effect that is greater than the sum of its parts (the poverty of each individual). The effects of concentrated poverty such as the creation of an "inner city subculture" become a cultural feature that distinguishes one place from another. Other features of a place that have captured sociologists' interest are economic well-being,

race/class/gender inequalities, social indicators, health indicators and environmental indicators (Lobao & Saenz, 2002).

Macintyre, Ellaway, and Cummins (2002), public health researchers, differentiate between individual effects, aggregate effects and place effects. An aggregate effect is the sum of the individual effects but place effects are a separate and unique factor, "features of place not captured by individual, compositional, properties" which will be described further below (Macintyre et al., 2002, p.127). However, they do report that some studies find support for the existence of place effects and some do not. They also caution that one must consider the interaction of the individual factors with the environment because they are not completely separate. The problem is that researchers have tried to figure out the role of context after taking into account individual characteristics, but this separation may be forced and unhelpful since the two are so intertwined and many individual outcomes are based on context.

The authors had previously suggested three types of geographical variation but have since revised this idea to create two broad categories that researchers must consider when looking at outcomes: 1. Compositional variation (the aggregate of individual traits) and 2. A combination of contextual (opportunity structures in the physical and social environment) and collective (socio-cultural and historical features such as shared norms, traditions, values and interests) variation. They explain that the second category includes both the "material infrastructure and collective social functioning and practices," which maps well onto the two umbrella categories introduced earlier in this section: structural and cultural features of a place (Macintyre et al., 2002, p.130). It should be noted that the importance of each of these categories depends on the population, its unique context, and the interaction between the two.

Macintyre et al. (2002) suggest a conceptual framework and a set of measures to use when examining the role of place in health outcomes. I believe it is useful and applicable to educational outcomes as well. They describe five features of local areas that might influence health. The first three are considered part of the umbrella category of the structural aspects of a place. First, is the "physical features of the environment shared by all residents in a locality" (p.131) Second is the "availability of healthy environments at home, work and play" (p.131), which I would argue would include the availability of opportunities at school. Thirdly, are the "services provided, publicly or privately to support people in their daily lives" (p.131) which the authors write does include education as well as transport, and welfare services, for example. These structural traits are part of "opportunity structures" that affect health outcomes (or any other outcomes such as educational achievement) both directly and indirectly.

The last two types of features of places are considered part of the umbrella category of the cultural traits of a location. The first includes the "socio-cultural features of a neighbourhood," which include "political, economic, ethnic and religious history of a community: norms and values, the degree of community integration, levels of crime, incivilities and other threats to personal safety, and networks of community support" (p.131). The second is the reputation of an area, which "may influence the infrastructure of an area, the self-esteem and morale of the residents, and who moves in and out of the area" (p.131). For example, businesses may not want to open in areas where the reputation is poor, because of the perceived dangers and potential lack of clientele. Together, these types of cultural traits make up the collective social functioning and practices of a place.

In terms of methodology, the prospect of including every trait named above can be overwhelming, but the authors suggest that not every factor has to be included in every study, but

rather that they should all be considered when designing the study. They also remind us to consider the role of time in observing the traits of a place and its effects on outcomes, since there can be considerable lag time between the inputs and the outputs. For example, the traits of a place may not have an instantaneous effect on a person, as the effect may depend on how long the person has lived there. This summary of place effects in the public health literature can be very useful when thinking about how to define a place and its features and the role it plays in a person's life.

Neighborhood Effects

Considerable research has focused on poor, African American neighborhoods and the effects of living there. The idea of neighborhood effects gained popularity with Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), and has developed into a large body of literature investigating the effects of living in concentrated poverty (Sampson, 2008). The approach that currently dominates is focused on neighborhood effects on individual outcomes- adult economic self-sufficiency, mental health, physical health, education, and risky behavior (Sampson, 2008). Most of this research has been done with large data sets where a composite variable is created from existing data, such as the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) project.

Sampson and colleagues (2002), reviewing neighborhood effects studies, found that few studies measured and identified the social processes or mechanisms involved. They call for more qualitative, observational research where the focus can be put on the processes that lead to the positive or negative effects of a place, because we know little about how this happens. "Only recently have we witnessed a concerted attempt to theorize and empirically measure the social-interactional and institutional dimensions that might explain how neighborhood effects are transmitted," they wrote (p.447). Based on their review, they found four classes of neighborhood

mechanisms: social ties/interaction (which is related to the concept of social capital), norms and collective efficacy, institutional resources, and routine activities. Studies focused on institutional resources have been mostly limited to measuring the presence of institutions based on survey reports, and a few studies tapping into levels of participation. They argue that the fourth category, routine activities, is often overlooked but should not be, because the distribution of daily routine activities can have an effect on a child's well-being. Again, studies in this area have been limited and contain few direct measures of social activity patterns. Upon review of the literature, Sampson and colleagues conclude that the strongest evidence links neighborhood processes to crime outcomes.

Sampson et al. (2002) present some of the methodological challenges that have plagued the neighborhood effects field. Differential selection of people into neighborhoods, for example, makes it hard to draw definitive conclusions about the causal influence of a neighborhood on outcomes. Even randomly assigning housing vouchers as in MTO does not help us understand why neighborhoods matter, because many variables change at the same time when a family moves, and it is difficult to disentangle the change in neighborhood poverty from other changes. Sampson and colleagues suggest using systematic social observation data, which are expensive to collect, but can provide information on the physical and social features of a place that cannot be reliably captured in surveys.

In terms of neighborhood effects and the MTO experiment, researchers have found that the life-course timing and durability of neighborhood effects should be considered. There is preliminary evidence to support the idea that disadvantage is cumulative, lagged, and most salient in early life, in which case the MTO experiment was too late in terms of making a meaningful difference in the lives of the children. For example, Sampson (2008) found that

neighborhood effects on verbal ability linger even if a child leaves the disadvantaged neighborhood. Unfortunately, the MTO experiment is not ideal for measuring neighborhood effects, because it focuses on individual outcomes, and because the adolescents who grew up in poverty have already suffered those effects, which are difficult to reverse via a change in context so late in their development. What MTO is actually testing is whether previously negative effects of concentrated poverty can be erased or overcome by moving to a less poor neighborhood. Also, the treatment was "weak," as most of the families moved to similar neighborhoods with similar schools. Sometimes moving produced a change in residence in terms of poverty level, but not racial integration or other factors that likely define the concentration of disadvantage because the area is still likely to be embedded in a larger area of poverty, and therefore, "spatial disadvantage."

David Harding and colleagues (Harding, Gennetian, Winship, Sanbonmatsu, & Kling, 2011) present a similar argument as Sampson and his colleagues (2002). They point out that most of the research on neighborhood effects has focused on macro level neighborhood traits and their effect on individual outcomes. A new observation is that the research fails to consider the diversity of the people who live in a particular poor neighborhood. They argue that any one neighborhood characteristic can affect children in many different ways, leading to differential outcomes, or what they term "effect heterogeneity." Previous frameworks on neighborhood effects have not considered the differences in the daily experiences of young people in their neighborhood. Sharkey (2006) developed a distinction between "imposed" environments that includes everything present in the neighborhood, versus "selected" environments, which are only the people and institutions that the person interacts with. Most researchers studying neighborhood effects focus on the imposed environment without considering individual agency.

Teenagers are able to choose, within some constraints, "certain features of the environment that enable them to pursue their own unique set of goals and ambitions" (Sharkey, 2006, p.827). This is an important distinction that can help explain the variety in outcomes despite growing up in the same neighborhood, while also taking into account individual choices.

Harding and colleagues (2011) propose a model that takes into account educational outcomes "as a function of neighborhood context, neighborhood exposure, individual vulnerability to neighborhood effects, and non-neighborhood educational inputs" (p.277). The variables would include a measure of the "dose" of a neighborhood characteristic a person receives, and the person's vulnerability or susceptibility to the effects of that characteristic. Another potential source of effect heterogeneity can be the variation found in family characteristics and how those traits interact with the neighborhood traits.

They also repeat the argument for a shift away from general neighborhood effects theories towards focusing on the "specific mechanisms through which the characteristics of a neighborhood might affect an individual" (p.277). These mechanisms or social processes include the "social, economic, and cultural processes that create associations between the compositional or demographic characteristics of neighborhoods, such as neighborhood poverty, and individual educational outcomes, such as achievement scores or educational attainment" (p.278). Harding and colleagues (2011) give many examples of mechanisms that might affect individual outcomes, such as environment and health, spatial mismatch of jobs, violence, neighborhood resources, culture, and social organization. It is important to note that some of these mechanisms can also work through the parents instead of directly on the children. Family characteristics such as income and familial structure can also determine the strength of a neighborhood effect. Other family traits that Harding's research shows may affect the strength of the neighborhood effect are

the proximity to extended kin, parents' social ties to the neighborhood, and parental employment outside the neighborhood.

The methodological implications of the argument Harding and his colleagues (2011) are making are huge for the field of neighborhood effects research. Besides developing measures for exposure and vulnerability, scholars must consider adding qualitative methods to large-scale studies, because they are helpful in understanding social processes. Additionally, we must go beyond measuring the presence of institutions and focus on documenting the quality, diversity, and acceptance of their use. What is needed is more nuanced data that are more time-consuming and expensive to gather, but crucial in exploring the social processes involved in mediating neighborhood effects.

Lastly, they argue for a comparative approach, which would be very helpful, since we know so little about neighborhood effects in suburbs. Exploring some of these questions in different contexts, in order to compare and gain deeper insight into the mechanisms at play, is a promising strategy.

Where Place is Left Out

The concept of space is underutilized in sociology in general, and more specifically within both research on immigrants and research on education (Lobao et al., 2007). Although many theories on the adaptation and acculturation of immigrants take place into consideration, it is not used as a theoretical concept or independent factor to fully explore the socially constructed implications of the location. Place can be better used in educational studies to understand how social institutions, such as schools, embody and pass on the traits of a place to the people interacting with them. Despite the importance of space to understanding processes and sense-making, it "remains peripheral to the sociology curriculum" (Tickamyer, 2000, p. 806).

It has been well established in the sociological literature that place matters and affects everything from access to jobs, medical services, and of course, education (Drier, Mollenkopf, & Swanstrom, 2004). Yet, the process of how the features of a place are internalized and manifested through the formation of an individual's outlook requires further research. For example, urban and suburban places provide vastly different schooling experiences for the children of immigrants, yet we know very little about how the features of each place lead to differential outcomes. In urban ethnic enclaves, schools are primarily Black and Latinx, whereas in newer areas of settlement, schools can be more diverse, and include larger numbers of White Americans. Research shows that there are a variety of implications in attending a diverse versus homogenous school, both tangible (material resources) and intangible (reputation, social networks) (Wells, 1995). Because urban and suburban places are so different, and schools are embedded within these two contexts, it is likely that the students will have very different experiences, and may interpret the role of schooling in different ways. This is why is it is crucial that we extend previous work on the children of immigrants to these new suburban contexts.

While there is a large body of literature on immigrants and their assimilation, little has focused on how students make sense of the context within which they live and go to school, and how this understanding connects to the formation of their educational views. Some notable exceptions mentioned above do take context into consideration to varying degrees. These studies focus on some of the specifics of a particular context, but they do not treat place as an independent factor, or emphasize the students' perceptions and understandings of that place. Such studies have been helpful in advancing the field by beginning to connect place with the experiences of second generation immigrant students. However, the connections between place and the students' point of view are limited, and more research needs to be done in this area.

Instead of taking a static view of context or just mentioning it, it should be incorporated into the conceptual framework, and research design, in a purposeful way.

Place and Assimilation Research

As discussed above, place has not been used as a theoretical framework in most assimilation research, even though location is an integral part of determining outcomes. To begin with, traditional assimilation theory was highly dependent on the existence of living-wage jobs (a feature of place) for immigrant adults, which were concentrated in large cities with a manufacturing industry (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Segmented assimilation theory does offer alternative paths for immigrants such as downward assimilation into the underclass. Even though this outcome is completely dependent on the location of settlement and the presence of a negative subculture (another feature of place), place is not considered as an independent factor influencing those who settle there. In other words, place has primarily been treated as something that emerges from the people that live in that setting, and not as a determinant of their subsequent experiences. This is a static view of place that does not acknowledge the ways in which place may work differently at different times depending on the person's interactions in the place. Even though a lot of research on immigrants does focus on a particular location and takes context into consideration, it needs to be taken one step further in order to really get at a place and its defining features, and how it shapes people's experiences within it.

Research on the acculturation process by Portes and Rumbaut (2001) also considers place, but only in terms of the implications of living in a particular location. For example, one of the factors in their model that influences outcomes is whether or not the parents and children are part of an ethnic community. Again, the existence of the ethnic community is going to depend greatly on the place where the family settles. They also consider external obstacles such as inner-

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city subcultures, but do not consider how the presence and strength of these subcultures are actually a defining feature of a place. Additionally, the model does not consider the diversity within a place (Harding et al., 2011) and the choices a person makes in selecting what part of the environment they will interact with (selected environments) (Sharkey, 2006).

Some of the key studies that do consider the contribution of place to assimilation outcomes were mentioned above, but a few of them bring place to the forefront. Louie (2004) does "emplace" her work, in that she uses a comparative approach to highlight differences between a suburban and urban location (Gieryn, 2000), and she focuses on students' perceptions of growing up and going to school in those places. She points out the lack of research when it comes to how students make sense of context and contributes to our understanding of the *processes* involved in this sense-making. Itzigsohn (2009) also emplaces his study of Dominicans in Providence, by bringing context to the forefront of his analysis as he looks at how the creation of a Dominican community has been shaped by the place, as well as how the community has shaped the place.

Lopez (2003) also emplaces her study, in that she focuses on social spaces such as the community and the schools and the interactions that happen there. She puts place in the forefront by examining how the students (children of immigrants) interpret and make sense of the place they grew up in (through their interactions with others in certain social spaces). By looking at the interactions in social spaces, she gives importance to the place and the messages it transmits through its institutions like the public schools. In her descriptions, she includes how the students felt walking through the neighborhood or being in a classroom. All of these data help us understand how students are experiencing the urban enclave where they live and go to school

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and, in turn, how this molds their outlook towards education. This study is most helpful in thinking about how to extend this kind of research into a new context.

Place and Immigrant Settlement Decisions

A question that comes to mind when considering place and immigrants is, how do people end up settling where they do? There are several factors that influence where an immigrant and their family head to as their new home, but the biggest influence is the decision made by their ancestors (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). These decisions made long ago were highly dependent on where certain industries, that were growing and hiring many immigrants, were located. Because migration is a "network-driven process," the presence of co-ethnic communities is the most influential pull towards a particular place, in order to be close to family and friends that can provide valuable resources (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). This helps explain the long-lasting concentration of most immigrant groups in specific states and cities.

For some immigrant groups, the government makes the decision regarding their relocation. Immigrants that come as political refugees, as did those in Zhou and Bankston's (1998) study, go where the government sends them, because of the support and resources provided there. This explains how and why a large Vietnamese community began and took hold in Louisiana. However, data shows that most of the immigrants that are dispersed by the government or relocation agencies tend to head back towards areas where their co-ethnics are concentrated, often places that are more similar to their home countries in terms of climate and culture (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Despite efforts to disperse these groups, they end up congregating in the end, anyway.

Demographic trends show us that immigrants are settling in new and varied places, but we have little information on why this is happening (Reardon & Yun, 2001). One problem with

the data is that we can rarely distinguish between generations of immigrant families, so we do not know how many of the immigrants settling in different places are second and third generation immigrants fleeing urban ethnic enclaves or moving "up" to houses in the suburbs once they experience some financial success. Part of the original assimilation theory assumed that all immigrants would eventually spread out and leave their enclaves as they assimilated, especially the second and third generations (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Data show that while some dispersal happens the longer groups are here, they are still highly concentrated in certain regions of the country (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). This fits with the current demographic trends in the New York City metropolitan area showing that immigrants are spreading to the surrounding suburbs but are still within the larger New York City metropolitan region.

However, some immigrants do arrive directly into suburbs, and we have very little information on how or why that is. As mentioned above, we cannot escape the problem of self-selection of immigrants into different places. Some of it most likely has to do with socio-economic status. It is quite possible that since many suburbs are considered "better" places with larger and more expensive homes, mostly immigrants with higher levels of education would be the ones able to settle in such suburbs. However, it is also possible that multiple families with a lower socio-economic status pool resources to share a home and find service jobs supporting the lifestyles of the upper-middle class by providing childcare, landscaping and so forth. In addition, there is evidence that jobs stereotypically thought of as existing only in large, urban cities are just as prevalent in suburbs, such as sweatshops (Gordon, 2005).

Place and Immigrant Families

It is also important to think about how place affects the immigrant parent or caregiver, since children are so affected by the experiences of their family. For example, the adult support

system (both the presence and the perception of support) and adult participation in the labor force (both individually as well as the aggregate for the neighborhood) are likely to influence the children as well. Individual characteristics of an immigrant family are obviously important, but so are the aggregate features of a place (both structural and cultural). In an urban enclave like Washington Heights, there are more social service agencies available to provide help to immigrant families; and because there is such a concentration of Dominicans in this enclave, there is a high-level of co-ethnic support (Lopez, 2003). In a suburban, diverse location, there is less likely to be as many social service agencies available because, of the higher socio-economic status of the community as a whole, and because the influx of immigrants to the area may be relatively new. Likewise, because there are fewer immigrants, the possibilities for co-ethnic support are smaller, although it is possible that the community might be more tightly-knit given its smaller size. These kinds of supports, both a structural feature (the presence of support organizations) and cultural feature of a place (the perception of support), are important in the lives of the children of immigrants, because agencies can help families in need, and social support can help parents with educational decisions that are likely to have long-term ramifications for the child.

Another aspect of spatial location that will be informative to this study is how the immigrant parent fits into the local labor market, a structural feature of a place. This may seem far removed from the experiences of their children, but in order to understand how students make sense of their place in society in regards to their future upward mobility, it is probable that parental participation in the labor market will greatly influence their understanding of the possibilities for themselves in the future. Additionally, the aggregate labor market participation

of the neighborhood produces cultural features that can influence the children, as Lopez (2003) found in the example below.

When Dominican immigrant families settle in urban enclaves, the parents are often employed by the ethnic businesses in the neighborhood (Lopez, 2003). The implications of this are that the possibilities for upward mobility are few, because these jobs rarely provide the skills needed to transition into the mainstream labor market. Additionally, these jobs may require little to no English, which may influence the language choices the children make. According to Lopez (2003), for example, many of the Dominican men living in Washington Heights do not have steady employment, while many of the women work in retail. She found that the daughters used their mother's hardships as inspiration to work hard in school and find better employment, while the sons were more cautious about trusting in the value of education, because they did not see the economic return. Not only did they reflect on their immediate family's situation, but they often referred to aggregate neighborhood features as being influential as well. A suburban community may have a very different local labor market; some jobs may be in the mainstream labor market, and others may be in the informal market of providing needed services for middle to upper middle class white American families. These kinds of jobs include gardening, child care, house cleaning and sweatshops (Gordon, 2005). Because the contexts are so different, they will surely influence the children growing up in them quite differently in terms of their understanding of what future options they have available to them.

Place and the Schools Within It

As a social institution that embodies its location, there is no better site to study how a person internalizes context than public schools. Schools are the most spatially-bound public institution, in that they are highly dependent on where they are located for such basic things as funding and

who can attend which school via attendance zones. Public schools are typically the social institution that children interact with the most outside of their family, and therefore make a perfect site for studying how the messages of a socially constructed space are embodied within an institution and passed on to individuals.

A powerful feature of the place and schools in which children grow up is the level of segregation and isolation, specifically from white Americans. The negative effects of concentrated poverty and segregation have been well-documented in the sociological literature. Parts of assimilation theory are highly dependent on who immigrant children grow up with and go to school with. Most of the research on second-generation immigrants in schools has focused on contexts where large groups of immigrants congregated, which ended up being enclaves in urban locations. This means most of the children attended large, segregated and isolated schools where most students are Black or Latinx.

We have established that spatial theory will be helpful in framing future studies in order to get at how social institutions embody their context. But how does this context affect the sense-making happening within individuals? What is missing is a concept to help understand the process through which experiences affect the way someone thinks. The internalization of these experiences can best be understood through the concept of habitus.

Habitus

The concept of habitus put forth by Bourdieu (1984) is a system of dispositions and practical skills that is developed in response to structured experiences in a person's life that are shaped by class, family and education, creating a sense of what is possible. The formed *habitus* then helps the person navigate different fields and informs their decisions and actions. It gives a person a

sense of what is possible and not possible for him or herself, greatly determining how they view their place in society.

However, it is important to note that Bourdieu himself was not consistent with his definitions and explanations of habitus, especially when considering his broader theories on social life (King, 2000). His ideas fluctuated between objectivism and subjectivism, often leading to contradictions between the subjectivist practical theory he proposed and his objectivist definition of the habitus. These ideas can be reconciled into a theory that can be helpful when attempting to understand the influence that structure has on a person while still maintaining that a person has agency (King, 2000). I will begin by elaborating on Bourdieu's definition of habitus, focusing on what shapes it and how it is constantly being altered.

Bourdieu argues that one's upbringing is the key to producing "the structures of the habitus which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.78). Therefore, one's habitus is always in the background, influencing future experiences. The formation of the habitus begins with one's earliest experiences which are mostly within the family. Then future experiences, such as schooling experiences, layer on top of the habitus formed in the earlier years of one's upbringing, and this continues on throughout a person's future experiences, such as those in the workplace (Bourdieu, 1977). Since people are constantly having new experiences, the habitus is ever-evolving, influencing a person's actions while at the same time being tweaked by the results of the actions.

Sometimes Bourdieu presents the habitus as a more static and rigid concept that is imposed upon individuals and then unconsciously internalized (King, 2000). He sometimes explains the habitus as an unconscious internalization of a person's objective social conditions that then automatically leads to that person living out an objective social destiny (King, 2000). This can

lead to an overly deterministic view of the role of habitus, where it provides the appropriate options available in a given situation and the individual chooses one. This, however, leaves little room for social change. How can actions outside of what is considered appropriate for a certain person be explained? Therefore, it is more helpful to think of the habitus as something that helps inform a person's decisions but does not determine their actions. It predisposes people towards a particular way of behaving, while still allowing for individual agency (Reay, 2004).

In addition, because new experiences keep adjusting the habitus, it is not a completely unconscious influence. According to Reay (2004), "habitus operates at an unconscious level unless individuals confront events that cause self-questioning, whereupon habitus begins to operate at the level of consciousness and the person develops new faces of the self" (p.438). Bourdieu's later works do include more cognitive aspects of the habitus that his earlier works neglect (Reay, 2004). Swartz (1997) explains that habitus is durable and stable while also responding to the changes in one's life experience. However, he cautions that the responses are small adjustments rather than complete transformations. As will be discussed further below, this adjusting can also happen with a major life change such as migrating to a new country.

It is more helpful to think about the habitus not as an internalization of a society's objective structures but instead as an internalization of experiences. The habitus is permeable, and responds to what is happening to the person (Reay, 2004). As King (2000) explains, "Social life does not consist of a synchronic map or system which imposes itself upon the individual but only of practical and negotiated interactions between individuals" (p. 422). Structure is not forced upon an individual, but experiences are couched within this structure. What are internalized from the very beginning of one's life are the interactions a person has with their family, in schools, and so forth. Because these experiences happen within a specific social system with its unique

structure, they are tinged with aspects of that particular social reality. It is through social interactions that structures are brought to life and internalized. Therefore, the habitus is like a "practical sense for what is to be done in a given situation" that is dependent on the interaction in that moment in space and time (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 25). A particular moment has many random elements, veering away from determinism. Therefore, choices are made within the opportunities and constraints that a person sees for themselves. The person is "circumscribed by an internalized framework that makes some possibilities inconceivable, others improbable and a limited range acceptable" (Reay, 2004, p.435).

Group Habitus

This line of thinking can lead one to view the habitus as a concept solely for individual-level analysis but Bourdieu (1977) explains that:

> the objective homogenizing of group or class habitus which results from the homogeneity of the conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized without any intentional calculation or conscious reference to a norm and mutually adjusted *in the absence of any direct interaction* or, *a fortiori*, explicit co-ordination (p.80).

Group habitus is not discussed outright, but comes from the shared experiences of a group. Therefore, groups that share a social reality will have a similar habitus because they are "products of the same structures" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.85). Bourdieu focuses on class habitus, but sometimes mentions a group habitus. This can be helpful when considering the diversity found in the United States. A class habitus will certainly exist, given our stratified society, but there could also be a group habitus based on race, ethnicity, and even immigrant generational status. There will of course, be differences within the groups as "*each individual system of dispositions* may be seen as a *structural variant* of all the other group or class habitus, expressing the difference between trajectories and positions inside or outside the class" or group (Bourdieu, 1977, p.86).

Nonetheless, considering a group habitus can help us understand how structure influences groups as well as individuals.

One way to think about the habitus is to consider it a multi-layered concept with levels regarding society, which are more general, and levels regarding the individual, which are more complicated and specific. "A person's individual history is constitutive of habitus, but so also is the whole collective history of family and class that the individual is a member of" (Reay, 2004, p.434). Therefore, each group that the person belongs to contributes to the individual's habitus, and each group habitus comes with a history. This leads to each individual having a unique combination of group habitus and individual habitus.

Habitus and Family

Considering that societal structures are forming the habitus through one's earliest experiences with the family, one may wonder exactly how these structures are being passed through familial relations and interactions. Bourdieu (1998) argues that "the family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of the social order, through social as well as biological reproduction, that is, reproduction of the structure of the social space and social relations" (Bourdieu, 1998, p.69). He explains that the family may appear as the most natural social body, but that it is actually an idea created by society. It is a "privilege instituted into a universal norm" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 69). It has become so natural for us to consider a family as normal that we "are able to demand the same of everyone without having to raise the question of the conditions of universal access to what [we] demand universally" (Bourdieu, 1998, p.69). He goes as far as to say that the family is "the main 'subject' of reproduction strategies" (Bourdieu, 1998, p.69). Therefore, with each social interaction within a family, ideas about what a family is in this society are transmitted and internalized as part of the habitus. The family must be taken into

consideration when attempting to understand how a person forms their perspective about their place in the world.

Habitus, Family and Schools

Another social institution to have a major impact on the habitus is schooling. Similar to the family, Bourdieu argues that schools are also a product of society, marked by a struggle for power, and therefore transmit the ideas of the dominant class. And just like the family unit, we have come to trust in schools as they are because "familiarity prevents us from seeing everything that is concealed in the apparently purely technical acts achieved by the school institution" (Bourdieu, 1998, p.21). Under the guise of a meritocracy and "the hidden linkage between scholastic aptitude and cultural heritage," schools reproduce the social structure (Bourdieu, 1998, p.22). The way we measure aptitude is considered completely separate from one's upbringing, and so we operate under the premise that these measurements are accurate and unbiased. Additionally, "cultural training in the home is awarded unequal value in dominant institutions because of the close compatibility between the standards of child rearing in privileged homes and the (arbitrary) standards proposed by these institutions" (Lareau, 2003, p.276). The school operates with assumptions about how a child should be raised, but does not explicitly communicate these expectations to families. The children with the compatible upbringing will be unequally rewarded. Once the family moves outside of the home and interacts with the world, its members find that social institutions do not give all cultural practices the same value (Lareau, 2004). Lareau reminds us that just because certain cultural practices give a family an advantage within a social institution does not mean that those practices are superior or right. The point is that some are valued over others, giving an advantage to the people possessing the valued cultural practices through interactions with supposedly neutral social institutions.

Lareau (2003) studied middle-class and working-class/poor students and their families, and found that social class had a strong impact on how the families interacted with schools. There was a particular way of being that schools required of parents without explicitly informing them. Lareau found that "the strategies of the working-class and poor families are generally denigrated and seen as unhelpful or even harmful to children's life chances" (p.13). Social competencies which then become part of the habitus are not given the same value in institutions that all children must interact with such as schools, health-care facilities, stores and workplaces (Lareau, 2003). The working-class and poor parents were raising their children in the best way for them but unfortunately, this would prove to be a disadvantage when encountering mainstream society. The middle-class parents cultivated a sense of entitlement in their children. That habitus served them well, as they learned to navigate school and expect that their needs be met to the best possible outcome. This habitus produces "highly effective strategies in the United States today precisely because our society places a premium on assertive, individualized actions executed by persons who command skills in reasoning and negotiation" (Lareau, 2003, p.133). On the other hand, the working-class and poor children developed a sense of constraint, and so the skills they had were "rendered nearly invisible in the 'real world' of social institutions" (Lareau, 2003, p.140). Therefore, the schools reinforced stratification in a quiet way.

Another study by Lareau (2000) focuses on social class and parental involvement, and showed that "the actions of parents seem linked to the resources that their education, occupational status, income and differences in family life provided" (p.107). In other words, social class provided cultural resources, some of which were more compatible with schools and therefore provided advantages. The poor parents did not feel it was their place to question the school or the teachers, mostly due to a lack of education themselves, which placed them at a

disadvantage in terms of interacting with the school. They always deferred to professional authority, and hence the "children's educational success was negotiated on the basis of the children's own ability, diligence, and overall performance in the classroom" (Lareau, 2000, p.59). Middle class parents felt it was their responsibility to scrutinize every aspect of their child's education and felt comfortable approaching school professionals to get what they felt their child needed.

Habitus and Immigrants

A few studies have used the concept of habitus in the study of immigrants and minorities, although not always with connections to schooling. Neckerman et al. (1999) discussed how middle class minorities are able to switch back and forth in their interactions between their co-ethnics and the white middle class. They do not explicitly use the term habitus but they describe the symbols, idioms and practices that middle class minorities draw upon to deal with the unique problems of being middle class and minority, which can be considered part of one's habitus. I call this a bicultural habitus because people are able to feel comfortable operating in two distinct fields, the mainstream one and one where their co-ethnics make up the majority, which fits nicely with the concept of selective acculturation. As immigrants acquire English and American customs, they also maintain and develop their home language and ethnic practices. This is compatible with Bourdieu's description of the habitus as being "transposable," in that middle class minorities' habitus is broad enough to be applicable across multiple social fields. I think a bicultural habitus is likely to occur for second generation immigrants that are residing in a middle-class diverse suburb and maintain connections to an ethnic enclave. In this study, they would be developing a habitus that feels comfortable in both mainstream and Latinx social spaces.

Guarnizo (1997) introduced the concept of "transnational habitus" to explain how an individual's dispositions are rooted both in the sending and receiving communities. This is different than a bicultural habitus, because a social field in the Dominican Republic is very different from a Dominican social field in the US. Guarnizo explains that the migration of Dominicans to the United States changed their tastes and preferences. This had an effect on both the places left behind and the places they settled in. Bauder (2005) found the same to be true with Filipino immigrants whose habitus changed within the new context of the Canadian labor market but also had profound changes on the labor market itself. I think a transnational habitus is more likely to occur in first generation immigrants, as they have a stronger connection to their home country.

Lopez (2003) explored Dominican students' worldviews, which can be considered part of the habitus, although she does not explicitly use the concept of habitus. She does talk about students' outlooks and worldviews, and the idea that these are formed through a person's experiences. For example, she found that "the distinct race-gender experiences that youth navigated within the high school setting were cumulative and in turn molded their outlooks on education" (p.65). She theorizes that the young adults were mostly influenced by racialized and gendering experiences and so their worldview was formed through their social interactions with the world. Bourdieu's concept will help bring together the influences of the family and school with the influences of their social interactions in a way that has not previously been talked about with immigrants and their acculturation processes.

Young's (2004) study on poor Black men does use habitus, though not with immigrants, and focuses on understanding worldviews and how experiences help shape them. His research "explores the capacity of young black men to think critically and creatively about the ways in

which mobility and opportunity operate in American society, showing how they situate their own lives within the broader social and economic forces that surround them" (Young, 2004, p.10). Young found that their experiences were the key in defining the breadth and depth of their worldviews, depending on whether they interacted with people outside their segregated neighborhood. "Access to people across race, class and social experiential boundaries provided these men with the capacity to build different mental maps of how the social world works and how they could or could not work within it" (Young, 2004, p.15). The participants in the study were no longer in school, but they did share information about their time there, although rarely speaking about the formal educational experiences. Instead, they spoke about relationships they had in school, often fraught with conflict as for some of them, "schooling was the first formal institutional setting where they bore and began suffering the stigma of being black and male in American society" (Young, 2004, p.84). Once again, we see that interactions with others within a social institution (embedded with society's mainstream views) are what shape and influence the habitus, and therefore their worldview.

Capital

Another concept related to habitus, and which is crucial to understanding it, is capital. In fact, they cannot be understood in isolation (Pallas & Jennings, 2009). Capital can be thought of as resources that function as a source of power and advantage in society and can be categorized into three major groups: economic, social and cultural (Pallas & Jennings, 2009). Social capital consists of relationships and networks while cultural capital consists of cultural signals, attitudes, and preferences. Cultural capital comes in three forms. Embodied cultural capital is carried within a person and consists of "dispositions, tastes and bodies of knowledge that are internalized via exposure to long-term socialization processes" (Pallas & Jennings, 2009, p.216).

Objectified cultural capital is more concrete and consists of objects that are acquired by a person such as artwork. Institutionalized cultural capital has been legitimated by educational institutions. "Educational credentials, particularly the array of credentials coinciding with the expansion of the postsecondary education system in modern societies, are the dominant form of institutionalized cultural capital" (Pallas & Jennings, 2009, p. 216). Our educational system is excellent at masking the different valuation of the cultural capital that students bring with them.

Although the concept of cultural capital was originally referring only to high-status signals, it has since been expanded. Lamont and Lareau (1998) suggested coining a new term for non-high status cultural capital to avoid confusion. They argued that "lower class high status cultural signals (e.g., being streetwise) perform within the lower class the same exclusivist function that the legitimate culture performs in the middle and the upper-middle class" (p.157). Therefore, when I write "cultural capital," I am referring to the dominant class' capital, and will use non-dominant cultural capital (or Latinx/Dominican cultural capital) to denote the other kind.

Young (2004) argues that capital is a "crucial concept for understanding the link between life experiences and thoughts about future mobility, opportunity, and life changes" (p.58). He found that the type and depth of the capital accumulated by young Black men was an indication of the depth of their understanding of their place in the world. In other words, the men that had more of the highly valued capital were more aware of their place in society and the stratification that exists within it. He also concurs with Lamont and Lareau (1998) in terms of considering non-dominant capital. Young (1999) explains that for the young black men he interviewed, they needed two kinds of capital: the kind to survive their immediate life circumstances, and the kind useful for social mobility. Unfortunately, it appeared that the kind of capital they needed to survive their high-poverty, segregated neighborhood was sometimes counterproductive in their

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attempts to acquire the kind of capital that would eventually help them exit this neighborhood. This work has been key in helping researchers move away from a deficit model where the focus is on what capital poor minorities lack, and instead considers alternative forms of social and cultural capital that help them manage life in their current settings (although sometimes it has detrimental effects on their social mobility).

Possession of any type of capital does not constitute an advantage until it is activated by the habitus within a particular situation to gain an advantage over others (Lamont & Lareau, 1998). Additionally, the mainstream holds the "power of legitimating the claim that specific cultural norms and practices are superior, and of institutionalizing these claims to regulate behavior and access to resources" (Lamont & Lareau, 1998, p.159). It is imperative that we not forget how habitus and cultural capital are situated within a context of power. It may not always be obvious that something is a form of capital, because it is often separated from the power relations that produced it, making it symbolic capital (Pallas & Jennings, 2009). For example, Lareau (2003) found that middle-class parents were constantly looking for opportunities to activate their capital on behalf of their children, and did so "by shrewdly framing their interventions in ways that institutions such as schools and public and private recreational programs found compatible with their organizational processes," gaining important advantages for their children (p.180).

Part of forming the *habitus* is figuring out how the cultural capital you bring with you from your family relates to what is valued in society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). Bourdieu argues that "the reproduction of the structure of the distribution of cultural capital is achieved in the relation between familial strategies and the specific logic of the social institution" (1998, p.19). Additionally, every place will provide different opportunities for acquiring social capital,

or networks, which can be useful in navigating processes such as applying to college or finding a job. Beyond providing different opportunities to acquire both social and cultural capital, every place can provide different scenarios in which to activate the capital in a way that can help students achieve upward social mobility (Lareau, 1987). Again, it is not a matter of simply acquiring the capital; a person must be presented with a situation and then know how to activate it in a way that provides a beneficial outcome. "Just as economic wealth cannot function as capital until it is linked to an economic apparatus," writes Bourdieu (1977):

> so cultural competence in its various forms cannot be constituted as cultural capital until it is inserted into the objective relations between the system of economic production and the system producing the producers (which is itself constituted by the relation between the school system and the family) (p.186).

Lopez (2003) reported few opportunities for activating capital for the Dominican students in the poor, segregated neighborhood she studied. Whether these opportunities are more readily available in a suburban context remains to be explored.

Capital and Schools

As discussed above, the public school is a social institution that reflects the beliefs and value judgments of those in power. These messages about what is and is not valued are transmitted through the social actors within this space such as administrators and teachers, whether intentionally or knowingly or not. As Bourdieu (1998) explains:

> by a series of selection operations, the system separates the holders of inherited cultural capital from those who lack it. Differences in aptitude being inseparable from social differences according to inherited capital, the system thus tends to maintain previous social differences (p. 20).

In a segregated urban enclave school, it is possible that non-dominant cultural capital will be more highly valued than in a middle class, diverse school, because of its history educating non-White students. Bartlett and Garcia (2011) found this to be true at a unique high school for

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newcomers in the Dominican enclave of Washington Heights. On the other hand, all schools still operate within the larger context of white American middle-class values, which would place little value on the cultural capital of immigrants and their children. In this case, there would be a mismatch between the messages the school sends and the messages the students receive. As mentioned before, Bourdieu (1977) theorized that schools operate under the assumption that students are familiar with the dominant culture. Without this cultural capital, it may be difficult to make sense of the messages being sent by teachers through their practices and beliefs. For example, educators may feel they are being clear about expectations, but the information may be lost to some students who do not possess enough familiarity with the dominant culture to pick up on those implicit expectations. When Lareau (1987) studied low and high socio-economic status White children and their families' relationship to the schools, she found strong support for the idea that social class position and class culture of families become a form of cultural capital in schools. Both sets of parents valued education, but the low socio-economic status families did not involve themselves in the education of their children in ways that were expected, yet not explicitly stated, by the teachers. Unfortunately, this led to a scenario in which these families were not aware they were not doing what the school required or preferred, to the detriment of their child's education.

Social and cultural capital theories have been used to help explain why some students are ill-equipped to receive the messages that schools send them, or why some students are unable to put the messages into action in a beneficial way. For example, teachers may tell their students to start gathering information about colleges and applications early in their high school careers, but some students, especially those whose parents and family members have not attended college, may not be able to put these ideas into action because they lack the social networks to guide

them through the process. In other words, the lack of social capital can inhibit students from being able to follow through on the messages they receive from the school.

Because immigrant students in a segregated, urban context are isolated from non-immigrants and those of a higher socio-economic status, they may not have the social contacts in their lives to help them navigate the world of higher education, for example. Lopez (2003) found that the Dominican students in Washington Heights knew few, if any, people who had attended college. Without this social capital or networks of knowledgeable people, it can be much more difficult for students to figure out the system.

The structural differences among places will influence immigrant students' habitus differently, possibly leading to varied decisions about their lives. For example, students in an isolated non-white community may not be exposed to the dominant class that would help them navigate mainstream society as would students who have more contact with middle class White Americans. Second-generation immigrant students may depend more on their context and peers for forming the kind of *habitus* that would help them achieve upward social mobility, since they may not be able to count on their upbringing to help form this kind of *habitus*. Because the immigrant students' families may not be familiar with the skills and dispositions that would help their children function successfully in mainstream settings, context and peers may matter more to the students in terms of exposing them to the dominant skills and dispositions. In exploring a group's outlook towards education, it is important to consider the habitus and capital, as these concepts have been found to be integral to the formation of worldviews.

Habitus and Field

The final piece in understanding habitus is the concept of field. According to Reay (2004), the concept expands the framework for habitus and gives it a more dynamic quality. The

field is the context within which people compete for power and dominance. The habitus informs actions within the field and capital is activated to gain an advantage. Field gives Bourdieu's theory room to explain social change. For example, "when habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar, the resulting disjunctures can generate change and transformation" (Reay, 2004, p.436).

"Fields are the structured social settings in which capital takes on value and meaning" (Pallas & Jennings, 2009, p.217). To understand a field, one must examine the history of it because it is a product of the past (Pallas & Jennings, 2009). "Fields are also bounded by participants' mutual engagement in the struggle to gain advantage" (Pallas & Jennings, 2009, p.217). A person struggling within a field can conserve his position, seek mobility through gaining a better position, or define the rules of the field, although the rules that establish the legitimacy of the field are usually set by whoever is in power (Pallas & Jennings, 2009). Although it is tempting to equate a field with a social institution, institutions are not always contested sites (Pallas & Jennings, 2009).

For second generation immigrants, different fields can provide opportunities for activating both dominant and non-dominant cultural capital. In social settings that reflect their family's country of origin, non-dominant capital can be activated to gain advantages. However, this advantage may not be recognized in other settings or may even be detrimental in mainstream settings as mentioned in the Young (2004) example above. Also discussed above, the concept of bicultural habitus provides a way to think about immigrants who have a set of dispositions at their disposal that work to gain advantages in two different settings. Knowing what field to activate which capital would be a characteristic of a successful bicultural person.

Chapter Conclusion

While assimilation research on immigrants has come a long way, there is much more to know and explore because of the changes in key traits of second generation immigrants. Given the significance of place in developing one's outlook towards education, it is crucial that we research the experiences of immigrants in their new locations, specifically the suburbs. The Latinx presence in schools is only going to continue to grow, and so we must learn all we can about how to best educate and support this group of students so that we can ensure a prosperous future for the United States.

Based on the theories outlined in this chapter, it is difficult to predict what I will find in the suburban location I will conduct this study in. A diverse suburb has the potential to be an ideal site for the development of a bicultural habitus if the families have connections to an ethnic enclave, through which students would be able to navigate both the social worlds of white Americans and Latinx or Dominican people. However, we know that exposure is not enough, and it remains to be seen whether this exposure to either a mainstream setting or an ethnic enclave leads to opportunities to develop a bicultural habitus.

On the other hand, since some of these suburbs are just now experiencing a change in their demographics, they may approach the education of immigrant students with a "subtractive" lens. The school may structure the students' experiences in a way that subtracts their home culture and replaces it with white American practices and beliefs, therefore leading the students in this study towards consonant acculturation, especially if they do not have ties to a strong ethnic community from which to draw support. Conducting this research will begin to provide answers as to how immigrant students in the suburbs experience that place and how it influences their educational outlook.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Design, Sample and Methods

In this chapter, I present my research design for the study of second-generation Dominican high school students in a diverse suburban context. This project focuses on how this new place of arrival for Dominicans influences their adaptation and their understanding of the role of education in their lives. The adaptation of second-generation immigrants in these new settings has not been fully explored, yet the current theories on adaptation rely heavily on the role of place of settlement. A qualitative approach allowed the students to share their views on their place in society and how education fits into their plans for the future. My job as the researcher was to help the students reflect on their experiences in order to put together an in-depth picture of how second-generation students navigate between the worlds of their family and U.S. society, as they figure out what role education will play in making a place for themselves in this world.

Prior immigration research has often used large-scale surveys, but this study's design has several advantages. In choosing depth over breadth, this research illuminates the complexity of how students make sense of their experiences. It also provides a richer picture by giving the students a variety of opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas, such as interviews and photos. And lastly, the parental perspective helps corroborate what the students are saying, while also adding context to help understand the student experience, as assimilation is a familial process.

Research Methods

The research questions posed in this study are amenable to an interpretive approach because they focus on perspectives and worldviews, such as how people make sense of a particular context and the role that education plays in it (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1998).

Qualitative research assumes that meaning is embedded in people's experiences, and it is through the researcher's own perceptions that this meaning is constructed (Merriam, 1998). This study design was based on an in-depth data collection approach that gathered information from various sources in order to get a fuller understanding of the participants' perspectives. The type of research questions in this study, focusing on processes and meaning-making, were best answered by combining various sources of data in order to paint a more complete and accurate picture.

My research questions called for case studies, because intensive descriptions of particular students best provide insight into second generation students' outlook towards education in the specific setting of interest (Merriam, 1998). I considered each student as a case of how place influences their outlook towards education, and then identified patterns across the cases. Similar work has been done in city contexts with majority minority schools, but this study extended the assimilation research to a new location. Through case studies, "the researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1998, p.29). In this study, I aimed to understand students' worldviews and how they are shaped by and interact with their experiences in multiple spheres of their lives. Their outlook towards education is a product of the interactions that happen at home, in school, and in their community. The case study is ideal for this type of investigation because it "offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1998, p.41). Given the variety of forces that shape a person's outlook towards education, the case study provides the opportunity to explore them simultaneously. Additionally, case studies can be useful in advancing a field's knowledge base (Merriam, 1998), which is important given the lack of assimilation research in a suburban context.

The inquiry paradigm from which I approach this study, a combination of critical theory and constructivism, has influenced the research questions and, in turn, the methodology I proposed for answering them. In developing the research questions, I operated under the assumption that everyone's reality is different and shaped by each individual's experiences. Therefore, I attempted to understand how the students made sense of their world within the context of a suburban community. Insight into the lives of second generation immigrant students came from examining their meaning-making within this context. It is from this individual perspective that students make decisions about their lives. By getting at their world view, we have a better understanding of the decisions they make, and what they feel is and is not possible for them. Either way, this worldview informs their actions and the direction they choose to go in their lives.

Additionally, I approached understanding students' worldviews under the assumption that their reality has been shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These questions could not be fully explored without understanding the context within which these students live and go to school. Because of this, I will include background on the community, families and schools as a means of contextualizing their perspectives and emplacing the study.

Site Choice

Because suburban places have become more popular destinations for immigrants to settle, this study is developing and expanding our understanding of the way our public schools affect how second generation immigrants view the role of education in their lives. Although there is a wide variety of skin color, educational background, and socio-economic status within the huge category of Latinx people, Dominicans are representative of the sub-groups that have historically

underachieved in our public schools, namely those of low socio-economic status, darker phenotype, and fewer years of parental education (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, & Holdaway, 2008). Therefore, although Dominicans are mostly concentrated in New York State, this study will help inform us about other Latinx sub-groups that are also settling in suburban places nationwide.

Using Census data, I looked for a suburban school district in nearby Nassau County with Census tracts of at least one hundred Dominicans. Many of the tracts with large numbers of Dominicans were located in majority Black and Latinx districts with poor academic outcome. I was looking for a district that only recently began to experience an influx of Latinx people, and therefore is diverse and does not have a majority Dominican or Latinx presence. Using Census data and state report cards, I found that the Bedford School District (a pseudonym) not only met these qualifications but had experienced a surge in the number of Black and Latinx families in the last twenty years. Therefore, this was a newer place of settlement for Latinx families, and ideal for this timely study, as this trend to arrive or move to suburbs is seen across the United States. Additionally, it is still within the larger New York metro area, which is where most immigrants can increasingly be found, in the suburbs outside of a large metropolitan city.

At the time of choosing a site for my study, I was part of a research team investigating Nassau County and its fragmented school districts. I had participated in interviews with County officials that helped inform early ideas about the project, as well as my site selection. After identifying districts that had experienced large demographic changes, we conducted interviews with school board members from these districts. In this initial stage of the project, I conducted interviews with Bedford School District board members. While these interviews were not intended to answer the research questions I would eventually come to investigate, they did help

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inform my understanding of the district and the Nassau County context. In Chapter Four, I

include a handful of quotes from County officials and Bedford school board members that help

provide a richer context within which to situate this study.

The school chosen for the study is the only high school in the district, and is therefore

representative of the community. Because I wanted to investigate the effect of the social

interactions that Dominican students are experiencing in this new suburban place of settlement, I

purposefully chose a school/district that is suburban and racially mixed, only recently beginning

to serve Dominican students. In this way, I chose the "most productive sample to answer the

research question" (Marshall, 1996, p.523), which is typical of qualitative research (Merriam,

1998). The advantage of purposeful sampling is that because I was interested in a specific

context, the location chosen was a "typical" example of a new settlement location for Latinx

immigrants of today: a diverse suburban neighborhood.

Although there was a possible bias of self-selection by the immigrant parents who settle

in a suburban community versus those who arrive to cities and their urban enclaves, it did not

subtract from the importance and timeliness of this study. It is not possible to randomly assign

newly arriving Dominican families to different locations. However, the reality is that many

immigrant families are heading to the suburbs, and so even though the comparison with those in

urban enclaves may not come from random assignment, we still needed to find out what their

experiences in the suburbs are.

Student Recruitment

Because the Bedford School District is small, it did not have a formal process for

reviewing and approving research proposals. As part of the large research project previously

described that involved multiple school districts in Nassau County, I met the Superintendent and

all of the school board members of Bedford. Through my connection with the Superintendent, I asked and was given permission to contact the principal of the High School. She referred me to one of the Spanish teachers, Mrs. Pardos, who would then be my sole contact for the duration of the data collection. I first contacted her in the fall of the 2012, but unfortunately, shortly after that, Hurricane Sandy hit the Northeast, and did extensive damage to many communities, including Bedford. The storm hit the Village part of the community much harder than the rest, but it still managed to damage the roof on one of the buildings at the high school. Though I continued to contact Ms. Pardos, she asked me to wait until things had settled down. The school had to close that building and relocate those classes, a disruptive process. In fact, the storm was a recurring topic in the student interviews, since it had happened recently and had had such an impact on their daily lives.

After a few months, Ms. Pardos finally felt things had calmed down enough to have me on campus to recruit students. I had hoped for a more systematic approach to finding participants for the study, but instead, Ms. Pardos suggested flyers. In terms of identifying Dominican students, I did not know what kind of data the school kept on students' race and ethnicity. The state report card on Bedford High School (grades 9-12) reported that about 20% of its students were Hispanic in 2009-2010. The state did not break down the category of Hispanic any further. The reason I suspected most of the Hispanic students to be Dominican is because Census data indicated a strong Dominican presence in the census tracts that make up Bedford. If the school had the capability of identifying the Dominican students, that would have been helpful to select a random sample. Unfortunately, I was told to work with Ms. Pardos in recruiting students and therefore, I was unable to select students randomly. Instead, students were recruited through the

snowballing method, where those who saw the flyers and came to the first meeting then spread the word about the project, and had others come meet with me the next time I was on campus.

The flyers were posted around the school, and Ms. Pardos also handed them out in her Spanish classes. The flyer advertised that I was looking for Dominican students to participate in a study, and those interested in learning more about it should come to Ms. Pardos' room afterschool for pizza. At the initial meeting, seventeen students showed up. Given the significant African American population at the school, I partly expected that some of the darker skinned students I had seen might be Dominican. I was surprised that the majority of the students that came to the meeting were medium to light skinned, although most would likely be classified as Latinx.

Overall, the project was well-received by the students. They seemed surprised that someone was interested in talking to Dominican students at their high school. They listened attentively to what participation entailed and eagerly accepted the Columbia University folder I gave them with all of the details and the consent forms. I provided everything in both Spanish and English and said I would be back one week later, same time and place, to collect forms and hand out the cameras. I also had the students fill out a quick information form providing their name, grade, phone number (if they had their own cell phone) and email address. At the second pizza party meeting, I was juggling giving the study information to first time attendees, while also reviewing consent forms and handing out cameras to the returning students. In the end, I collected eleven consent forms at that meeting. From that point forward, I corresponded with the students individually via text, arranging to meet them at their convenience.

When considering my sample, and the fact that only one male student completed all the parts of the study, I am unable to draw any conclusions about gender and how it affected the

experiences of the students in Bedford. This was particularly disappointing given Lopez's findings regarding gender and the very different ways that boys and girls experienced their school, neighborhood, and family. The rosy picture painted by the students in my study is biased by the fact that 9 of the 10 students were female. It is possible that the male students were having a very different experience, and in fact, one would speculate that is more likely the case than not, given prior research on the topic. The fact that male students were reluctant to both join the study, or follow through with the study, speaks to the fact that they may have felt uncomfortable sharing their experiences in Bedford, specifically because those experiences were negative. I speculate that in only having one male voice, I am missing half of the Dominican story in Bedford. In fact, that may be the reason they did not participate in the study. Perhaps the thought of sharing negative experiences with a stranger was exactly why I had such difficulty recruiting male participants. As a phenotypically white female researcher, the students may have seen me as too much of an outsider to feel comfortable sharing their stories with me.

The lack of males in my study sample is a drawback, especially when considering the recent study published by Chetty and colleagues (2018) describing the persistence of racism and the long term consequences for Black boys in the United States. Given that many Dominican men are perceived as Black, it is very likely that they will face similar challenges. Chetty paints a disturbing picture of how Black boys, no matter what socioeconomic status they are born into, are more likely to end up poor or incarcerated, and the best possible explanation for this is racism. The Hispanic story is far less worrisome, as they found evidence of upward mobility over generations. Nonetheless, it is important that this kind of research be extended to Dominican males, particularly those of darker phenotype, as they may be experiencing the same negative effects as Black males in our society.

Data Collection

The research questions I posed required data from various sources due to the complex nature of arriving at an understanding of how the students' experiences within their community, school and family were influencing their adaptation and their ideas about the role of education in their lives. Therefore, this study involved five separate data collection pieces, emphasizing depth over breadth. Because the theoretical framework is based on the importance of place and how place plays a role in one's life, the first piece involved examining the structural and cultural features of the community and school that the students interact with. The second piece involved photo elicitation interviews that encouraged the students to reflect on their experiences and engaged them more with the project. In lieu of observing the students interacting in social spaces, and possibly affecting the nature of the interactions by my presence, the use of photo elicitation interviews provided the opportunity for the students to share their interpretations of those experiences, which is actually what influences their understanding of their world. The third piece was in-depth, open-ended student interviews that covered their experiences in their community, school and home. The fourth piece was an in-depth, open-ended parent interview that provided a way to cross-check what the students were saying, as well as provide richer data as to how their family has influenced their worldview. And lastly, the fifth piece was a follow up interview with the student about two years after the initial interview. This provided insight into their academic outcomes, as many had graduated high school and started their college careers.

"Emplacing" the Study

The students' lives are embedded within the realities of their neighborhood and community. Therefore, background information on both was gathered and written up as a case study within which to embed the rest of the data. This included longitudinal Census data and

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state district/school report cards that provide the academic achievement in aggregate and by sub-group for the district and its schools. Some of this information was gathered prior to starting the interviews, as it also shaped the choice of the research site. In order to provide a point of comparison to the prior research done in urban enclaves, I chose to include data on New York City District #6, where the Dominican enclave of Washington Heights is located. Comparing the structural and cultural features of these two places helps us understand how much influence a place can have. Interestingly, because a neighboring community, Fairview, emerged as such an important place in the data, I then pulled information on this place and included it in setting the context for this study. Because the students were providing pictures of Bedford through the data collection, I visited both Washington Heights and Fairview and took my own photos to include in the analysis. All of the data reported in Chapter Four has been rounded or is presented as percentages, and all names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the communities.

In this dissertation, I will refer to Bedford as a place of mainstream culture. While the community is now one-third white, one-third Black, and one-third Latinx, I argue that it is still representative of a quintessential American suburb, and therefore representative of what I call mainstream culture. It is difficult to quantify exactly what makes Bedford representative of mainstream culture, but based on my time spent there, I argue that living in a place like Bedford is what most Americans view as the fulfillment of the American Dream. It is a quiet bedroom community where people appear to live comfortably and happily. Therefore, even though the United States is an incredibly diverse place, there is a shared idea about what is American, and I argue that Bedford fits into this idea.

It is important for me to point out the problematic nature of the term mainstream, in and of itself. I use the term mainstream as a shortcut for middle-class white in this dissertation. However, I am left with questions about what mainstream is and what group dominates in the definition of mainstream. In fact, Alba and Nee (2003) argue that the creation of the mainstream is not a one-way street, where immigrants are the ones who change and adapt to it. Instead, the mainstream is also changing and being shaped by the new groups of people, as they arrive and integrate into the United States. Therefore, mainstream is not constant, but instead is being remade and renegotiated between groups over time. Waves of immigrant arrivals will also participate in these negotiations, as the United States moves towards becoming majority minority.

This also calls into question the desirability of mainstream, as I am making an assumption that that is what we all want. This is problematic, because it privileges middle class, white American culture over others. Even though it is an issue, I do believe that learning to operate within the mainstream will lead to the best possible chance of "making it" in the United States. Of course, there are exceptions, but in general, one must have some buy-in regarding the mainstream and must learn to play the game, in order to win at it. I do think we can look at this with an additive lens, rather than a subtractive one. I am not suggesting the Dominican students in this study need to replace their Dominican culture with a mainstream one, but instead, can add that to their repertoire so that they feel comfortable operating in both mainstream and Dominican spaces.

Photo Elicitation Interviews

I chose the photo elicitation interview method because it has been shown to be particularly effective when used with young people (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Dennis, S.F.;

Gaulocher, S.; Carpiano, R.M. & Brown, D., 2009; Samuels, 2004; Orellana, 1999; Sampson & Gifford, 2010). Photos are user-friendly, child-centered, and useful in exploring abstract questions (Dennis et al., 2009). In fact, Dennis et al. (2009) found that the teens in their study ended up being the most active participants, despite initial hesitation on their part about whether anyone would listen to their perspective. Using photos gave the teens a way of reflecting and sharing their thoughts. Samuels (2004) compared the data he collected from word-only interviews with the data collected in photo-elicitation interviews and found that the photos elicited more information from the children. In addition, the children were able to give more concrete and emotional descriptions, make more connections between the concrete, their experiences, and relationships, and stay focused for much longer periods of time.

Photo elicitation interviews have been used in many studies that report positive experiences with the method. The photos act as a medium of communication between the researcher and the participant (Clark-Ibanez, 2004) and can even be helpful in crossing cultural boundaries (Harper, 2002; Samuels, 2004). They can also reduce misunderstandings because the conversation is anchored by an image that is at least partly understood by both the interviewer and the participant (Harper, 2002). Accessing a person's experiences cannot be done directly, but photos can help the participant communicate their interpretation of their experiences (Dennis et al., 2009). In addition to helping participants give more thoughtful answers, photos use a different part of the brain that evokes a different kind of information, such as feelings and memories (Harper, 2002), and can provide a different perspective as participants capture important parts of their lives (Sampson & Gifford, 2010).

Another important advantage to having participants take photographs for use in the interview is that they provide a means of "breaking frames" for both the participants and the

researcher. The photos can "generate data that illuminate a subject invisible to the researcher but apparent to the interviewee" (Clark-Ibanez, 2004, p. 1516). This is especially true when working with young people, because an adult may misunderstand or overlook something that is salient to a young child or teenager (Clark-Ibanez, 2004). This can help to overcome the problem of assumptions coming from the researcher, especially given the age difference between the students and the researcher.

For example, Freidenberg (1998) investigated the social construction and reconstruction of "the other" in a poor area, and found it very difficult to get the participants to place themselves within a larger social order. This was integral to my research, as I wanted the students to step back and analyze their place in their family, community, and school and reflect on how their experiences in these social spaces influence their outlook towards education. Freidenberg (1998) found that using photos helped the participants become the ones doing the social analysis, thereby becoming social critics, and articulating social issues and problems.

Sometimes, researchers have used pictures they have taken themselves to elicit deeper responses from participants. However, when Orellana (1999) took her own pictures of the neighborhood and compared them with the ones the children took, she found the pictures to be very different for several reasons. She shot photos that "suggested social commentaries" and had "visually arresting" scenes, while the children's photos had more people in them and were more candid. Additionally, in the analysis, "not only did we [the researcher and the participants] notice different physical details, but the children saw what I could not—a web of complex and engaging social relationships that both filled and gave meaning to the physical landscape of buildings, streets, and cars" (Orellana, 1999, p.84). Giving the participants the power to take the pictures provided more insight into their thought processes. Therefore, in this study, the picture-taking

was left to the students themselves, so that my pre-conceived notions were less likely to get in the way. Breaking the researcher's frame can lead to reevaluation about assumptions the researcher did not even realize he or she was making (Samuels, 2004), and for the participant, the pictures can provide a means of deconstructing their own taken-for-granted experiences, "jolt[ing] subjects into a new awareness of their social existence" (Harper, 2002, p. 21). A student's outlook towards education is a complex phenomenon, and assessing a person's comfort level in their community and school is complicated. Therefore, giving the students the opportunity to take their own pictures helped them begin the reflection process.

Participants received an inexpensive digital camera and a one-page instruction sheet on what to take pictures of (see Appendix D for instructions given to students). The list of what to take pictures of helped orient them towards the topics we would later discuss in the interviews (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Sampson & Gifford, 2010). Although instructions come with some preconceived notions on the part of the researcher, the fact that the students are the ones taking the pictures gave them the power to capture their lives as they see them. As discussed above, if the researcher takes the photos, the assumption is made that he or she is the expert on the participants' lives and that the images capture the participants' reality (Kerstetter & Bricker, 2009). The instruction sheet gave general guidance with a list of topics participants were to photograph, such as "the place you like best at school" (Sampson & Gifford, 2010) and "things that mean the most to you or that you would miss if you moved away" (Kerstetter & Bricker, 2009). This list of photo topics was created through a combination of the research questions and other studies that have used this method in exploring the concept of place.

Once they had taken their pictures, I arranged to meet again with the participant, download the pictures onto my laptop, and review them together. This happened in a variety of

settings, depending on what the student preferred and the time of year. Some students met me in Ms. Pardos' classroom after school, while others met me on a weekend or during Spring Break at the Dunkin' Donuts location that was closest to their home. Students were first given the chance to look through the pictures and delete any "regret pictures," which is important in establishing trust with the participants (Clark-Ibanez, 2004). However, I found that most of the students had already deleted pictures they did not want to share and were comfortable explaining that some of the blurry or random pictures were test pictures, as they figured out how to work the camera. The rest of the photos were used to elicit information from the students and get them talking about their lives. I asked them to specify which of the photos belonged to each category they were given on the instruction sheet one by one, and we discussed them (Samuels, 2004). Most of the students did not use the guide to take pictures that address each one of the prompts. Instead, they read over the prompts, and then took a series of pictures. They did not always have a picture that corresponded with each prompt. These interviews took approximately thirty to forty-five minutes and were recorded with a digital voice recorder.

At the end of the interview, the students were asked if they would mind sharing the pictures for further use in my research. All of the students gave me permission to use all of the pictures they had shared with me. The pictures became another data source that I used to further enhance our understanding of the students' context. Pictures with recognizable faces were used in the analysis but will not be published, even with students' permission, to avoid exploitation of the participants (Orellana, 1999). Additionally, the students got to keep the camera as compensation for the time and energy spent participating in this project. I blurred anything identifying in all of the pictures used to present my findings.

Since spatial theory is the backbone of the theoretical framework for this study, the pictures provided an even richer description of the context within which the students' meaning-making takes place. Gieryn (2000) argued that we may over-rely on the traditional forms of communicating in sociological research, which are numbers and words, and that visual representations can help broaden our thinking. Using pictures taken by the students in this study not only facilitated the interviewing process, but then the pictures also became data themselves, as illustrations of the students' perspectives. Photos can be especially helpful in studies that focus on places because they can represent both the spatial and social contexts at the same time (Kyle & Chick, 2007). The pictures capture physical attributes of the place that, in combination with interviews, provide a window into the meanings that people attach to their place (Kerstetter & Bricker, 2009). Kyle and Chick (2007) found that while participants were discussing their pictures, they were able to describe at length why these settings had come to mean so much, even though they seemed innocuous to the researchers. Giving the cameras to the participants enables the researcher to document how the participant looks at the world, as well as how they position themselves in it, providing insight into the participants' understanding of their world (Orellana, 1999). Therefore, photo elicitation was especially useful in exploring how the participant makes sense of their experiences within the context in which they live and go to school.

In-Depth Student Interviews

Because it turned out to be so difficult to coordinate schedules and get the high school students to show up for interviews, I decided that combining the photo elicitation interviews with the in-depth interviews, eliminating an additional meeting, was the most effective way to ensure I was collecting as much data as possible. The interview protocol guided my questions and probes, ensuring we covered all of the topics that pertain to the research questions, and got more

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in-depth information or clarification on subjects previously discussed. The interview protocol had been developed around a processes-focused theoretical framework which includes the following sociological themes: spatial theory, assimilation theory, and Bourdieu's concept of habitus (see Appendix D). I anticipated that my status as a Latina would be helpful in rapport building between the participants and myself. However, it must be noted that phenotypically, I look White, and therefore it may not be obvious to the interviewees that we have a common pan-ethnic background or language. Therefore, I found ways to signal my ethnic background by greeting them in Spanish or simply being explicit about my background, in order to communicate this similarity in hopes of gaining a bit more of an insider status with the interviewees. I did not anticipate the students being Spanish-dominant, and they were not. Therefore, interviews with students were all conducted in English.

Parent Interviews

Because the participants in this study were adolescents, the parental perspective was very useful in constructing a more complete picture of their lives. The experiences of the families, both in their home country and their current community, have a large impact on the views of the students because they have yet to venture out on their own. Therefore, interviews with the families of the students were integral to sorting out where influences about their educational views were coming from. According to Louie (2012), parental interviews situate the student perspective within their family context, which is especially important when looking at processes that are inherently familial. By conversing with the families and learning about their experiences within the neighborhood, workplace, school, and wider society, we can better understand what kinds of messages families have been transmitting to the students.

The parent protocol was developed in the same way as the student protocol. Many of the questions were similar, so that I could then compare their answers and better understand each of their perspectives, and how they were informing each other (see Appendix D). These interviews took place wherever the parent felt most comfortable. I was invited into the homes of eight of the ten students, and the other two parent interviews happened at a local coffee shop of their choosing. One of those was the least well-off student in the study, who explained that her apartment was too tiny to host me, and so we would be more comfortable at Dunkin' Donuts. The other was the sole male participant in the study, who brought his dad to the parent interview. It was the father who suggested we meet at Starbucks in the neighboring and more well-off community. The parent interview was typically the last piece to be completed in the first round of data collection, and so once it was, the students received a $50 payment for their time.

Follow Up In-Depth Student Interviews

The final data collection piece was not part of the original study plan. After completing the first four pieces discussed above with a total of ten students, I created a data reduction table. The other students that had turned in consent forms had stopped responding to texts, emails and phone calls. An added complication was that Ms. Pardos had been laid off due to budget cuts and so I no longer had a contact at the school that could help me either contact the students who had already expressed interest, or help me recruit new participants. By reducing the data, I began to see patterns across the cases, as well as differences between the students who had a college-educated parent and those that did not. Overall, the students' and parents' answers had been consistent across the variety of topics we covered, and thematic saturation had been reached. Because I was interested in students' views on education, and many of them had now graduated high school, I felt that a follow-up interview would provide insight into whether their views had

changed. In addition, all of the students had planned to attend college, and I was curious whether that had happened and what their experiences were like in college. Therefore, I designed a new protocol to be used for those students who were attending college. These new questions were designed using a combination of the prior protocol as well as the preliminary analysis of the data collected so far. For those still at Bedford High School for their follow-up interview, I adjusted the original protocol (see Appendix D). Of the ten students that had completed the first four pieces, I was able to re-connect with seven of them. The other three students did not respond to texts, calls or emails. I also tried asking the seven that did respond whether they knew the whereabouts of the other three, and they were not able to help. Of the seven that responded, five of those interviews took place in Bedford. The other two had moved to the Dominican Republic, and we completed their interviews through Face Time Audio. After completing this interview, the students all received an additional $50 for their participation.

In addition to all of the interviews and photo project, I made field notes after each meeting with a student or their parent. I included physical descriptions of the participants and their surroundings, as well as my general impressions of the meeting and our interactions. These data proved especially helpful in providing details for the findings chapters.

Characteristics of Student Participants

My sample was bounded by purposeful selection, in that the ten students had at least one parent born in the Dominican Republic, and lived and went to school in Bedford. In the end, ten students completed the first four pieces of the data collection. Nine were female and one was male. Follow-up interviews were conducted two years later with seven of the ten original participants. Because two are sisters, there was a total of nine parent interviews. With the ten student interviews, ten photo elicitation interviews, and seven follow-up interviews, I analyzed a

total of thirty-six interviews. Below is a table with what grade the student was in at the initial interview, who they lived with at that time, where their parent(s) were born, and at what age they came to the US. Only three students did not live with both parents, and one of those lived with a stepfather. In two cases, both parents were not from the Dominican Republic, having one parent from Ecuador and one from Puerto Rico. Most of the parents were born in the Dominican Republic, but two were born in the US but were raised in the Dominican Republic for most of their childhood.

Table 1. Who the participants live with and details on their parents' arrival to the US.

Student	Grade at Initial Interview	Who They Live With	Parents' Country of Origin and Arrival to US
Alicia	9th	Mom, Dad, Grandma, two younger brothers	Mom born in DR and came at 18; Dad born in US and raised in both US and DR
Narcisa and Valquiria	12th and 10th	Mom and Dad	Dad born in DR and came at 18; left wife there. Sisters were born in DR and came at 3 and 5 years old with their Mom
Christy	12th	Mom, two younger brothers; Stepdad and Grandma half-time- they have places in the City and go back and forth	Mom born in DR and came at 9
Jenny	12th	Mom, Dad, older sister	Dad born in Ecuador and came in early 20s; Mom born in DR and came in early 20s
Yesenia	9th	Mom, two younger sisters, Dad had recently moved out	Dad and Mom born in DR and came in early 20s
Rodrigo	12th	Mom and Dad	Mom born in US and raised in US and Puerto Rico; Dad born in US and raised in US and DR
Adelina	12th	Mom and younger sister	Mom born in DR and came in early 20s
Rebeca	10th	Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, two older brothers	Mom born in DR and came at 16; Dad born in DR and came at 17

In Table 2, I provide parental details such as their occupations, the language their interview was conducted in, the type of home they live in, and whether it is rented or owned. Most parents worked in the helping professions or in the hospitality industry. The four parents

whose interviews were conducted in English were the ones who had attended and graduated from college in the US. All but two of the students lived in homes their parents had purchased.

Table 2. Parents' occupations, interview language and home ownership status.

Student	Parent Occupation	Parent Interview Language	Type of Home and Status
Alicia	Mom- court translator Dad- accountant	English	Owns home
Narcisa and Valquiria	Mom- caregiver for elderly person Dad- custodian at nursing home	Spanish	Owns home
Christy	Mom- nurse in the City Dad- not in her life	English	Owns home
Jenny	Mom- social worker Dad- mechanic	English	Owns home
Yesenia	Mom- odd jobs, sells Avon and food upon request, and takes care of a child Dad- works at a graphic design sign store	Spanish	Owns home
Rodrigo	Dad- accountant Mom- secretary in the City	English	Owns home
Adelina	Mom- on disability Dad- not in her life	Spanish	Rents apartment
Rebeca	Mom- stopped working due to car accident 2 years ago, but now cleans 3 houses and works at the church when they need her. Dad- landscaper who owns his company	Spanish	Owns home
Soledad	Mom- housekeeper at hotel Dad- chef at pizzeria	Spanish	Rents apartment

Data Analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed on an on-going basis, as they were collected. The transcriber was bilingual, and so she was also able to do the parent interviews that were in Spanish. I used Google Translate for the initial translation of the transcripts and then went over the results, word for word, making corrections where needed. I would also return to the recordings when the transcriber had not been able to make out what the participant had said,

which happened with several of the Spanish-speaking parents that were soft-spoken and did not articulate clearly. Informal analysis took place after every couple of interviews in order to better inform future interviews and to re-work the questions as needed, so that the data were continuously informing the research process (Maxwell, 2005). As themes began to emerge from the data, I revisited or sought out new literature in these areas, in order to further inform the data collection (Luker, 2008).

I used the NVivo software package to do all of the coding. The coding of the data was a multi-step process, beginning with the creation of the data reduction table, that then led to collecting additional data through the follow-up interviews with the students. I also created analytical questions to ask of the data (Neuman, 2006), which emerged from the data themselves and from my experiences collecting the data. Using these questions as a guide, I read through the data and began linking quotes to them. Reading and re-reading the grouped information led to identifying themes and patterns. The data were then further broken down and organized by these themes, leading to more reorganization, grouping, and re-writing. At first, each student was considered as a separate case with its own themes. Then I looked across the cases and wrote memos on the themes. Eventually, the many themes were merged and blended, leading to overarching data categories (Neuman, 2006). While I let the data inform the themes, I came with pre-existing ideas, concepts and perspectives from the literature that also influenced my analysis (Neuman, 2006). The theoretical framework presented in the previous chapter gave me a starting point for the data analysis.

I embedded the photos the students took into the section of their interview transcripts where they described what the pictures were about. I also wrote descriptions of the pictures in the transcripts, to facilitate their coding. In this way, I was able to code the text describing the

pictures and use that in the analysis. I also printed out all two hundred and ninety-nine pictures in order to physically group and re-group them, looking for trends, commonalities and differences. At first, the pictures were analyzed as part of each individual case, informing the themes emerging from each student. The pictures were also sorted across cases to inform the macro themes applicable to the community as a whole. Grouping and re-grouping the photos while looking for patterns facilitated the analysis (Orellana, 1999). This enabled me to create categories and group the pictures, from which I created an Excel table that further enhanced my analysis. Lastly, I considered how each photo contributed to the whole set of pictures, while comparing and contrasting with my views of the neighborhood and community (Orellana, 1999). Including the photos for a separate analysis provided "an additional research node from which to interpret or triangulate findings" (Stanczak, 2004, p.1474). They provided further insight into the students' worldviews by illuminating their perspective of their communities.

After attempting to write thematic findings chapters, I decided to write up the findings by choosing three students to highlight. This approach makes better use of the rich data collected from each student, including the field notes. After identifying some key differences between the students who had a college-educated parent and those that did not, I chose one of each for a focus chapter, highlighting the similarities and differences. Throughout the chapters, I reference the full sample, identifying whether the finding was particular to that student, or representative of the other students as well. The third findings chapter focuses on the anomaly in the sample, the sisters whose family moved here with the intention of staying temporarily and returning to the Dominican Republic.

Quality of Data

I used Maxwell's (2005) concepts of validity and threat to assess the credibility of descriptions, conclusions, explanations, or interpretations from the data. To make sure the data collected were getting as close to the students' realities as possible, I combined data from several sources (field notes, observations, interviews and photographs), in order to put together a more in-depth understanding of the students' experiences. The research questions required an in-depth approach to data collection from a smaller sample, due to the nature of the questions. Meaning-making cannot be reached in a superficial way, and therefore all these pieces of data were used together to provide an in-depth analysis.

I approached this research through a logic of discovery method versus a logic of verification (Luker, 2008). The study began with research questions to guide me, but I was open to the story the data told. It was an iterative process that repeated as I went back and forth between data and analysis. Since I began with the hunch that assimilation theories would not fit a suburban context, this research was looking to generate theory rather than test existing theories (Luker, 2008). By identifying elements and finding the relationships between them, what emerged was a theory-driven story (Luker, 2008). I was open to the development of new theory given the new context within which this study took place, and how little we know about the assimilation process in suburban settings. In the end, however, the data fit existing assimilation theories.

It is important that I am clear about my positionality in this research study, as it has influenced the entire project, from development, to analysis and findings. By stating my personal background, theories and beliefs in my writing, the reader is informed of how these things may influence my findings. In this way, those that read my work will understand what lens I was looking through as I investigated and analyzed these phenomena. For example,

coming from an immigrant family may have led me to be sympathetic to the plight of immigrants. This may have caused me to over-rely on structural causes, rather than individual choices, as explanations for some of the negative outcomes for Latinx in public schools. By analyzing my reasoning throughout the study, I was able to communicate how my values and expectations have influenced it.

Reactivity was of great concern, because "what the informant says is *always* influenced by the interviewer and the interview situation" (Maxwell, 2005, p.109). By acknowledging the effect I may have had, and expressing that in my written conclusions, I have made my audience aware of this threat to validity. Additionally, using photographs taken by the students to elicit responses in the interviews gave them the opportunity to bring up topics that I may not have even thought of. Although the protocol comes loaded with the preconceptions of the researcher, the photographs provided an avenue for the students to bring forth their own ideas and challenge my assumptions.

Other strategies I used to address the validity of this study include focusing on one community and school, in order to provide rich and detailed data with enough variety to get a better understanding of what is going on (Maxwell, 2005). In other words, in-depth data from fewer participants was more useful in answering these research questions than a larger sample with less data about each person.

Although some researchers have argued that qualitative methods cannot lead to generalizable results, Payne and Williams (2005) do believe that they "can produce an intermediate type of limited generalization" called moderatum generalization (p.296). Luker (2008) also argues that qualitative work can produce information that is generalizable to the larger population in a logical, though not statistical, way. In other words, I have chosen a site that

can be argued is representative of one kind of suburban school district in America. Additionally, the goal of this type of study is to generalize theoretically (Luker, 2008), contributing to current theories on immigrants and their adaptation by exploring the lives of the children of Dominican immigrants in a completely new setting, that is now becoming a more common trend. This kind of grounded theory research is critical to advancing the field of immigration sociology. The experiences of Dominican immigrants in a suburban context can be applied to other Latinx immigrant groups of similar socio-economic status, skin color, education level, and length of time in the country, leading to ideas for further research in the future.

Ethics

One of the ethical concerns for this study was the power differential that exists between the researcher and those being researched (Kvale, 2006). Even though I hoped students would be eager to share their experiences, I must concede that I was driving the interview, because I was bringing questions which I hope would get answered, and then I walked away with the benefit of accumulated knowledge (Kvale, 2006). Without acknowledging this, abuse of the researcher to student relationship was possible. However, the photo elicitation interviewing approach helped ameliorate some of the uneven power dynamics by providing a means by which the students led the conversation through the snapshots of their lives. The same was true for the parents, in that I was a researcher from Columbia University, and so the parents may have felt intimidated. I did sense that some of the parents were hesitant in answering questions, as if trying to find the "right" answer that I was looking for. This was especially true for the parents without a college education. I did my best to make them feel comfortable by speaking in Spanish and sharing my family experiences. With the informed consent process, I attempted to make clear to the respondents that they did not have to answer all of the questions and that the interview could

cease at any moment of their choosing. Without this, there was the potential for abuse of the power differential discussed above. Awareness of the power differential is part of my positionality and helped inform my interviews and analysis.

It is important to note that there were potential benefits to the students' participation in this study as well. I hoped that the students would experience the small benefit of "event validation" from sharing their stories with me (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004). They may also have enjoyed documenting their lives with the cameras, which they got to keep as a token of reciprocity, along with $100 (or $50, if I was unable to locate them for the follow-up interview). The interviewees may have possessed "thoughts and feelings that have few outlets or little legitimacy in current communities of interaction, or that were difficult to express without sanctions or censorship" (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004, p.8) and the interview may have provided them the forum to be heard. They may even have found it empowering to be given "the opportunity to talk about an experience that had great personal impact" (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004, p.12). As children of Dominican immigrants are a relatively new presence in this district, participating in this study may have given them the forum to talk about their community and school in a candid way.

Positionality

Besides the lack of research on the experiences of second generation immigrants in suburban public schools as discussed previously, I chose this topic for several personal reasons as well. The first is that I taught elementary school in a Central American immigrant neighborhood in Los Angeles for six years, and have since felt compelled to pursue issues around Latinx people and their schooling experiences. I witnessed first-hand how a segregated and racially-isolated neighborhood and school created an environment with little support for

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learning English. I was the only fluent English speaker in the classroom, leaving my students without any peers to model Standard English. This context also lacked networks for my students' parents, who often felt lost in and bewildered by the U.S. public school system. Given the recent influx of immigrants to the suburbs, I felt compelled to explore whether their experiences are the same or different as my Los Angeles parents and students, in the hopes of informing the public schools on how they can best educate these students for the future.

Additionally, I myself am a second generation Latinx person who went through the public school system in two very different neighborhoods. I began my public schooling in a Latinx, mostly Mexican, neighborhood. My elementary school was also majority Latinx except for one Gifted and Talented Education class in each grade, which was much more diverse and majority White and Asian. However, my family moved between seventh and eighth grade to a completely new context which was majority White, and a more affluent suburb. I found myself with new friends who were preparing for college, and I went along with it. None of my cousins who stayed back in the Latinx neighborhood took a traditional path to a four-year college, although a couple did manage to eventually graduate. The change in context led me to a school with more resources on how to prepare for college as well as how to apply. A couple of my high school teachers were instrumental in helping me find out about schools and learn about the application process. For example, I would have never applied to the undergraduate institution I ended up attending had it not been for the recommendation and nudging from my English teacher. My life would possibly have turned out quite differently had my family stayed in the segregated neighborhood.

Through these two experiences, I came to realize how influential context is in determining a students' experience in the public school system. From affecting academic

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outcomes to how a student sees him or herself fitting into the labor market or U.S. society in general, a place, and the public schools within it, can make or break the lives of second generation immigrant students. Because of this personal connection, I had to continually keep myself in check and try to be as objective as possible. I was both an insider and outsider to the students and parents, and so I was mindful of this throughout the entire research project.

My positionality was particularly influential in my data analysis. I found myself feeling a kinship towards the students and their families, and found it very difficult to be critical of them. Due to our shared pan-ethnic identity, I saw myself in the students, and therefore found myself sympathizing with them and their struggles. To counter this, it was helpful to create a data reduction table with annotated notes on each student so that I could look across the data and not get lost in the details of each individual story. In addition, I found it very helpful to discuss initial thoughts and emerging themes with other doctoral students. These conversations would help me distance myself from the students, leading to new ideas about the patterns in the data.

I also struggled with my definition of success and my judgment of the students' educational trajectories. I saw myself in the students and therefore wanted them to have the transformative college experience that I had had when I attended a four year liberal arts college and had the opportunity to live on campus. It may be that I am biased in my assessment of their educational success, since overall they are already doing better than the average Dominican student being raised in New York City. The fact that they were all enrolling in college is a significant achievement that should not be overlooked. However, I could not help seeing the missed opportunities, and that comes from my own personal experience, and the fact that I wanted it for these students, too.

Conclusion

Due to this study's in-depth approach to understanding the experiences of second generation Dominican high school students in this suburban context, it has the potential to help school districts experiencing changes in demographics better serve their new students and their families. In addition, my research contributes to the field of immigrant sociology by adding data from a new and different location that has been understudied. By using in-depth interviews, this work also provides richer data that demonstrate how nuanced these findings can be. In the next chapter, I will provide a comprehensive description of the Bedford community, comparing it to both the Dominican ethnic enclave in New York City and the neighboring suburban ethnic enclave.

CHAPTER FOUR: Emplacing Bedford

In Chapter Two, I argued that assimilation studies need to be more explicit about the context in which they take place, thereby emplacing the research. Because assimilation research does not often include an in-depth consideration of the context, I will do this by taking into account both the structural and cultural features of Bedford. As previously explained, structural features are concrete, tangible characteristics, and cultural features are the cultural beliefs and practices that come from the structural features. Therefore, this chapter will serve as the backdrop for the three students whose stories are highlighted in the findings chapters following this one. In each section below, I will discuss both structural and cultural features of Bedford as a community, as well as Bedford High School more specifically. The data will include numbers collected from the Census, American Community Survey and New York State Report Cards in combination with interview and picture data from the participants of this study. Adding the rich interview and picture data enables me to communicate an understanding of the community that would just not be possible from only numbers, and is a good way to get at the cultural features of a place.

In describing a place, it is often most helpful to include data on other places to provide a point of comparison. A closer look at the body of research on Dominicans reveals that not only is it concentrated in New York, but the setting is typically an urban area where the majority of the residents are Black and Latinx. Therefore, the logical comparison site for this research was Washington Heights, a Dominican enclave in New York City. This enclave in New York City will serve as a comparison to Bedford so that we can see if the experience in the suburb is different from the traditional experience in upper Manhattan. The majority of the data on the cultural features of Washington Heights will come from Lopez' study (2003). As explained in

the previous chapter, a third location will also be included in this context chapter because it was mentioned in nearly every interview by both students and their parents. Because Fairview has a larger Dominican presence and is just next door to Bedford, the families in this study used this neighboring town to access the benefits of an ethnic enclave, such as attending church services in Spanish, eating at Dominican restaurants, and getting their hair done at salons. Yet, most said they would not live there, and so this adds an interesting comparison to Bedford, and in fact, is part of their experience in Bedford. Almost none of the families had any connection to the ethnic enclave of Washington Heights, and they rarely go there, despite its role as the traditional place of settlement for Dominicans in the NYC area. In order to provide a comparison for the pictures taken by the study participants, I also include pictures that I took of both Washington Heights and Fairview. In this chapter, photos taken by study participants are labeled as so, and the others were taken by me. By looking at the three places, we will gain a better understanding of the second generation Dominican experience in Bedford within the context of previous research done in the urban enclave.

I begin this chapter with a short description of Bedford's history and its recent demographic changes. The rest of the chapter is divided into two large sections: community factors and school factors. These factors have been identified in previous research as important contextual information that greatly influences the experiences of a person living and going to school in that place. For each of the factors, I will make comparisons across the three locations: Bedford, Fairview and Washington Heights. The community factors I will focus on are: socioeconomic status, the local labor market, the composition of family households, and the language context. In the second half, I will focus on school factors, again making comparisons across the three communities. First, I present data on whether the public schools in Bedford do in

fact reflect the composition of the community. Then I delve into the racial and ethnic composition of the school districts, and end with school outcomes.

Bedford's History and Demographic Changes

This section will provide a brief history of the development of the suburb of Bedford followed by a more in-depth look at the recent population changes, beginning with Census data from 1990. Demographic data are considered a structural feature of a place, and will provide context for this community that only recently began experiencing significant changes in its demographics. For the cultural perspective on these demographic changes, I will present data from school board officials that reflect the community's understanding and response to this demographic shift. Interestingly, because most of the families in this study had not lived in Bedford for very long, they did not have a lot to say about these changes, as they had not experienced them personally. However, they did provide important insight into how the Bedford community has responded to the increasing number of Latinx people. The context of reception for these newly arriving families is best described by those who have experienced it firsthand.

One important thing to note with Census data is that school districts do not map directly onto communities in Nassau County. Sometimes the data are reported by school district, but this has not been done consistently over the years. When data are not reported by school district, I use a combination of two areas as a proxy. The Bedford School District actually includes both the Census Designated Places (CDPs) of Bedford and Bedford Village, which are reported separately in Census data. In addition, the boundaries are slightly different, and the school district includes parts of other neighboring communities with very different demographics. While these are small differences, they can have a significant impact on the data, because of the extent of racial and ethnic segregation in Nassau County. Therefore, when the data are not reported by

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school district, I will include both Bedford and Bedford Village when reporting statistics for the Bedford School District, but the reader should keep in mind that the numbers are not portraying the composition of the District exactly as it is.

The Bedford community began as an early suburb in the 1920's, thirty years before the peak of suburban growth in Nassau County. The current population is around 32,000, and it covers an area that is only two miles wide and five miles long. It has a wide variety of housing, including single-family detached homes, co-ops, and condominiums, and one third of the homes were built before 1939. Different from other more privileged Nassau communities, Bedford's housing stock comes in a range of sizes and prices, allowing for a wider spread in socio-economic status. It is a popular community with people who commute to Manhattan for work, as it is less than an hour-long ride to the city on the Long Island Rail Road.

Using a combination of Census and American Community Survey data, we can see the changes within the total population living in the Bedford School District (see Table 3). From 1990 to 2000, the White, non-Hispanic or Latinx population decreased by 15%, and then another 25% from 2000 to 2010. The White population has essentially been cut in half over a twenty-year period. The Black, non-Hispanic or Latinx population has grown significantly over that same time period, with the percentage tripling in size from 1990 to 2010. For Hispanic or Latinx people, there have been dramatic increases in all three categories, White, Black and other race combined with two or more races. The raw number of Latinx people that identify as White tripled over the twenty-five-year period, although as a percentage of the whole population, it only doubled. Interestingly, the largest increase is in the other race or two or more races category. Dominicans are likely to self-identify in either of these two categories due to their complicated history of race and their relationship with neighboring Haiti (Hoffnung-Garskof,

2008). Although we would categorize some Dominicans phenotypically as Black, they would be less likely to identify with that category, because they consider Haitians to be Black and Dominicans to be mulattos (Hoffnung-Garskof, 2008). The 1990 Census is particularly helpful in illustrating the dilemma Dominicans face when forced to choose a race category. Out of those individuals who identified as being of Dominican origin, 25% indicated their race as White, 5% marked Black, and 70% identified as being of an "other race." In the 1990 Census, the option to state you are two or more races did not exist, but has been added to all subsequent Census surveys.

Table 3. Race and ethnicity of Bedford residents from 1990-2016.

	Not Hispanic or Latinx			Hispanic or Latinx		
	White	Black	Other race and 2 or more races	White	Black	Other race and 2 or more races
1990[1]	85%	10%	<1% (other race only)	5%	<1%	<1% (other race only)
2000[2]	70%	20%	<1%	5%	<1%	5%
2010[3]	45%	30%	5%	10%	2%	10%
2016[4]	40%	35%	5%	10%	1%	10%

[1] Sum of Bedford and Bedford Village CDPs from 1990 Census
[2] Sum of Bedford and Bedford Village CDPs from 2000 Census
[3] Reported for Bedford School District from 2010 Census
[4] Reported for Bedford School District from ACS 2016 (5-Year Estimates)

Although all of the structural data are helpful in painting a picture of the demographic changes, how the community has experienced them is equally important. According to one community member quoted in a New York Times article, Bedford is "solidly middle class but still diverse…You don't get a sense that it is a rich or a poor community. There is a spectrum of races and classes," which is uncommon in the highly fragmented Nassau County (Rather, 2003).

The parents and students in this study confirmed this belief, as nearly all of them talked about the diversity of the community and how wonderful it is that everyone gets along.

In terms of the population changes, it appears that County officials are still grappling with what this means and how to address it. In my work on a larger research project on suburban school districts, I interviewed a Nassau County official who explained that this is a relatively new phenomenon that is posing new challenges for school districts.

> Again a high quality school, wealthy as far as its local property wealth is concerned, highly regarded which is again attracting a population that truly values public education, but it too needs outreach for the parents to have the ability to orient them into being comfortable with the school district, assisting them in the conversion from their original countries to a suburban area. This was not the case years ago. The embarkation place for most immigrants was the city, and the second generation was what ended up on Long Island or pretty much the third generation if we looked at what developed here. Now it's directly to suburban districts. No stops anywhere. It's here.

From his perspective, he is seeing a new phenomenon in which immigrants are arriving directly to the suburbs. He sees a need to help these new immigrant families navigate the suburban school district by helping them "convert" and learn to fit into the suburbs. While his assimilationist view requires that the newcomer adapt to their new community, he is at least acknowledging that the district needs to do outreach as well. Unfortunately, none of the families in this study were aware of any such services, if they do, in fact, exist. While it is the responsibility of the receiving community to address these changing needs, it can be argued that these families also need to advocate for themselves. Unfortunately, they are often unaware of their needs. For example, an institution such as a school does not explicitly communicate how it expects families to interact with it, and families may be unaware that they need additional support to learn how to do so. I will go more in-depth into this idea in the findings chapters that follow this one.

In spite of the rapid population shifts in Bedford, the community appears to have welcomed its new residents. The study participants all said they felt comfortable and welcome in all parts of the community. No one reported a negative experience in public spaces. There were a couple of comments from parents about neighbors not being as welcoming, but the students did not mention this. The most common descriptors of the community used by both parents and students were "mixed," "diverse," "quiet," and "safe." One student explained, "Yeah. It's really quiet. Nothing really happens, but it's nice." Another student answered that her favorite thing about Bedford "is the safety of it all," which shows that these newly arrived families feel comfortable and safe in their community. Overall, the context of reception has been positive for these Dominican families.

Community Factors

There are several factors that have greatly influenced the experiences of the students in this study. They are factors that have been identified as having an impact on a young person's understanding of how they fit into their community and more generally, society. In the following subsections, I will provide the information that will serve as the backdrop for understanding the experiences of the second generation Dominican students in this study. The factors that will be explored are: socioeconomic status, the local labor market, the structure of family households, and language isolation. Again, I will provide descriptions of both the structural and cultural features of those factors, whenever possible, combining quantitative data (structural features) and qualitative data (cultural features).

Socioeconomic Status

A variety of measures can be used to assess the socioeconomic status of a community. In this section, I will focus on educational attainment, household incomes, the average value of the

homes in the suburban communities, and lastly, the number of people living in poverty. All of

these data will speak to the structural features of the three places. To address the cultural aspects

of socioeconomic status, I provide descriptions of the three communities, including photos taken

by the study participants and myself.

Educational attainment is a good indicator of the socioeconomic status of a community,

as it is highly correlated with income. For Bedford, I averaged the percentages from the two

Census Designated Places that make up most of the Bedford community. There, 90% of people

aged 25 years and older have graduated from high school or higher, and 40% of people aged 25

years and older have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. In neighboring Fairview, 80% have

earned a high school degree or higher, but less than 30% have earned a bachelor's degree or

higher, which is significantly lower. The data for the neighborhood of Washington Heights are

reported slightly differently because it is a small part of a much larger city. In order to get a sense

of just this neighborhood, I had to rely on secondary sources that have analyzed Census and

American Community Survey data from New York City and divided it by neighborhood. The

educational attainment data is reported as the highest level of education among people aged 25

years and older. In Washington Heights, 32% of people have not earned a high school diploma,

33% have earned only a high school diploma, and 35% have attained a degree higher than a high

school diploma (Statistical Atlas, 2015). As you can see, while the educational attainment of

people in Fairview is lower than in Bedford, both communities still have much higher

educational attainment than Washington Heights.

Household income, the value of homes, and the percentage of people in poverty are also

helpful measures to compare across the three communities. In Bedford, again an average of the

two Census Designated Places, the median household income reported for 2012-2016 in 2016

dollars was just over $100,000. In Fairview it was around $70,000 and in Washington Heights it was $40,000. Again, we can see that Bedford has a higher socioeconomic status, followed by Fairview and then Washington Heights. While the majority of the housing in Washington Heights is made up of apartments, we can still compare the median value of owner-occupied housing units (2012-2016) in the two communities on Long Island. In Bedford the value is $380,000, and in Fairview the value is $300,000, again showing the affluence of Bedford in comparison to its neighboring community with an ethnic enclave. And lastly, the poverty levels vary across the three communities in the way we would expect based on the other data reported above. In Bedford, less than 10% of people are in poverty, in contrast to 15% of people in Fairview and more than 25% in Washington Heights. While all of these data is helpful in providing a description of the structural features of these three communities, the qualitative data presented below will provide an even richer description of the cultural features.

The data presented below come from a variety of sources. After having spent extensive time in Bedford collecting data, I will include my impressions of the community. This will be supplemented by study participants' interviews, as well as the pictures the students took as part of the study. As previously mentioned, I also visited Fairview, and I will provide descriptions of that community as well as pictures I took while there. And lastly, I have lived in a neighborhood adjacent to Washington Heights that is also majority Dominican for the last seven years. Therefore, I have firsthand experience to add to the descriptions of Washington Heights, as well as pictures I took. Findings from Lopez' (2003) study will enhance the descriptions even further, providing qualitative data from Dominican young adults.

Bedford gives the impression of a solidly middle-class community, but with a dated look. The main street is four lanes wide and heavily trafficked, but only by cars, with very few people

on foot. The shopping centers or strip malls made it seem like this community was much more desirable in the past. The movie theater, for example, had an old sign and a general feeling of griminess. A few improvements had been made, and one would occasionally see a brand new Walgreens with modern construction. Overall though, the one-story strip malls are old, and contain a variety of small random businesses, from a frame store to a doctor's office to a catering company. One parent complained that there is no major commerce in Bedford, and longed for a Target or Macy's. However, there is a Target in neighboring Fairview that is just ten minutes away from the high school. The next nearest Target is just over twenty minutes away in the other direction. This leaves me to wonder if she did not consider the Target in the neighboring Dominican enclave to be good enough to shop in, and was actually commenting on the distance to the one that is in a more diverse community, but much farther away. While I do not recall seeing any retail clothing stores, there was a large variety of fast food chains on the main street, but no large box stores except a Petco. I always felt safe walking up and down this street, despite the cars whizzing by me, in this generally sleepy community. My impression of Bedford was consistent with what the study participants said.

Figure 1. Strip mall near Bedford High School (taken by study participant).

In the Figure 1 above, you can see the dated strip mall that is typical of the Bedford community. This particular area was located adjacent to the high school and therefore was a hangout place after school, especially for the students who skateboard and can use the empty corridor to practice. One student described it as a shopping center "where there's like no stores," which makes it a good place to hang out and not be kicked out by business owners or their clientele. Despite there being many empty storefronts, the premises are still clean and no graffiti was visible. In Figure 2, you can see some of the abandoned storefronts more closely. While a window has been boarded up and the pillars could use a fresh coat of paint, the property is still being looked after and has not been completely abandoned.

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Figure 2. Close-up of empty store fronts (taken by study participant).

Walking down the main street that runs north and south, you come across small streets that

lead into suburban neighborhoods. As soon as you turn off the main road, the quietness of Bedford

hits you. You see very few cars drive by, and I was usually the only person walking down any

given residential street. The homes give an overall impression of caring and pride. Yards were well

kept, and homes were well cared for with fresh coats of paint and decorative details. The homes

are generally modest; typically, two-story structures on small lots. Below, Figure 3, is a typical

residential street in Bedford taken by a study participant.

Figure 3. Typical residential street in Bedford (taken by study participant).

This sense of order and calm stands in stark contrast to the hustle and bustle of

Washington Heights. Below, Figure 4, is a picture taken on a Saturday morning in winter that

shows street vendors lined up in front of brick and mortar businesses. As you can see, it would

be difficult to get a picture without people in it. In fact, it is rare to find yourself alone on any

block in this part of the City, even the residential side streets.

Figure 4. Busy commercial street in Washington Heights

There is also a difference in terms of the kinds of businesses that are found on a typical street in Washington Heights. It is common for many of the signs to be in Spanish and for businesses to cater to Dominican clientele, such as companies that ship supplies in large barrels to the Dominican Republic, or that specialize in sending money to the Dominican Republic, or travel agencies advertising good deals to the Dominican Republic. Figure 5 is a picture of a typical street with a meat market being advertised in Spanish, including a smaller sign reminding customers to place their orders early for a holiday whole pig. Next to it is a barbershop, of which there are no shortage in Washington Heights. One can be found on almost every block, and are most often filled with young men hanging out and listening to music, or older men playing

dominos. It is not uncommon for businesses to blast music from large speakers outside of their

stores, making a walk through the neighborhood a loud experience, where different songs

compete for your ear.

Figure 5. Common businesses found in Washington Heights.

And, of course, the housing stock in Washington Heights is very different from the suburban homes of Bedford. The landscape is dominated by large apartment buildings. Because of the topography of this neighborhood, which includes many hills-hence the name the Heights-there are many parks throughout, including two large ones on either side of the island of Manhattan. The picture below, Figure 6, depicts typical apartment buildings, as well as a small snow-covered park.

Figure 6. Apartment buildings in Washington Heights.

To assess the study participants' connection to urban enclaves, and to find out if they had

moved to Bedford from there, or if they had arrived directly to the suburbs, I asked them whether

they go to Washington Heights or other neighborhoods in the City. Only one family in this study

had a connection to Washington Heights, whereas the other families would rarely come into New

York City. Throughout the interviews, however, Fairview was mentioned as a resource for

Dominican products and services, located right next door to Bedford. Time after time,

interviewees talked about going to Fairview for Dominican food and for Spanish-language

Catholic church services. From a practical standpoint, it makes sense that families would drive

just fifteen minutes to the neighboring town and take advantage of the Dominican goods and

services available there versus an hour long trip to Washington Heights.

Given the importance of Fairview for these families, one begins to wonder why they chose to live in Bedford and not Fairview. However, when asked if they would live in Fairview, the parents and students both answered that they would not, because it is too rowdy or noisy. When talking about the surrounding neighborhoods, one student, Alicia said "Like in Hampshire, specifically, it's like- you know- it's not as liberal. Like, you can't just go. And walk. You have to like be a little careful. It's a little more annoying. You know… Fairview is the same, but not as bad." What Alicia was trying to convey is that other communities do not feel as safe as Bedford, and she cannot walk around freely without a worry. Hampshire is similar to Fairview in that it is majority Black and Latinx. The students and parents feel that Fairview is not as safe or as quiet as Bedford, yet they go there regularly to access the cultural resources. Possible reasons for their negative views of majority minority communities will be further explored in the findings chapters following this one.

Because Fairview emerged as such an important part of the Dominican families' lives, I felt compelled to take a drive through the downtown area, as well as a few of the residential side streets. In the central part of Fairview, I found a well-cared for, yet dated, strip of restaurants and shops. However, one major difference was that many of the businesses had signage in Spanish. In Figure 7, both businesses have Spanish names, although I had to blur the one that was searchable and identifiable in Google. In addition, the barber shop has a Dominican and U.S. flag under the words welcome. At the deli and restaurant, they advertise a long list of Latinx snacks, as well as instructions on where to park, all in Spanish.

Figure 7. Businesses with Spanish names in Fairview.

Another palpable difference was in the state of the commercial properties. A closer look at the retail shop below in Figure 8 shows that in addition to being dated, as were the stores in Bedford, there was more of a sense of disrepair. The new owners did not fully remove the shadows of the old signage before putting their new store name up. The residential building next door has not been kept up as well as places in Bedford. Fairview was not starkly different, but just gave the impression that it was slightly more run down than Bedford.

Figure 8. Business on one of the main commercial streets of downtown Fairview.

While driving around some of the residential streets in the heart of Fairview, I immediately saw a difference in the number of people around. In Bedford, it was rare to see another person walking around or see people outside their homes, whereas in Fairview, I found it difficult to take a picture of the homes because there were many people just hanging out in front of their homes, and photography would be awkward. There were also more modest looking homes on lots of a similar size as those found in Bedford. The housing stock looked older and had not been renovated or kept up as well as the properties next door. This is not to say that there were no nice homes. There were many that had nicely landscaped yards, showing pride from the owners, and could have easily been mistaken for a home in Bedford. Below, Figure 9, is a picture of a typical home in Fairview.

Figure 9. A home in Fairview.

As you can see, descriptions and pictures provide an additional layer of information on socioeconomic status that helps us better understand what it might be like for Dominican families living in these communities. This data on the cultural aspects of socioeconomic status, embedded with the descriptive data on the structural features of the place provides a deeper understanding of all three contexts.

Local Labor Market

A contextual piece that helps us understand how students are making sense of their place in society comes from how the immigrant parent fits into the local labor market. Parental participation in the labor market will have a great influence on the students' understanding of the

possibilities for themselves. In this section, I will first review what Lopez (2003) found in the

context of Washington Heights. Then I will share how the parents in this study participated in the

labor force, ending with the students' perceptions of their participation.

Lopez (2003) found that Dominican immigrant families settling in Washington Heights

were often employed by the ethnic businesses in the neighborhood. The implications of this are

that the possibilities for upward mobility are few because these jobs rarely provide the skills

needed to transition into the mainstream primary labor market. Additionally, these jobs may

require little to no English, which may influence the language choices the children make.

According to Lopez (2003), many of the Dominican men living in Washington Heights did not

have steady employment, whereas many of the women worked in retail. She found that the

daughters used their mother's hardships as inspiration to work hard in school and find better

employment, while the sons were more cautious about trusting in the value of education, because

they did not see the economic return. In a suburban community, such as Bedford, the local labor

market was very different.

In this study, the Dominican parents were mostly employed in the service industry (see

Table 4). This supports the hypothesis that some of the families in this study were supporting the

lifestyles of the better off. However, almost all of these parents worked in surrounding

communities and not Bedford itself, which eliminated any awkwardness there could have been

among students if some of their parents worked for their peers' parents. Several fathers worked

in landscaping, another as a mechanic, one as a janitor at a nursing home, and another in a

restaurant. These service industry parents were mostly unhappy with their work, but were doing

it in order to provide a better future for their children. They did not enjoy their work or feel

passionate about it, instead seeing work as a means to an end, a way to support their families.

This message was communicated clearly to their children. The children of these parents were aware of the hardships their parents had endured, and felt indebted to them. The students wanted to have a job they liked in the future, because they had seen how unhappy their parents were.

Table 4. Mother and father's education and profession for each study participant.

Student	Mother's Education and Profession	Father's Education and Profession
Alicia	No college; court translator	Bachelor's degree; accountant
Narcisa and Valquiria	No college: caregiver for elderly person	No college: custodian at nursing home
Christy	Bachelor's degree; nurse	Unknown; not in her life
Jenny	Master's degree; social worker	No college; mechanic
Yesenia	No college; odd jobs, sells Avon, sells food upon request, and takes care of a child	No college; works at a graphic design sign store
Rodrigo	No college; secretary	Bachelor's degree; accountant
Adelina	No college; on disability	Unknown; not in her life
Rebeca	No college; cleans houses and works at the church when needed	No college; landscaper who owns his company
Soledad	No college; housekeeper at hotel	No college; chef at pizzeria

In contrast to what Lopez (2003) described as the labor market context in Washington Heights, the Bedford parents were much more likely to be participating in the mainstream labor market. None of them worked in ethnic enclave businesses, even though that was an option in neighboring Fairview. Those that did work in Latinx communities were often the more educated parents that served those communities as professionals, such as the social worker and nurse. Those with less education were still participating in the mainstream labor market through the service industry. While they were on the lower rungs of the mainstream labor market, they were not experiencing the isolation of working in an ethnic enclave with little to no interaction with

non-Latinx people, as did the parents in Lopez's (2003) study. How the parents' participation in the labor force influenced the students' worldviews and their future plans will be further explored in the next chapters.

Family Households

Another factor that has been given much weight when considering assimilation paths is family structure. Lopez (2003) found that many of the students she interviewed in Washington Heights grew up without a father in the home. This affected the girls, in that they were very careful to plan for their futures in terms of using education to work towards gainful employment so that they could support themselves no matter what happened with their significant other. For the boys, they were less sure that education would pay off in the future, because they had few male role models, and the men that were around were often unemployed. The presence of both parents has great implications for how the students made sense of their futures, and household type is an important factor to consider when studying the second generation.

Additionally, family households with only a mother or father present often experience more economic hardships due to reliance on a single income. Due to the high cost of living on Long Island, it is likely that single-parent households have a harder time making ends meet. In Bedford's family households, where the householder is between 15 to 64 years of age and lives with his or her own children under 18 years of age, the majority are married couples (see Table 5), and there is very little difference among white, Black and Latinx households. Meanwhile, in Washington Heights, over half of the family households with children under the age of eighteen are single-parent homes. Only 42% of the households consist of married parents, whereas 50% are headed by a single mom and 8% are headed by a single dad. Therefore, it appears that the households in Bedford have a much stronger family structure than the urban enclave of

Washington Heights. By comparison, in Fairview, out of the family households with a child under eighteen present, 60% are homes where the parents are married, 30% are headed by single mothers, and 10% by single fathers. This too is a large difference and stands out when compared to the high number of families with married parents in Bedford.

Table 5. Household type by race in Bedford.

	Married Couples	No Wife Present	No Husband Present
White households	85%	5%	10%
Black households	80%	5%	15%
Latinx households	80%	5%	15%

Out of the ten students in this study, only two of them lived with just one parent, in both cases their mother. The two students in a single-parent home were clearly less well-off than the other students, residing in rented apartments instead of houses. They had less space than those living in houses, and their apartments were located on busy thoroughfares while the houses were tucked away on residential streets away from traffic and noise. The rest of the students lived with both parents in their household. In addition, many of the students had grandparents either living with them or living nearby, providing support with childcare when they were younger. Others had aunts and uncles in Bedford or other nearby suburbs, giving the students in this study an opportunity to be with extended family on a regular basis.

This stands in stark contrast to what Lopez found at the high school she studied in Washington Heights. The Dominican families in Bedford are generally more stable and well-off than those who live in the city ethnic enclave, and this had greatly influenced their outlook towards the future. They did not seem particularly stressed or worried about their futures, something I call suburban complacency. I argue that because they were so comfortable in their

suburban life, they did not feel a sense of urgency about improving their lives or the lives of their families, as the students in Lopez's (2003) study of Washington Heights.

Language

One of the decisions second generation students grapple with is language choice, which is greatly influenced by the context within which they live and go to school. In a Dominican ethnic enclave, students do not have as much exposure to native English speakers, and because of the concentration of Spanish speakers, English is rarely needed on a daily basis. Therefore, they would likely develop and maintain their Spanish skills, deeming them useful in everyday life, as a part of fitting into their ethnic community. However, Lopez (2003) found that most students did gain some fluency in English in order to be translators for their parents, when interacting with people outside of their segregated neighborhood. For the students in Bedford, on the other hand, English was a necessity in everyday life in their community, and the priority became learning and becoming fluent in English. However, most had someone in their immediate or extended family that did not speak English, and therefore still saw a need to learn Spanish.

Census data can be used to look at the linguistic isolation of a group of people in a community, and some of these data are even available by school district boundaries through a secondary analysis by Statistical Atlas. This information is useful for describing the structural features of the language context for the Dominican students in Bedford. The percentage of the total population living in households where Spanish is spoken at home is 20% in Bedford, 40% in Fairview, and 65% in Washington Heights. This indicates that the linguistic isolation of Latinx people in Bedford is low, followed by Fairview, and then Washington Heights, where speaking Spanish is common and almost a necessity when going about one's daily life in that neighborhood. However, just speaking Spanish in the home does not provide a full picture of the

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language context for those residing in these communities. It is also helpful to consider how well the people in the Spanish-speaking households speak English. In Bedford, 60% of those residing in Spanish-speaking households speak English "very well." In Fairview, 40% speak English "very well." In Washington Heights, 44% speak English "very well." Therefore, Fairview and Washington Heights are more similar, and Bedford's Spanish speakers are more likely to speak English very well.

Through the interviews with the students, I gained a sense of the cultural features of the language context within which the students are being raised and going to school. Although the Census data provides a sense of the linguistic isolation, which is very low in Bedford, the students and their parents provided an in-depth look at their everyday language practices. In addition, they provide insight into how speaking Spanish was received by fellow community members, peers and teachers in the Bedford community and in the High School, more specifically.

In this study sample, all but one of the students considered themselves Spanish speakers, although to varying degrees. The one male student said that he had not learned Spanish, because his parents raised him speaking English, but he wished he did, and was therefore taking Spanish at the high school. All of the other participants did use Spanish at home, but how much they did depended on their parents' level of English fluency. The majority of the students were spoken to in Spanish by their parents, and eight of them had at least one parent or grandparent present in their household that did not speak English. The difference was that the students whose parents spoke English would respond to their parents in English, even if the parents spoke to them in Spanish. Therefore, these students were getting less practice speaking Spanish, although they were still getting practice with listening and understanding the language. Many of the students

also had extended family living with them or nearby, and it was common for the grandparents to not speak English. The desire to maintain connected to their extended family surely provided another reason for the students to want to continue practicing their Spanish language skills. It was by no means critical to their ability to navigate daily life in Bedford, as it was for students in Washington Heights. For example, I find myself using Spanish more than English in my daily life in this urban Dominican enclave.

Both the students and their parents reported that they felt comfortable using Spanish when out and about in the Bedford community. None of the study participants had experienced a negative response or had had a negative interaction in regards to their use of Spanish in all kinds of establishments. As is common with the second generation, seven of the students said they translated for either a parent or grandparent outside of the home, especially with doctors. While the students did not need Spanish to navigate their everyday lives in Bedford, they did use it when spending time in Fairview. The neighboring ethnic enclave provided a space where Spanish was not just useful, but necessary. In fact, many of the students attended Spanish language church services there. Therefore, Fairview provided an opportunity for the students in this study to develop and maintain their Spanish language skills, in addition to communicating with their families.

Despite nearly all of the students being fluent in Spanish and having mostly Latinx friends, the students reported rarely using Spanish at school. Three of the students talked about using Spanish with their friends in the hallway, between classes, and using "Spanglish" by either mixing the two, or at least throwing in some "Dominican" words here and there, colloquial words from the Dominican Republic. Another four students talked about using Spanish only to tell secrets that they did not want other students to hear, and two of those mentioned that they do

not do it often, because they do not want people to feel uncomfortable if they do not understand. One even said that other students have asked her to stop speaking Spanish because they feel she is speaking poorly of them, and they feel uncomfortable not understanding. Two of the students said they never speak Spanish in school, not even with friends. All of the students did agree that teachers did not mind if they spoke Spanish and never said anything to them about it, which is contrary to what Lopez (2003) described in her study. Students in her study reported that teachers were hostile towards the use of Spanish in school (Lopez, 2003). Overall, it appears that Spanish is not used much in the school by these Dominican students. Though they felt it was mostly okay to do so, perhaps because of the high number of non-Spanish speakers, they did not do it.

The students I interviewed did appear to be maintaining some Spanish skills, although it is unclear whether they are truly bilingual. The suburban context and the school environment have not completely erased their desire or their need to speak Spanish, as they needed it to communicate with their families and to navigate the neighboring Dominican enclave. However, they were mostly using Spanish for interactions in daily life, and were not likely to be developing their reading and writing skills in Spanish. Therefore, it remains unclear whether the students in this study were becoming truly bilingual.

School Factors

I will now focus on school factors that shape the experiences of the students attending them. In the first section, I will compare data from the Bedford community to the student population enrolled in its public schools. It is important to understand whether the schools reflect the community. I will then present data on the racial and ethnic composition of the schools by comparing the Bedford School District to the Fairview District. For the urban ethnic enclave

location, I will use New York City District #6, which encompasses Washington Heights. Lastly, I present school outcomes, focusing on the one high school in the Bedford School District, the one high school in the Fairview School District, and Gregorio Luperón High School, which is located in the heart of Washington Heights.

Do Bedford Public Schools Reflect the Community?

In this section, I examine whether the diversity of the population in Bedford is accurately reflected in its schools. It is important to look at whether the school district is representative of the larger Bedford community, because the response to increasing diversity is often to enroll in private schools or move out of the neighborhood completely. These kinds of population shifts can be welcomed or resisted by community members. As one can see in Table 6, there is some underrepresentation of white students in the district, compared to the percentage of white people living in the Bedford community. However, from interviews with district officials, I got a sense that many of the white families had been in Bedford for a long time, and their children had grown and aged out of the public school system. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of white flight.

Table 6. Race and ethnicity for Bedford community and school district.

	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latinx	White
Bedford Community* (2016)	30%	20%	40%
Bedford School District (2016-2017)	50%	30%	20%

*Average of two Census Designated Places

It is also important to look at whether the affluence of the Bedford community is reflected in the school district. Interestingly, it used to be difficult to actually know the level of poverty in the school district. As one County official explained:

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Bedford, doesn't have a lunch program, doesn't have a federal lunch program. Don't ask us why. Sometime in the 1950's, the community thought it was a John Birch thing, God knows, and they decided, no, we're staying away from the federal lunch program…So there's no poverty measurement for Bedford.

One district representative explained that despite appearances, not everyone in the community is a professional. Many people work very hard to be able to live in Bedford and are able to do so through rental properties in the northern section or illegally subdivided houses. However, none of the families in my study were sharing a home with another family.

Since my interviews with district officials, the district has finally decided to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program. Based on data from the Institute of Education Sciences, Bedford first had less than 50 students eligible for free lunch in the 2009-2010 school year. After apparently skipping a year of participation in the program, Bedford had even fewer students in the program in the 2011-2012 school year, and then just over 50 students the following year. Interestingly, the number then jumped to over 200 students eligible for free lunch in the 2013-2014 school year. The school district continued to report zero children eligible for reduced price lunch for each of the years mentioned above. Given the increase of students eligible in just five years, one can deduce that this need was always there, but that it took a few years to spread the word and do the outreach necessary to get these families signed up for the program. It is highly unlikely that this many lower income families had entered the district from one year to the next.

The 2016-2017 district report card for Bedford reports that less than 30% of students are economically disadvantaged. This is defined as students "who participate in, or whose family participates in, economic assistance programs," and includes a variety of programs including food stamps and free or reduced-price lunch. This is much higher than the Census data reported

above that states less than ten percent of people living in Bedford are in poverty. The schools have a much larger at-risk population than the community at large.

For a description of the cultural features of the community with regards to class, I will discuss what the students in the study shared in their interviews. However, it appears that they were unaware of the level of privilege in Bedford. In addition, they did not seem aware of class differences except for one student. She was the one student who had moved to Bedford from Washington Heights, and perhaps because of her experiences in both neighborhoods, she seemed especially informed. She talked about how students in Bedford do not realize how well they have it, acknowledging a certain level of privilege, particularly when compared to the urban ethnic enclave. She also noted class differences within Bedford, explaining that one way students assess how well-off their peers are by asking which of the elementary schools they went to. Because parts of Bedford are more affluent and feed into certain schools, this would be a good indicator of socioeconomic status. Other than this one student, the Dominican students in this study did not have any commentary or opinions on class.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

Because this study is focused on high school students, I decided to go more in depth with the racial and ethnic composition of the district, rather than the larger community. Since students spend most of their time in school, who they go to school with matters most to this study. In this section, I will compare the racial and ethnic composition of the Bedford School District with Fairview and New York City District #6. Then I will share what the students said about their school and peers.

Using the New York State Report Cards from 2014-15, the differences between the school districts becomes clearer (see Table 7). In terms of enrollment by ethnicity, Bedford is

approaching 50 percent with its Black or African American student population and is about 30% Hispanic or Latinx. In Fairview, about 30% of the students are Black or African American, whereas 60% are Hispanic or Latinx. In NYC #6, less than 10% of the students are Black or African American, while 85% are Hispanic or Latinx. In terms of non-White student population, Fairview and NYC District #6 are more similar.

Table 7. Enrollment by race and SES for each community (2014-2015).

	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latinx	Asian or Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	White	Economically Disadvantaged	Eligible for Free Lunch
Bedford	50%	30%	5%	20%	25%	20%
Fairview	30%	60%	<5%	10%	70%	60%
NYC #6	10%	85%	1%	5%	85%	80%

Because many of the students talked about being friends with other "Spanish" kids, I wanted to get information on exact country of origin, as so many countries are lumped together in the Latinx label. Unfortunately, this breakdown is not reported in the school report cards, so I returned to the American Community Survey, which does report this data by school district. In 2016, of the Latinx residents in the Bedford School District, 30% identify as Dominican (see Table 8). Of the 20% that are from Central America, the majority (70%) are from El Salvador. There are also residents from seven different South American countries, with the largest group from one country being from Ecuador (40%). In Fairview School District, of the Latinx residents, 30% are Dominican and 10% are Puerto Rican. Of the residents from Central America, the biggest groups come from El Salvador (55%) and Guatemala (20%). For those who are from South America, they are also from seven different countries with the largest groups coming from

Columbia (30%), Ecuador (30%), and Peru (20%). Although 30% of Latinx residents in each

district are from the Dominican Republic, in raw numbers, there are two and a half times more

Dominican residents living in the Fairview School District.

Table 8. Percent from different Latinx countries by school district.

Of the total of Latinx residents	Bedford School District	Fairview School District
Percent Dominican	30%	30%
Percent Puerto Rican	20%	10%
Percent Central American	20%	35%
Percent South American	20%	10%
Percent from other Latinx Countries	10%	15%

Similar data is not available for District #6 in New York City, but a secondary analysis of

Washington Heights shows that 63% of the foreign born population came from the Dominican

Republic, about 46,000 people (Statistical Atlas, 2015). The next largest group, Mexicans (7% of

the foreign born), lags far behind the number of foreign born from the Dominican Republic. The

third largest group accounts for 5% of the foreign born population in Washington Heights and

comes from Ecuador.

Besides racial and ethnic composition, another factor that can influence where a family

decides to settle is socio-economic status. Based on the New York State Report Cards from

2014-15, we can see that once again, NYC District #6 and Fairview are more similar on the

percentage of economically disadvantaged students, while Bedford has significantly fewer (see

Table 7). Fairview reported that nearly 70% of their student population consists of economically

disadvantaged students, and NYC #6 reported that 85% of their student population consists of

economically disadvantaged students, whereas Bedford reported that less than a quarter of their

students are economically disadvantaged. Clearly, Fairview has many more economically

disadvantaged students than Bedford, right next door. However, NYC District #6 far surpasses

both in the sheer number and proportion of economically disadvantaged students.

The message that Bedford High School is diverse, and everyone gets along, is definitely

being received by the Dominican students in this study. They all talked about how wonderful it is

that the school is so "mixed," and how the students are friends with everyone. I asked them about

cliques or rivalries between groups, and each painted a rosy picture of their experience at the

school. When further probed, some students admitted that there are some friend groups based on

race, and others based on the different sports offered there. They even explained that there are

certain parts of the commons that have been claimed by certain groups, although this is mostly

based on what grade they are enrolled in. Overall, the students were very happy with their

school, and did not want to change schools, or change anything about their school.

School Outcomes

As was done above, this section will continue the comparison to both Dominican enclaves,

Washington Heights in New York City and Fairview, right next door, with a focus on their

school districts and academic outcomes. In New York City, only a few highly competitive high

schools are considered academically rigorous enough to produce students for elite colleges and

universities. Most of the high schools are segregated and produce poor academic outcomes for its

students. In NYC District #6, one of the high schools had such a history of low academic

achievement that it was dismantled into four smaller high schools as part of the small-schools

reform in New York City. The Bedford Senior High School, on the other hand, states on its

website that it is "a nationally recognized school of excellence." Its online district handbook

touts 82 AP scholars (a score of 3 or higher on 3 or more exams), 12 AP scholars with honors (an

average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more

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of these exams), 14 AP scholars with distinction (an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP

Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams) and 1 national AP

scholar (an average score of at least 4 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on eight

or more of these exams).

Graduation rates and type of diplomas awarded can be used to compare the high schools

in the three communities (see Table 9). In New York State, high school graduates can leave with

a Regents Diploma or a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation. The graduation rates at

Bedford High School are excellent, at nearly 95%, given the state standard is 80%. Fairview HS

also surpasses the state standard with a graduation rate of 80%. Gregorio Luperón HS has a very

low graduation rate of 56%. Another statistic showing the stark difference between these three

high schools is the percentage of students earning a Regents with Advanced Designation

Diploma. Over forty percent of Bedford's High School students earned one, compared to less

than 20% at Fairview HS and 13% at Gregorio Luperón HS. We can see that Bedford has the

best outcomes, followed by Fairview, with the high school in Washington Heights lagging far

behind.

Table 9. Graduation rates and type of diploma across the three high schools.

	Graduation Rate	Regents Diploma	Regents with Advanced Designation
Bedford High School	95%	95%	45%
Fairview High School	80%	90%	15%
Gregorio Luperón High School	56%	96%	13%

Other outcome measures that can be used to compare school districts are the post-

graduation plans of completers (see Table 10). Bedford's graduates are more likely to enroll in a

4-year college than those from Fairview and Gregorio Luperón (see Table 10). The other

significant difference is in the number of graduates that go directly to employment. Less than

five percent of Bedford graduates enter the workforce after high school as opposed to twenty

percent of Fairview graduates. It seems odd that Gregorio Luperon has zero percent, but perhaps

that can be accounted for with the sixteen percent whose plans are unknown. Given that all the

Bedford parents interviewed said they wanted their child to attend college, the fact that one-fifth

of the students graduating from Fairview go directly to employment might be disconcerting, even

if it is not unrealistic in many high schools across the country.

Table 10. Post-graduation plans for the three high schools (2014-2015).

	To four-year college	To two-year college	To other post-secondary	To the military	To employment	Plans Unknown
Bedford HS	60%	40%	<1%	<1%	<5%	0%
Fairview HS	25%	40%	<5%	<5%	20%	0%
Gregorio Luperon HS	24%	58%	0%	1%	0%	16%

In this era of school accountability, there is so much information at a parent's fingertips.

For those parents who said they were purposeful in choosing Bedford, you can see why they may

done so. However, many of the parents just ended up there by chance through an acquaintance or

family connection. Either way, these state data show that parents might believe that the Bedford

School District is a "good" place to entrust with their child's education.

For school outcomes, it makes sense to focus on the parents' impressions of the district in

order to understand them as cultural features. An in-depth analysis of the three parents

highlighted in the case studies will be included in the findings chapters. In general, though, the

parents seemed unaware of how "good" the school district is. Unlike a typical white, middle-

class parent who would investigate school outcomes before buying into a community, the

Dominican parents in this study did not. Only one parent talked about looking into the zoned

elementary school near her home before purchasing it. Aside from her, everyone else seems to have stumbled upon the Bedford community through familial connections.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented one possibility of how to emplace this study. While there are certainly additional traits that could be addressed, it is impossible to include every single aspect of a place. What I have done is created a rich and in-depth picture of three different communities in which to embed the rest of the findings in this dissertation. I believe that by emplacing studies such as this one, we can better understand how a place influences and shapes the experiences of the people living in it.

Findings Chapters Introduction

I will be presenting the findings from this study in the following three chapters. I have selected one student to focus each chapter on, in order to paint a more complete picture of the experiences of these Dominican students growing up in the diverse suburb of Bedford. Some of the findings cut across the entire sample, while others were dependent on whether the student had a parent with a college degree or not. Therefore, the first findings chapter focuses on Rebeca, whose parents did not attend college, representing six of the students in the study. The second chapter focuses on Jenny, whose mother had earned a graduate degree, representing four of the students whose parents had attended college. (Jenny's mother was the only parent in the study to have earned a graduate degree.) The third findings chapter focuses on Narcisa, whose family was only temporarily living in the U.S. and planned to return to the Dominican Republic for her to attend college there, representing the trend of transnationalism common among Dominicans.

What follows is a detailed account of my interviews with those three students and their mothers. I have strived to create as full a picture as possible of each student and her family from our conversations and their pictures, in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of the individuals behind the statistics we often see. In addition to shedding light on the acquisition of mainstream social and cultural capital, the belief in the power of education and the American Dream, and the assimilation of immigrants in a suburban community, I also hope to show that although there are patterns and tendencies, each student and his or her family are also distinctive, with particular worries, strengths, and desires within the larger patterns I discovered. Though patterns can help us think about what needs to happen to ensure a bright future for students such as these, it is also important that we avoid the temptation to think that what fits for one group in

one community will fit for all newcomers to the suburbs. The variation I report is a hedge against

this.

CHAPTER FIVE: Rebeca

I chose Rebeca as a focal case because she was one of the six students in this study whose

parents did not go to college. Both her responses to my interview questions, and those of her

mother, represent many of the trends found in this group, as well as across the entire sample of

ten students. Rebeca's case was also particularly informative because her mother was the most

talkative from the non-college-educated group in my sample. The other parents in this group

seemed far more uncomfortable with me and the questions I was asking, often giving very short

answers in an unsure tone. Therefore, Rebeca's mother gave me better insight into the

perspective of the non-college-educated parents in this sample. At the same time, Rebeca is also

different, in that she was the student who seemed to be making the most out of attending a

"good" suburban school, with all of its extracurricular offerings and course options. She was

heavily involved in softball, and had chosen to pursue AP classes and fill her schedule her senior

year, unlike the other students in this study, who fulfilled the minimum requirements to graduate,

and were not taking additional classes.

In this chapter, I will present three main arguments. The first is that the students in this

sample are in the process of selective acculturation, whereby people are able to assimilate to

mainstream culture while also developing and maintaining their racial and ethnic identity.

Rebeca's story conveys that she is developing a bicultural habitus because she feels comfortable

operating in a diverse, middle class suburb like Bedford, which I equate with a mainstream

setting, while also feeling comfortable in Latinx spaces, because she is developing and

maintaining her Dominican identity through a combination of family support and the presence of

a Latinx ethnic enclave next door. As scholars have questioned whether assimilation paths

correlate with social mobility, I am unsure if being on this path is helping Rebeca maintain or

improve upon the status her parents have acquired. While Rebeca was not in college yet at the time of her follow-up interview, her college planning indicates that she lacked direction and had an unrealistic understanding of what it takes to get into a top college. Therefore, although she is on the path of selective acculturation, she is by no means on a path towards future success.

Second, Rebeca is representative of the students whose parents did not attend college in that she believes in the power of education and the rhetoric of the American Dream. I argue that this blind belief detracts from to her ability to plan for her future. Students without a college-educated parent had more optimistic views of the power of a college education than those with better-educated parents, and this view was shared by their parents as well. What these parents desired most for their children was a better life and a happier life than the one they had led. The pervasiveness of the belief in the American Dream was potentially hindering the parents' ability to plan for their children's futures in a more purposeful way. These parents felt strongly that their children would be successful as long as they went to college; and because they were on a trajectory to attend the local community college, they assumed everything would be alright.

The third argument is split into two sections. In the first, I argue that despite residing in a middle-class community, Rebeca's parents are approaching her education in a way that is consistent with Lareau's (2000, 2003) findings on lower class parents. Her parents care about and believe they are doing what they can to support their daughter, but this kind of involvement is not valued by schools, and is in fact, seen as a sign of not caring. Rebeca's parents are constrained by many factors, but she feels supported by them, and knows that they believe education is very important to her future.

It has been argued that class-linked differences in parental involvement are due to differences in values, institutional discrimination, or lack of mainstream capital (Lareau, 2000).

In the final section, I present evidence of the lack of mainstream social and cultural capital on the part of Rebeca and her family, and how this harms Rebeca's schooling and her future prospects. This is not to say that Rebeca does not possess any social and cultural capital. She does the best to use whatever connections and resources she has, within her means.

Bedford: A Context Supporting the Process of Selective Acculturation

In this section, I describe how Rebeca, like the other students in this study, was on a path of selective acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). I argue that Rebeca has developed a bicultural habitus that reflects her comfort in both worlds, mainstream and Dominican, that has been supported by the location of this middle class suburb next door to a suburban ethnic enclave. The students in Bedford are being raised in a context where they are able to live among and interact with mainstream society while also making use of the cultural resources located in the neighboring suburban ethnic enclave. Rebeca, like the other students in this study, feels very comfortable in all parts of Bedford, and greatly enjoys living there. At the same time, she, like most of the other students in the sample, is developing and maintaining her Dominican-ness. Their families are ensuring the students feel comfortable navigating Dominican social circles in the US by maintaining cultural practices such as speaking Spanish in the home. In addition, they spend time in Fairview, where they can access Spanish language Catholic mass, Dominican restaurants, and hair salons. Therefore, it would appear that these students have the potential to be truly bicultural, feeling comfortable in two worlds.

Rebeca's Mother's Perspective on Bedford: Choosing Calm and Safety

In order to provide a more complete picture of the kind of *habitus* Rebeca has developed growing up in Bedford, it is important to examine the *habitus* of her mother, Sonia. Sonia's understanding of the community and her family's place in it has played an important role in

shaping Rebeca's understanding of her own place in the world. The concept of *habitus* will help highlight how Rebeca and her family feel comfortable straddling two worlds, yet had a preference for Bedford over the Dominican enclave next door. In this section, I will describe Sonia, her family, and her impressions of Bedford.

Rebeca lived with her grandmother, grandfather, mother, dad, two older brothers and their dog. Her older brothers were in their twenties (20 and 25), and one worked at a car dealership, whereas the other worked at the airport handling cargo. Rebeca's other grandmother lived next door, and she had multiple cousins who lived in Bedford and attended its schools. Rebeca's mother, Sonia, and her dad were in their teens, around age sixteen, when they came to the United States. They knew each other in the Dominican Republic, but became a couple here. They married when Sonia was just nineteen years old, and she had their older son at twenty.

When I went to their house for the parent interview, only Rebeca and Sonia were present, and I did not meet any other family members. It was a small house, so I don't think anyone else was home, or I would have heard them. It was a Saturday afternoon, and perhaps everyone was out and about. Sonia was in her mid-40s, dressed casually but put-together. She was soft-spoken and unassuming, yet she seemed comfortable talking to me and sharing details about her background. In general, the six parents who did not attend college seemed less comfortable talking with me, despite my conducting the interviews in Spanish, than the four college-educated parents, whose interviews were conducted in English. Some of the non-college educated parents seemed very uncomfortable with the interview and gave mostly one word answers, but Rebeca's mother was on the chattier side, and seemed relaxed while speaking with me. While she shared that she had learned English over the years and could get along fine without the kids translating for her, we spoke in Spanish.

As is common in these small, older homes, one enters directly into the living room. Rebeca and Sonia both came to the door and were very welcoming. The home was neat and tidy, and was decorated with traditional-style furniture and framed prints. There was no clutter or evidence of people hanging out in that room. There was no TV, and the room was set up to receive guests and have conversations, as the couch faced two sofa chairs, with a fancy glass coffee table in between. Sonia invited me to sit on the sofa and get set up for the interview in the living room.

Although I expected some of Bedford's Dominican families to have moved out to the suburbs from the city, all but one, including Rebeca's family, arrived directly to the suburbs of Long Island. They found Bedford specifically through extended family member connections that had already settled there. They had never lived in the Dominican enclave of Washington Heights, nor anywhere else in New York City. This was true of all the families but one, highlighting the recent phenomenon of immigrants bypassing cities and settling in the suburbs, and refuting the longstanding idea that immigrants arrive to cities and then move out to the suburbs after achieving a certain level of success. Sonia talked a lot about how she came from the rural countryside of the Dominican Republic, where she had to go get water from the river and use a fire stove to cook, to the suburbs of Long Island. Interestingly, she considered that a smooth transition, as both places are calm and tranquil, unlike Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, or Washington Heights. Sonia felt that the two places are similar in that sense, and so it was not hard to adapt to the quiet suburban life in Bedford. As she explained how she feels when she goes back to visit, she realized how much she appreciates what she has in Bedford. Although she enjoys visiting her family and being out in the countryside, she lamented the lack of security in the Dominican Republic, and in fact said she feels safer and more secure

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in the United States. For example, she explained, you cannot trust the police in the Dominican Republic, where sometimes a person is valued by their ability to pay. Sonia said:

> No hay justicia. Pero aquí sí me gusta por eso. Porque aquí quien la hace la paga sea quien sea. Sea grande o sea chiquito, sea quien sea. E- En nuestros países algunas veces la gente vale por lo que tiene. (There is no justice. But here there is, and that's what I like about here. Here, whoever commits the crime, pays for it. Whether they are someone big (important) or small, whoever they are. In our countries, sometimes, people's worth is based on what they have.)

She is thankful that everyone is treated equally in the US, and that whoever commits a crime is prosecuted for it, no matter who they are, who their family is, or how much money they have. It is interesting that she has not experienced any negative interactions in her everyday life here. Her skin tone is on the lighter side, but she looks Latina and speaks English with a heavy accent.

Sonia pointed out that there had been changes in the population of the community during her time living there. She said that she did know why the population had changed, "Pero vinieron mucha gente de otro lado y se mudaron aquí. Principalmente de- de la ciudad. Hay gente que yo conozco que- es de Brooklyn, que se han mudado aquí a Bedford." (But a lot of people came from someplace else and moved here. Mostly from the City. There are people I know from Brooklyn, that have moved here to Bedford.) This was surprising, given that only one of the students in the sample had moved from New York City. Sonia theorized that they had gotten fed up with the City and had decided to buy a home instead. She explained that she had no desire to ever live in the City, and only rarely went there to shop or just walk around.

Sonia had an overall positive view of the community, and said she felt comfortable in all parts. She mentioned there is a supermarket nearby, in Fairview, owned by Dominicans that carries all of the products she needs. In fact, her only complaint is that there is not a home décor store like a Macy's or Home Goods. She noted that there are lots of empty store fronts nearby, but there is no place to shop for your home. She later added that a clothing store would also be

nice. She did not like that you have to leave Bedford to do this kind of shopping, but did not imagine moving away in the future. Rebeca was also positive about Bedford. She described it by saying, "It's really quiet. Nothing really happens, but it's nice." This was true of most of the families. They had purposefully chosen to live in the suburbs, liked Bedford, and imagined staying there in the future. Their children felt similarly. Although not all of them were sure about living in Bedford for the rest of their lives, the adolescents mostly preferred the suburbs to the big city, and imagined themselves living in a similar community.

Overall, Sonia was very positive about Bedford, and like most of the other parents, called it *tranquilo* (calm), saying she did not plan to move away or back to the Dominican Republic. In fact, all of the parents in the study were very positive about the community, and few had had negative interactions with other people in Bedford. One parent talked about some problems with an elderly Italian neighbor, but these had not affected the family's overall quality of life. The parents all pictured themselves staying in Bedford in the future, except for the one family that had never intended to stay in the US and would be returning to the Dominican Republic just a few months after I met them. (The third findings chapter focuses on that family.) The parents all seemed satisfied with the community and grateful to be in the United States. This level of comfort was part of Sonia's *habitus*, and this orientation had influenced Rebeca's understanding of her place in Bedford, as we will see further below.

Interestingly, despite loving the community and feeling safe there, Rebeca's parents had been very cautious with getting to know and trusting others in the community. While she felt she and her family belong there, there was an element of distrust as well. Her mother noted that as her children made friends in school, she would first meet the parents and then go to their house to see how they live, before allowing them to go to anyone's house to play with their friends.

After this vetting process was complete, she would allow them to go for thirty minutes to an hour, preferring to keep them close to home. Rebeca concurred, saying "My mother's scared for me to go out." She did not complain about this, and happily shared that her weekends consist of hanging out at home with her family, going to church, eating out, and an occasional movie. This was true of all of the students in the study. They all talked about spending time with their families on weekends, while only half mentioned spending time with friends. Many traveled to nearby suburban communities where they had extended family, and would visit with them on the weekends as well. Rebeca's mother was the most explicit in her description of her cautious approach to monitoring her children's friends, but other parents also talked about needing to meet the families before letting their kids go to other people's houses. This is typical of Latinx families, preferring that their children play and socialize with extended family rather than strangers. Many of the students had extended family in the area, but often in other suburbs of Long Island, making it difficult for cousins to be the primary friends of their children. Most of the students reported that their parents were stricter when they were younger, and had gotten laxer now they were now in high school.

Therefore, despite residing in this community, Sonia was wary of people, and she had not developed relationships with her neighbors. The family mostly kept to themselves and socialized with family members in other suburbs or with fellow church-goers in Fairview. By not forging relationships with others in Bedford, Sonia lost the opportunity to be exposed to and acquire mainstream social and cultural capital. In a subsequent section, I will further explore the constraints to Sonia's ability to support her children in school, due to her lack of mainstream social and cultural capital.

Because the influx of Latinx people is relatively new to this community, I expected there to be more pushback from the longtime residents. I expected that the families in this study would have many examples of negative social interactions or that there were places in the community that they do not feel comfortable in. Instead, what I found is that the Dominican families in my sample were very happy with their neighborhood and its surroundings, feeling welcome and included. Sonia's habitus had been shaped by all of the positive experiences she had had in Bedford. Below, we will see how this has informed Rebeca's understanding of her place in this community. The fact that all of the families were satisfied with their experiences in Bedford may have to do with their self-selection into the study, as families who were not happy may have not wanted to talk about their negative experiences.

Feeling Comfortable in Two Worlds: Bedford and Fairview

In this section, I will describe how Rebeca has developed a habitus that includes feeling comfortable in two worlds: a mainstream middle class suburban community and a suburban ethnic enclave. Bedford provides a spatial location that enables students to live and go to school in a mainstream setting while still being able to access the cultural resources of the neighboring Dominican suburb. An interesting twist is that while the students and their families in this sample took advantage of the resources in Fairview, they do not consider that community to be a desirable place to live. Nonetheless, the students in this sample were provided with the opportunity to develop a *habitus* that feels comfortable in two contexts, thereby developing their biculturalism. However, there remains a question as to whether the students in this study are actually acquiring the mainstream social and cultural capital they are being exposed to. This will be further explored in a subsequent section, in relation to the college application process, while

this section will focus on how Rebeca has developed a *habitus* that allows her to feel comfortable in both mainstream and Latinx spaces.

Rebeca's house was located in a neighborhood adjacent to Bedford High School, towards the end of a cul-de-sac. At the end of her street, you could see the school through a chain link fence. There was a gate providing access to the campus, but it was locked and had a sign that said, "No Trespassing. Violators will be prosecuted." The neighborhood consisted of modest single-family homes built around 1925. Some had clearly been re-done or had additions built to them, creating an uneven look among the houses. The majority, however, appeared to be the original homes on small lots, one right next to the other. Rebeca's house was one of these original homes, and it looked well-cared for, just like the other homes around it. The yards were landscaped, and the houses looked neat and tidy. In fact, there was only one house that stuck out as looking abandoned when compared to the others, and Rebeca took a picture of it to share with me (Figure 10). She said with exasperation, "Yeah. And that house I don't like on this block. ___ it's right down there. I don't like it. I think it ruins everything. In this block. I don't even think- It's like everybody's house is all nice and that's just ruins." Clearly, Rebeca had strong feelings about this house and how it affected the overall look of her neighborhood. She felt pride in where she lives, and was upset that the homeowner did not appear to feel the same way. There was a sense of ownership that Rebeca exuded by feeling confident enough to criticize a neighbor that is not meeting her expectations of what her neighborhood should look like. She felt she belonged in this community enough to criticize those that were not meeting the social norms.

Figure 10. The house at the end of Rebeca's block that she complained about.

Despite her confidence in judging the neighbor's house, Rebeca was actually quite shy. After recruiting Rebeca at the High School to participate in the study, I asked her to meet me during her spring break at the Dunkin' Donuts near the school. After not responding earlier in the week, she texted me out of the blue that she would be coming to meet me with another recruited student and her little sister. When I called Rebeca over to the table where I had just wrapped up an interview, we started talking, and I immediately worried that the Carvel ice cream cake refrigerator right next to us would drown out the entire recording. She was so soft spoken and shy. I understand that she did not want to commit to meeting me without first getting a friend to come along with her. She came dressed in her softball uniform jacket, sweats and her hair pulled back in a ponytail.

The photo portion of the project proved useful in assessing the students' comfort level in their community. For the fourteen prompts provided to her, Rebeca took twenty-two pictures. Unlike six of the other students in the study, Rebeca did not include any pictures of herself, her friends, or her family (see Appendix 3 for topics the students took pictures of). The closest thing to a selfie was one picture of her wearing her softball jacket, but it only showed her upper torso without her head (Figure 11). You can see the jacket, and just a bit of her chin, and the tips of her hair brushing her shoulders. Given her shyness and quiet demeanor, I am not surprised that she did not include photos of herself. Many of the other students included pictures of their families, but Rebeca did not. She focused on places such as the school and softball field, and nearby strip malls. For Rebeca, her participation in softball speaks to her level of comfort and integration into Bedford High School.

Figure 11. Rebeca wearing her Bedford High School softball jacket.

Out of the fourteen pictures prompts I gave to the students, three of them asked students

to take pictures of places they do not feel comfortable in or feel they don't belong in. Like all of

the other students, Rebeca had no pictures for the three negative prompts. She did refer to the

picture of the eye-sore house as a place she does not like, but not as a place she feels

uncomfortable in. On the other hand, there were a couple of recurring themes regarding places

where Rebeca did feel comfortable. Of the twenty-two pictures, two were of the front of the

school, three were of the softball fields at the high school, and four were of softball related

memorabilia, further reinforcing the fact that Rebeca's school life revolved around her

participation in sports. Because sports were such an integral part of Bedford High School's

reputation, Rebeca's participation shows just how much she has embraced the Bedford

community. Her experiences in this well-regarded activity contributed to the development of her habitus, which sees Bedford as a place where she belongs.

In addition to feeling comfortable at school and on the softball fields, Rebeca felt comfortable in her residential neighborhood and in the local strip malls surrounding the high school. All of her pictures were taken within a five-block radius. She took three different residential street pictures and four different strip mall pictures, highlighting the bagel place, the movie theater, an empty parking lot with flowering trees bordering the road, and a row of empty storefronts where she and her friends hang out after school. The bagel place and movie theater have dated signage, and the buildings look old (Figure 12). While not dilapidated or dirty, the places looked like they had seen better days, and had not been updated in a very long time. Seven of ten students took pictures of nearby suburban business and strip malls as places they feel comfortable in, attesting to their comfort level in Bedford. Six of the ten students also took pictures of residential streets and homes as well. Based on this, it would appear the students in this study are in an environment where they feel comfortable and could therefore potentially acquire mainstream social and cultural capital. In a later section, I will delve into whether Rebeca has acquired the mainstream social and cultural capital that is helpful in the college application process.

Figure 12. The movie theater sign and strip mall adjacent to Bedford High School.

However, there is evidence that the students in this study may not be integrating with mainstream students in a meaningful way, thereby limiting their acquisition of mainstream social and cultural capital. Similar to the other students in the study, Rebeca loved the diversity of Bedford High School, yet her friends were all "Spanish," from a variety of Latin American countries. She was the only student to say she did speak Spanish with her friends. Therefore, despite being in a diverse context with the potential to gain mainstream social and cultural capital, the students in this study were not gaining that capital from their close friends. However, all of the students did say that their classes were diverse, and the Dominican students were still interacting with non-Latinx students. While the students in the study were selecting their Latinx

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peers for their close friendships, they were still living and going to school in a diverse context that could, arguably, help them gain mainstream social and cultural capital.

It was surprising to hear all of the students refer to each other as "Spanish," rather than some of the more common pan-ethnic names like Latino or Hispanic. However, adopting a pan-ethnic identity is not uncommon among Dominicans (Itzigsohn, 2009). What it signifies, is assimilation into American society, as this is a label that has been created in the U.S. to combine a group of people from a large number of countries, that may not have much in common (Tran, 2008). As Itzigsohn (2009) explains so succinctly, "Becoming American means becoming Latino" (p.189).

At the same time, Rebeca was also developing a habitus that feels comfortable in a majority Dominican context, and acquiring Dominican social and cultural capital, by taking advantage of the suburban ethnic enclave right next door. Rebeca's family attended church in either Bedford or Fairview, depending on whether her grandparents were joining them, in which case they would head to Fairview for services in Spanish. This was true of half of the students in the study. Eight of them talked about going to church, mostly Catholic services, and five of them attend in Fairview because they wanted Spanish language services. Rebeca explained what is different about Fairview by saying it is "more, like, alive. There's like a lot of people out there. A lot of Spanish people." Despite this, Rebeca prefers the quiet of Bedford, as did all but one of the students. While Fairview served as a place to connect to their heritage and maintain cultural practices such as attending Catholic mass in Spanish, the students did not want to be a part of that community all of the time. In fact, many spoke of Fairview in a negative manner, saying it is too loud, and conveying that they did not want to live there. One student even accused students from Fairview of coming to Bedford to cause trouble and pick fights. This is an interesting

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juxtaposition, because the students are benefitting from this neighboring community, but they do not want to be a part of it. The fact that they do feel comfortable there, though, does support the idea that they are developing a sense of biculturalism. They feel competent in their ability to interact and engage with Dominicans in this ethnic enclave, showing their cultural competence, and their acquisition of non-dominant social and cultural capital.

Another way the students were developing and maintaining their cultural heritage was through the use of the Spanish language with their families. Rebeca's parents spoke to her in Spanish, and she would respond in English, since they understand "pretty well." However, Rebeca's grandparents only speak Spanish, and she translated for them. Sonia says Rebeca does not speak Spanish as well as her two older sons, and she wants her to practice more. While her Spanish may not be at the level her mother would like, Rebeca was still fluent enough to maintain the connection with her grandparents, helping her stay connected to her Dominican-ness. This supports Tran's (2010) findings that using Spanish at home significantly helps retain Spanish language skills.

In summary, Rebeca and her family have taken advantage of Bedford's location. They felt comfortable in the mainstream setting of their community, and had not had any negative experiences there. In addition, they were using the cultural resources available in neighboring Fairview, allowing Rebeca to develop a habitus that includes a sense of belonging in both mainstream and majority Dominican spaces. Based on previous research on assimilation, Rebeca could be considered on a path of selective acculturation.

Optimism as Hindrance: The Drawback of the Belief in the American Dream

In order to assess their understanding of what it takes to be successful, and how education fits into that understanding, I asked the students and their parents to share their thoughts on what

they think they need to be successful in today's world. I felt it was important to broaden the question and not assume that they felt education was necessary for future success, but instead, give them the opportunity to come up with their own ideas. My findings provide an interesting contrast to Mickelson's (1990) typology of concrete and abstract attitudes towards education. She teased out these two kinds of attitudes to help explain the paradox of seemingly high aspirations yet low academic achievement of African American children. The majority of the children in her study, regardless of race, had positive abstract views on education, but the African American children had negative concrete views, which she offered as an explanation for their lower achievement. She argued that they had seen the harsh realities of a minimal return on education from their families and communities, and so, they did not excel in school. However, I found differences in abstract views on education, among the students with college-educated parents versus those without. Interestingly, the students who had a college-educated parent were far more skeptical of the American Dream, as were their parents. The students without a college-educated parent were more likely to have positive abstract views, and to believe in the power of education as the key to their future success. This viewpoint was shared by their parents as well. Therefore, this calls into question whether most students have positive abstract views, as Mickelson had previously reported. Despite the differences in abstract views between groups, I found that the concrete views on education were similar across all the students in this study. The students all talked about school and the way they approach their schoolwork in similar ways. In this section, I argue that Rebeca, who is representative of the other students whose parents did not attend college, is being hindered by her deep belief in the power of education. Both Rebeca and her mother are putting too much faith in the American Dream, to the detriment of Rebeca's college planning.

Rebeca's Belief in the Power of Education for Future Success

Rebeca was a sophomore in high school during her first interview. When asked what she needs to be successful in this world, she answered, "Good grades... A goal. To reach it… And just stay out of trouble." The first part of her answer is of course related to education, and is part of the mainstream ideology that tells us that if you work hard and get good grades, you will be successful. The second part of the answer also falls in line with the American dream rhetoric of setting goals and working towards them. It was not until two years later, in her follow up interview, that I was able to truly make sense of the staying out of trouble part of her answer. As a senior, she admitted that she had been friends with the "bad kids" at school. She assured me she had not done any "bad things" herself, but she had witnessed "a lot," and had decided to find new friends. It makes sense that she was questioning her friendships at the time of the first interview, and therefore thought that staying out of trouble would lead to future success. Nevertheless, her answer reflects a belief in the power of education if she believes that all she needs are good grades in order to be successful.

> At her follow up interview as a senior in high school, Rebeca answered:
>
> A high school diploma. And, I guess some job experiences. And, doing something like community service. If like you don't, then you haven't been doing anything. Because some people- I guess they make their resu- like- friends- some of [my] friends that need help to do their resume, I'm like, "Have you done anything?" They're like, "No." I'm like, "Oh. Well, this looks great."

Her answer was geared towards college admissions in terms of rounding out one's resume with other experiences such as those in the workplace or time spent volunteering. She was aware that a strong academic record isn't enough to impress colleges, and even criticized her friends who do not have other activities to add to their resume. She did not delve into what you get out of the experiences, but instead, focused on how it looks on a resume. In other words, the experiences

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are just a means to an end, and that end is getting into college. It was surprising that Rebeca felt confident enough to call out what was wrong with her friends' resumes, given her shy demeanor and the fact that she did not have much more to add to her resume herself, other than softball. Two years later, Rebeca's answer still reflected a strong belief in the power of education as the first thing on her list was a high school diploma. However, that is quite a low level of education to consider as enough to be successful in today's world. This answer reflects a certain level of naïveté about the return of a high school diploma in the current labor market that, I think, narrowed her college application process, which will be further discussed in a section below. Her faith in the power of a high school diploma may have come from the fact that her family had done quite well for itself despite limited formal education. They managed to buy into this nice suburban community and live a comfortable life. Unfortunately, this may have been backfiring in terms of motivating Rebeca to learn about the college landscape and challenge herself to think beyond the local community college.

Rebeca's ideas about what she needs to be successful in today's world were practical and part of the mainstream rhetoric. These core American values are focused on the individual, and therefore it is up to him or her to get the good grades, set and reach their goals, and earn that diploma. While education was first on her list, she did include other practical ideas like setting goals. Only one of the six students with non-college-educated parents answered that education was the only thing one needs to be successful in today's world. The other five students all included other ideas on their list. While some of the other five students did say education, they also included a variety of things that were all focused on the individual, such as people skills, charisma, confidence, determination, and open-mindedness (see Appendix A for answers to what they need to be successful in today's world).

Rebeca's Mother on Future Success: What you need is a "good education"

Exploring the parents' perspective is useful because it helps us understand the context within which the students' answers lie, since their understanding of what it takes to be successful surely influences their children's understanding. When I asked Sonia what she thinks her daughter needs to be successful in this world, she answered, "Una buena educación. Ah, un buen- una buena profesión. Ah ha. Y, bueno. Y es todo- y tener un buen trabajo después. Y- una- Una vida honesta." (A good education. Uh, a good- a good profession. Uh huh. And well. And that is all- and later on have a good job. And- an- an honest life.) She began with education, which fits into mainstream rhetoric around schooling and success. Due to the family's lack of experience with a college degree and its value in the workplace, Sonia's list of what Rebeca needs is vague and fits into the mainstream ideology. Given that neither parent has a college education, yet they are still able to live in Bedford and give their kids the opportunity to attend a good high school, it is no surprise that they would believe that if Rebeca goes to college and finishes (unlike her brother), she will do better than they did. I found that when parents do not have experience with translating a college degree into a job, they are more optimistic about what that degree can get them, potentially overestimating the ease with which educational credentials can be converted into a good job.

In the case of Rebeca and the other students without a college-educated parent, their ideas about what they need to be successful fit with Mickelson's findings that abstract views are positive across almost all students. The students in this group were very optimistic and bought into the mainstream ideology regarding hard work and self-made success. We will see that this was not the case for the students with a college-educated parent in the next chapter. This case also calls into question the definition of a "good education," as that is a relative term. Sonia's

unfamiliarity with the labor market comes through in her vague answer regarding what her daughter needs to be successful. A "good" education and "good" profession are true and honest desires for her daughter, but they are not clear and concrete things that Rebeca can plan for. It is unclear how her mother would evaluate her daughter's future success. Perhaps a "good" job is anything in an office, as opposed to the kind of manual labor Rebeca's parents do.

A Parent's Hope for a Better Life and Happiness for her Children: "There's still plenty of time for everything"

What Sonia wants most for her children is closely connected to her deep belief in the American Dream. Because she feels everything will be all right if Rebeca goes to college, she has adopted a hands-off approach to Rebeca's life and timeline. She wants Rebeca's life to be different than hers, and she insists she take her time and follow her heart, two things that are rarely valued in a competitive, market-based society. To Rebeca's mother, the freedom to follow one's passions, and take the time to figure them out, is what she has worked so hard to provide for her children. Unfortunately, this stance may, again, be working against Rebeca's ability to maintain or surpass what her family has achieved.

When looking to the future, Sonia just wants her daughter to be able to make her dreams come true. She said:

> Ah, bueno. Cuando ella se gradúe, ella- yo quiero que vaya a la universidad, que cumpla su sueño que- por lo menos- que ella quiere ser, um- doctor. Doctor. Doctor y doctora. Y-mm Yo quiero que cumpla su sueño. Hasta que lo haya realizado que luche porque hay que hacer lo que su corazón le diga. Pero yo, lo que quiero es que ella se me gradúe de la escuela y que haga su universidad y que después que ella piensa en su vida. Que todavía hay mucho tiempo para todo." (Ah well. When she graduates, she- I want her to go to college, to fulfill her dream that- at least-what she wants to be, um- a doctor. Doctor. Doctor and doctor. And- mm -I want her to fulfill her dream. Until she has reached her goal, she needs to fight because you have to do what your heart tells you. But what I want, is for her to graduate from school, go to university and then think about her life. There is still plenty of time for everything.)

Rebeca had shared with me that she was interested in sports medicine because it brings her two passions together. Her mother was unfamiliar with the field, and therefore saw that position as a doctor, when in reality, Rebeca was looking into being a physical therapist in sports medicine. There was little understanding on Sonia's part of what it takes to become a medical doctor and the number of years of schooling, not to mention residency. Sonia did acknowledge that Rebeca will need to fight for what she wants, but again, this is very abstract. There was also no sense of urgency in terms of figuring out her life path and career. Sonia had a romanticized view of college, and deeply desired that experience for her daughter, because that opportunity was not there for her.

When I asked Rebeca if her parents wanted her to be something specific when she grows up, she concurred that they wanted her to be a doctor, in addition to a couple of other careers that did not seem to fit her interests at all. Rebeca said:

> Um. My dad wants me to go to the D.R. and to go to college over there to be a doctor. But I don't want to go over there. Because- I [don't even] understand anything. Um. Because I want to go to Columbia University in New York City and- I don't want to be a doctor, but my mother, and like my family, they want me to be, like, be either a hair salonist or a model or one of those. But I don't like ___. Yeah. [laughs] I'm like, "Why ___ be a hair salonist?

This was surprising to hear, given Rebeca's interests in sports and medicine, and the fact that her mother had expressed her desire for Rebeca to become a doctor. This may be partly due to the fact that she did not seem that interested in stereotypical female things like makeup and hair. Rebeca wore no makeup, and simply pulled her hair back each time I met with her. Many of the other female students not only wore makeup, but they also took pictures of their vanities, or of themselves dressed up to go out. It is possible that how she managed her appearance did not fit into her family's expectations of a female Latinx, and they suggested modeling or hairstyling as a way to encourage her to do these kinds of things. All but three of the students in the sample

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said their parents did not have a specific career in mind for them in the future. Of the three, two

of the parents wanted their daughters to become doctors and the other a lawyer. But it is not

evident that they knew what it would take to attain this.

When I talked to Sonia about her daughter's future, she always came back to the idea that

there is time for everything, and so Rebeca should focus on her education first. She never

explicitly talked about marriage and having children, but she alluded to this by saying things like

"first graduate from high school, then go to university, and then think about your life." This

sentiment may also apply to jumping right into the workforce, because that was what she had to

do to help support her family since she was very young. She believes that education is the key to

Rebeca having a better life than she had. She explained:

> Sí. Tiempo hay para todo. Y se prepare para que mañana tenga una mejor vida que la que
> yo tuve. Que tuvimos que trabajar desde pequeña. No pudimos ir- a universidad y todo
> porque tenía que ayudar a mi familia. (Yes. There is time for everything. She needs to
> prepare herself so that tomorrow she can have a better life than I had. Because we had to
> work since we were little. We were not able to go- to university and all that because I had
> to help my family.)

It is as if she had to grow up too quickly, and she wants Rebeca to take her time and relish in the

opportunity she will have to continue her studies and go to college. Her mother was pushing

back against Latinx customs and social timetables that dictate marrying and having children at an

early age. This is why she has worked so hard to provide a different life for Rebeca.

Sonia's desires are representative of the other students whose parents also did not attend

college. All five of the other parents said they wanted their children to have a better life than they

did, and spoke of the hardships they had endured. It is clear that they have worked very hard to

provide a good life for their children, but hoped that their children would be able to have an

easier time in life than they did. They also tended to have a more optimistic view of what hard

work and a college degree would give their children in return, believing in the American Dream

and displaying immigrant optimism. Lastly, they all focused on happiness as a desired outcome for their children's futures. In particular, they wanted their children to find a job that made them happy. All of the non-college educated parents were unhappy with their jobs and desired something different for their children. It was their hope that they find something that makes them happy, because "hay que hacer lo que su corazón le diga" (you have to do what your heart tells you), as Sonia put it.

In addition, this idea that there is time to figure things out takes a lot of pressure off of Rebeca. She was not being pushed to enter the workforce or to even make concrete future plans. This was also a common theme across the non-college-educated parents (see Appendix B for what the parents want for their children's futures). These parents would tell their children that they can take their time, take their time figuring out their career and what makes them happy. These students were not being pressured to contribute financially to their families, and so the students felt they could take their time figuring out what they wanted to do with their lives. It appears that the parents felt economically secure enough to not need their children to work. The non-college educated parents had to take whatever job they could get in order to provide for their families, and because they were doing ok and felt relatively secure, they wanted their children to be able to take the time to find their own path. On the other hand, the parents with a college education had a less romantic idea of their children's futures, and worried about the realities of the labor market (see Appendix B for what parents want for their children's futures). Although they did not seem to be pressuring their children a lot more than the non-college educated parents, they were always telling their kids about the diminishing returns on a bachelor's degree and the competitiveness of getting a job. Only one parent, who went to college and is a nurse, was truly pressuring her daughter to get through school quickly. This parent wanted her daughter

to find an accelerated program where you get a bachelor and master degree in five years due to their financial constraints. This student was well aware of the pressure, and although she felt it was unfair that she could not take her time to find herself in college, she accepted her mother's financial situation and was looking to get into the workforce as quickly as possible. The other parents were much more laid back, and did not put this kind of pressure on their children. This stands out when comparing to the stereotype of the suburban parents pushing their children to excel in school and become overachievers (Demerath, 2009).

This case presents more evidence supporting the belief in the power of education as a guarantee for a good future. Rebeca's ideas about good grades and goal-setting are the standard mainstream ideas about getting ahead in life, do well in school and work hard by setting goals and reaching them. This supports the abstract views I would have expected from a family with limited experience with college degrees. The other non-college-educated parents had similar answers (see Appendix A for answers to what they need to be successful in today's world) that revolved around the American Dream rhetoric that if you work hard, you will succeed. Unfortunately, this belief in the power of education had led Sonia to take a detached approach to her daughter's future plans, to Rebeca's detriment. Sonia believed she was securing the American Dream for her daughter by giving her the time and space to figure out what she wants to do in life, which puts her at a disadvantage when compared to middle-class families who are purposeful and calculating in their plans for their children's futures (Demerath, 2009; Lareau, 2000).

Parental Involvement: Mismatch of Parenting Style with a Middle Class Community

While Rebeca's mother valued education and believed it is the key to the future success of her daughter, she did not act in ways that middle-class parents do, that then lead to advantages

for their children. In fact, despite living in a middle-class community, none of the parents in this study, not even those with a college degree, acted in a way that would be considered "good" parenting from the perspective of the institution of school, which is set up to privilege those with mainstream cultural capital. Lareau (2000) explored these differences in parents' approach to schooling in a middle class and lower class community. She explored three possible explanations for the differences in how parents get involved in their children's education: how much they value education, institutional discrimination, and the role of class in the kind of cultural capital parents possess. In the following section, I will argue that despite approaching the education of her daughter in a way consistent with what Lareau found was common among parents in the lower class community, Sonia cared deeply about her daughter's education and felt welcome at the high school. And indeed, Rebeca felt supported by her mother and dad, and felt that they also value education. Therefore, I concur that lack of mainstream cultural capital is what explains Sonia's approach to her daughter's schooling. This will be further explored in the following section. In this section, I will focus on the kind of parental involvement Rebeca's parents provided and how Rebeca perceived this. Lareau (2003) later expanded her work on class differences, and named these parenting styles, calling middle-class parenting "concerted cultivation," because those parents are purposeful in cultivating their child's development, and lower-class parenting "accomplishment of natural growth," because those parents separate the adult world from the child's world and let them develop more naturally. While the accomplishment of natural growth is not valued in schools, it is important to note that Rebeca felt supported by her parents and felt they value education greatly.

Supporting Rebeca's Education: Constraints to Parental Involvement

Rebeca's mother had faced significant constraints to her involvement in her children's education, but she had done what she could under those circumstances. From her perspective, she had done everything she could and was very involved; however, from the perspective of a mainstream schooling institution, she had not been involved in the way that is considered appropriate, especially for this middle-class community. Below I will show how Sonia has tried to help her children in the best way she can.

Rebeca's parents had been in Bedford for twenty-two years, the longest of anyone in the study, and her mother had interesting observations about the demographic changes the community and its schools had experienced. She recalled that when her older boys were in elementary school, there were few Latinx people in the community, and it was a big struggle to find help for their homework. She was learning English along with them. She shared, "Para hacer la tarea con- con los muchachos. E- Como [principalmente] con David era difícil. Pobrecito. Casi- Yo sin saber casi inglés." (To do the homework with the kids, especially with David was difficult. Poor thing. Almost- I barely knew any English.) She did not recall there being an "ESL program" or teachers who spoke Spanish to be able to help her out, but she did find a Head Start program, and was able to enroll the other kids in that, better preparing them for school. Despite the language barrier and her unfamiliarity with the school system in the United States, she was able to find a program to help her children. Even with these challenges early on, she raved about the elementary school and reminisced, "Y ese escuela era encantadora. A mí me encantaba como __ trabajan." (And that school was charming. I loved the work they did there.) Sonia did not expect the school to support her kids in Spanish and instead, struggled through it. It did not occur to her to go to the school and ask for resources or demand support for her children as they acquired English. There was no sense of entitlement about the services a school is supposed to

provide, and so she did what she could within her means. This outright faith in schools to do what is best for your child by lower-class parents was also reported by Lareau (2000).

As her boys got older, though, she recalled there were big problems at the high school. She shared, "Se ponían a- ehm- había mucho violencia. Venían otros muchachos de otro lado y se ponían por allí a pelear. Pero después ya- como de tres- tres, cuatro años atrás, todo está más tranquilo, normal." (They would- eh- there was a lot of violence. Kids from other places would come and start fights here. But then after that- then like three, four years ago, now everything is more quiet and normal.) She could not offer a theory as to why that had happened or why it had gotten better. Sonia was just grateful that her children had never gotten involved in any of these problems. She remembers thinking, "Ai, Dios mío que ___ que todo se arregla porque- todavía Rebeca no estaba en la high school. No había empezado." (Oh, my God, I hope that everything gets fixed because- Rebeca still was not in high school. She had not begun.) As the safety problems disappeared, her worry about sending Rebeca to that school disappeared as well. She shared, "Sí. Pero ahora sí, veo que hay mucha seguridad" (But now, yes, I see there is a lot of security), and school officials keep the gate locked, so access from her neighborhood directly to the school campus had been taken away. Sonia then felt confident sending her daughter there. She said there were fewer incidents and more security guards present. In fact, she said she was vigilant, and would contact the school security if she saw kids hanging out on her street. She cared about the safety of her children, and saw this as an appropriate area to get involved in. She felt comfortable contacting the school about security concerns, but again, she did not act in the same way regarding educational concerns. Again, there is that belief that the school knows best regarding matters of education, similar to what Lareau (2000) found.

This was an unexpected, and perhaps inaccurate, view of the school, given some of the recent happenings that the students had shared with me. In fact, on a day I was meeting another student at the Dunkin' Donuts near the high school, that student told me that there had been yet another bomb threat, and they had spent the day out on the fields. And there had recently been an incident at a football game involving a gun and students from a neighboring school district. In response, Bedford had changed evening games to the daytime to help with safety. Therefore, it appears that although Sonia was concerned about safety, she was not staying informed about the goings-on at the high school. I imagine that the school has been communicating with parents regarding these incidents, and Sonia seemed unaware of them.

Ironically, Rebeca's mother had a positive opinion on the communication from the high school to the parents. She explained that they had an automated system to call parents and remind them about events. She found this very helpful and commended them for their persistence with contacting parents, not giving up until someone picked up the phone. She said:

> Allí a mí me gusta porque- bueno me gusta la High School. Me gusta allá a Bedford porque ellos están atentos a todo. Si hay un meeting ellos te llaman hasta que tu contestes. "Hay un meeting mañana." "Hay un deporte mañana." (I like it over there because- Well, I like the High School. I like Bedford because they are attentive to everything. If there's a meeting, they call you until you answer. "There's a meeting tomorrow." "There's a sporting event tomorrow.")

Overall, the parents without a college education were far more satisfied with the schools in Bedford than the parents with a degree. When I asked Sonia if she felt welcome and comfortable at the school she emphatically answered, "O, claro que si." (Oh, of course, yes.) This supports Lareau's (2000) finding that the parents in the lower-class community did feel welcome at the school, thereby excluding this as a reason for why those parents were not as involved as the middle-class parents.

Bedford High School is considered a good suburban school and has the sports program to prove it. It is known for sports, and has plaque after plaque on the different buildings and in the commons, commemorating wins at various levels and for a variety of sports. However, most of the plaques are for male teams. Nonetheless, sports are an important part of the school identity, and participation in them shows support for the integration of the students in this study to both the Bedford community and High School, as they are public and a source of solidarity. High school sports programs can also be integrative in suburban communities, bringing everyone together for a single cause. It is clear that Rebeca felt a lot of pride from participating in this program, and felt connected to the school because of it. She took five pictures relating to her involvement in sports, including several of her sports memorabilia (Figure 13) and uniforms, showing her commitment to and passion for playing on the Bedford softball team. Sports were referenced in half of the students' pictures, either depictions of the sport the student participated in, or of the ways the school honors the sports achievements of its students (see Appendix C for topics the students took pictures of). In addition to the pictures, most of the students also talked about attending sports events, and school spirit was a common theme as well. Clearly, the students enjoyed attending Bedford High School and showed their pride in a variety of ways. Two other students played sports, including the one male student in the sample, Rodrigo, who was on the wrestling team, and also included several pictures related to his participation in that sport. Participation in sports, either by joining a team or just rooting for fellow students shows how the Dominican students in this study were becoming part of the Bedford community.

Figure 13. Rebeca's softball memorabilia.

Despite the fact that softball was a big part of Rebeca's identity and most of her free time

revolved around team practice and games, her parents were usually unable to attend the games.

For school events, she shared that if her dad was unable to attend, her mother would go. But

when it comes to her softball games, her parents did not show up. Rebeca talked about her last

season, saying:

> Um. I mean, last year was alright. It wasn't- Like my brothers would come. Or my
> cousins. But __ my mother and dad usually ne- Well, my dad never comes to my games
> because he's always working. And my mother, when she has a chance, she'll bring me
> like water or something. But- not really. Just my cousins that go to school, maybe they'll
> come.

Rebeca did not seem to judge her parents for this, and instead felt guilty that they work so hard to

provide her with a good life. Luckily, she did have her brothers and cousins who were able to

support her athletic endeavors. All of the students reported that their parents were able to attend conferences, but outside of that, they rarely went to the high school. This stands in contrast to the suburban soccer mother stereotype of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2003) where a parent gets very involved in their child's extracurricular activities. Here, the community was middle-class but the parents of the students in my study had neither the resources nor the inclination to hover over their children. Sonia was constrained by her work schedule, leaving Rebeca to fend for herself.

Based on the level of parental involvement Sonia displayed, it is probable that she was not meeting the implicit expectations of Bedford High School and the middle-class community it resides in. She deferred to the professionals at the school and assumed they would do what is best for her children. It was not in her realm of possibilities to advocate for her children in the way that has come to be seen as good and appropriate parental involvement. It is likely that the school considers Sonia to be uninvolved in her child's education, despite the fact that she cares deeply about Rebeca's education.

Feeling Supported Despite her Parents' Limitations and Constraints

It is important to explore Rebeca's perspective and not take Sonia's words at face value. Whether or not Rebeca felt supported by her family is just as important as what her parents actually did or said. We know that supporting Rebeca in her schooling had been a challenge due to her parents' work schedules, the language barrier, and a general lack of experience with the American educational system. Now we will look at how their involvement was perceived by Rebeca.

Rebeca's parents' ability to help her with her homework was limited. She was only able to ask her parents for Spanish homework help. She did not make much of this, and assured me

that there was afterschool help offered by the teachers, and that did not need her parents to help her. She did mention that her older brothers were also available as resources when she needed help in any subject outside of Spanish.

When I asked her whether her family asks about school, she said, "Yeah. Sometimes. If- Like, during the report card season, like when they come ___. That's when they ask me. Or when, like- I don't know. Just sometimes. Not always. But- Yeah. I'm always doing [pretty well]." She seemed to justify the low frequency of their inquiries by explaining that she was doing well in high school, and therefore did not need to be checked up on. It is almost as if she knew that her parents could check in more often, but she was quick to make up an excuse for them. This is consistent with what Lareau (2000) found of lower-class parents. They tended to rely on their children for information and so Rebeca's parents would ask about her grades once the report card arrived.

Rebeca's parents valued education, but were not familiar enough with the educational system and its demands to be able to check up on their daughter and make sure she was on the right track. For example, the school changed to an online system for grades, and it was up to the parents to set up a portal for themselves. Rebeca's parents did not know about the change, and it was up to Rebeca to decide when to set it up for them, and give them access to her school records. Again, Rebeca's parents were over-relying on their daughter to provide information regarding her education. It did not occur to them to get a schedule of the grading periods, or to ask her where her grades were, after not receiving them in the mail. She explained that "none of the parents know about electronic stuff," and it was really easy to get away with not giving them the information. Rebeca said:

> I think I waited until like last month to make a parent portal, where you see all your grades and all that. So. Um. We made it. And I just told her- Like- I just wanted to see if I

passed all my classes. And I did. So, I was like, - so __ You could see my- like you could see attendances and all that, if they cut class or anything. So, I was like, "You can see it. Every time you want to see it, I'll just log in." But- I'm a good kid, so- yeah.

Basically it was up to her to decide whether to let her parents receive the school's communication. Whereas some students would perhaps have delayed signing up as a way to hide grades from their parents, I got the impression that Rebeca just had not bothered, and because her parents were not on top of grading periods and the specifics of when grades come out, they did not know when to ask her about the grades. This was true of the other students as well. They all shared that their parents made inquiries, usually daily, about school, but they were vague and general. All of the parents stressed the importance of education and the students were receiving those messages, but they were not involved in the details of their children's high school education. I concur with Lareau (2000) that this situation is further exacerbated by the lack of social networks. Sonia did not have other Bedford High School parents in her social circles that could potentially help keep her informed. As previously explained, Sonia was suspicious of strangers, and had not connected with others in Bedford. They would spend their weekends socializing with family in other nearby suburban communities instead. Even if those family members had teenagers, they would not know the routines and expectations at Bedford High School.

While Rebeca's parents cared about education and think it is important, they were unable to provide concrete help or advice, due to their lack of familiarity with the U.S. educational system. I asked Rebeca what her parents say to her about her education. She said:

> Oh. My dad's always like, um, when I have any opportunity just to take it. Even if I'm bad at it. Just do it because you never know what it can do in the future, like, to help you out.

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While this is good advice about getting the most out of every opportunity, it did not provide specific actions that Rebeca should take to reach her goals. Once again, her parents care, but they just do not know how to be involved in a meaningful way.

In summary, Rebeca's parents were limited in their ability to be involved in her education, which is consistent with what Lareau (2000, 2003) found with lower-class parents. In her study (2000), the complaints about the school centered on non-academic issues such as the use of bad words or the length of the lunch period. For Sonia, her concerns were about safety. Lareau (2000) also found that lower-class parents relied on their children to receive information about the school, instead of other adults. Rebeca's parents relied on their daughter to provide access to her grades. This study adds the student perspective by including how Rebeca perceives her parents' involvement. While she felt they value education and care about her, she was aware of their limitations. In the following section, I will further explore one of the possible reasons for this approach to Rebeca's schooling, the role of mainstream cultural and social capital.

Mainstream Social and Cultural Capital

In this section, I will show how Rebeca and her family lacked the mainstream social and cultural capital to help Rebeca make the most of her education in this "good" suburban community, and how this hindered her ability to plan for the future. As Lareau (2000) argued, parents' actions are based on the resources they have access to, and these resources come from their education level, socioeconomic status, and job status. As we saw above, Rebeca's parents do value education and felt welcome at the school. Therefore, capital is the best explanation for why her family does what they do in regards to Rebeca's education. Below we will see some of the issues that this lack of social and cultural capital caused for Rebeca. We will also see how she did her best to be resourceful and find opportunities, within her means. While the school

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could have potentially stepped in to fill in these gaps in Rebeca's social and cultural capital, the guidance counselor was unable to do that for her. Despite attending this well-resourced suburban school, Rebeca was unable to turn that into advantages in her educational experience.

Parental Lack of Mainstream Social and Cultural Capital

In this section, I will share a couple of examples of how Rebeca's parents lacked mainstream social and cultural capital. Due to this, Rebeca missed out on opportunities that were available to her, because she lived and went to school in this "good" suburban community. In addition, they were giving their daughter advice that may not be advantageous for her, because it was coming from a lack of understanding how college works in the United States. Despite the fact that they cared about their daughter and her education, they were potentially harming Rebeca's ability to maintain the progress that her parents have been able to make in this country.

It would be expected that middle-class parents living in Bedford would push their high school children to take advantage of the school's resources, since that is a common reason for buying into these communities. In Rebeca's case, her parents could have pushed her to round out her resume and explore something outside of softball. Even their reasons for Rebeca participating in softball show their lack of mainstream cultural capital in regards to the college application process. Sonia's philosophy revolved around the idea of keeping children busy and out of trouble. She said, "Me gusta, sí. Porque es mejor que esten en algunas actividades porque así no están pensando en otra cosa." (I like it, yes. Because it is better that they are in some activities so they are not thinking about other things.) As is true with most parents of a teenager, Sonia was implying that she wanted to keep Rebeca occupied and away from boys and drugs. She appreciates that the school had many options to choose from and felt that this keeps kids out of trouble. Therefore, Rebeca played softball throughout her high school career. However, there

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was no discussion of how her participation in softball would look on a college application. Her mother showed she is involved in Rebeca's sports activities because she shared with me the game results from the day before, and clearly kept up with how the team was doing. Only one of the other parents talked about participating in extra-curricular activities in this way. Rodrigo's dad talked about his son's participation in wrestling because it had helped him channel the extra energy he had when he was younger, and therefore had had a very positive impact on his son. The other parents did not talk about the huge variety of offerings this high school has, nor pushed their kids to take advantage of these opportunities. None of the parents considered this in regards to bulking up their college applications with extracurricular activities either. Despite attending a well-regarded suburban school with a large variety of extra-curricular activities to choose from, most of the students were not taking advantage of these opportunities as much as Rebeca, who could still have expanded her participation.

Another example of how her parents lacked the mainstream cultural capital that would help Rebeca with the college application process was her dad's advice to her regarding where to go to college. Rebeca's dad wished she would go to college in the Dominican Republic. When I asked why, she mused, "I guess it's cheaper over there. But I don't want to go." Rebeca had a lot of reasons for not wanting to go to college there, the first being that she did not know anybody there and did not like being surrounded by "Spanish people," because all they do is speak Spanish. She further explained that she "doesn't know Spanish like that," meaning she did not feel comfortable enough speaking Spanish to be surrounded by monolingual Spanish speakers, nor to receive instruction in Spanish. Rebeca also felt that the Dominican Republic is a "mess" and "not organized like here," so she would find it hard to adapt to their "weird schedules." Her final complaint was that there is no diversity there, so she would not meet people from Europe,

for example. Her biggest fear was that she would end up marrying a Dominican man, which she did not want to do. This highlights the difference between feeling comfortable in Latinx or Dominican spaces in the US versus in the Dominican Republic. As we will see in Chapter 7, the skills useful in an American Latinx setting may not transfer well to a Dominican one.

Clearly, Rebeca had strong opinions about what her experience of going to college in the Dominican Republic would be like. Given the realities of getting a degree abroad and then returning to the US to work, Rebeca's dad did not understand the implications of that decision and how that could disadvantage Rebeca in the long run. He was only thinking about the practicality of it being much cheaper, while Rebeca believed she would not be able to adapt to such a different context. One of the potential disadvantages of going to college in the Dominican Republic was brought up by another student, Alicia. Her parents attended college in the US, but her older sister had returned to the Dominican Republic for college, and she was considering it as well. However, she pointed out that the "connections" she would gain there would not transfer back to the US, where she eventually wanted to live and work. Therefore, Alicia was leaning against going there for college. In addition to Alicia, the sisters Narcisa and Valquiria, one of whom will be featured in the third findings chapter, always planned on going to college in the Dominican Republic, because their family would be moving back there. What is interesting is that neither Rebeca nor the sisters talked about the transferring of social capital as a drawback, while Alicia, whose parents did go to college, did bring that up as a concern. It is possible that Alicia had a better understanding of what benefits come from a college degree such as social connections, because her parents had had that experience. Sadly, this may not hold true for disadvantaged students. Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) found that a moderately-selective four-year institution did not help low-income students make the kinds of social connections that

would help them find a job after college. Therefore, Alicia may be naïve in her expectation to gain mainstream social capital that will help her with her future goals. On the other hand, the sisters and Rebeca have not picked up on that due to their lack of familiarity with some of the potential gains of going to college, such as social capital.

Rebeca's parents also lacked the mainstream social capital that would help their daughter with the college application process. Similar to what Lareau (2000) found, Rebeca's parents had not forged relationships with other high school parents in their community. Therefore, they had not had the opportunities to gain mainstream social capital. As previously mentioned, they socialized with family in nearby suburbs or with fellow Latinx in the neighboring suburb of Fairview. Without these connections, they were not able to get the information that is so critical for learning to navigate the U.S. higher educational system. Rebeca's story supports the previous finding that Latinx students are the least likely racial group to participate in an extensive college choice process (Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee, 1997).

Rebeca's Lack of Mainstream Social and Cultural Capital

The area where Rebeca's lack of mainstream social and cultural capital came through most clearly was when she talked about applying to college. As she talked about her college dreams, it became clear that she did not have a good understanding of the college landscape, and had unrealistic goals. And when it came to people in her life that could help her navigate the higher education system, she was also lacking. Her parents did not have the knowledge to help, and the older brother that did begin college did not finish.

Overall, Rebeca did not feel she had anyone to go to for help with college applications. When I asked her whether there was someone at school she could go to, she said, "Ummmm….I think. One teacher. She helped my cousin get into college and get a job at the hospital and all

that." And when I asked about family or friends, she answered, "No. I don't think they know…like half of my family, they usually go to Nassau. I'll probably be the first to go to a different school and they probably don't understand." This is particularly disheartening, as Rebeca aspired to attend Columbia University, and took a close-up shot of the shiny, black Columbia University folder with the University insignia in gold that I provided to all of the students with the description of the study and the consent forms. She stated in a matter of fact way, "Oh yeah, that's the college I want to go to." Unfortunately, despite taking a couple of advanced courses that would put her on track to attend a four-year college, her goal was unrealistic. She did not have any other selective schools on her radar, and had not taken any concrete steps towards applying to Columbia. Her desire to attend an Ivy League school shows her lack of understanding of the tiered higher education system in the United States. Students can spend their entire K-12 educational careers strategizing how to get into a place as selective as Columbia. This knowledge of Ivy League institutions and what it takes to get into one is the mainstream cultural capital that Rebeca lacks.

Two other students also took pictures of the Columbia folder I had given them. One student had a personal connection to the University. She had two aunts who attended Columbia College, and she had visited them on campus many times when she was younger and they were enrolled there. Two other students addressed their future plans through pictures, one showing a doctor's office, because she hoped to work in the medical field, and the other a picture of her computer screen with the Mercy College logo. Though I asked the students to take pictures of something that represents their future, only the four just discussed did so. Three were focused on their hopes for college and one on her hopes for a future career. This could be due to the fact that

none of the students participating in the study actually used the checklist I provided in a systematic way.

Not having anyone to go to- a lack of social capital to help with college applications- was a common theme across all of the students in the study. I expected that the parents who did not attend college would not have the knowledge to aid in the process, but the parents who did go to college also seemed unable to provide that support for their children. This will be further explored in the following chapter. While some of the students had extended family that had attended college, these family members either did not have the requisite knowledge, or the students were not taking advantage of their knowledge.

I asked Rebeca if her parents ask her about applying to college, and she replied that her dad did not know much about it, but that her mother did ask her regularly. She also had an older brother who attended college, and so he had some experience to share. Unfortunately, as she explains below, that experience did not end well, and they were still paying off loans for her brother's stint at St. John's, even though he dropped out before finishing. She said:

> And- I think this year, like, I don't know, my parents don't really ask me- Well, my mother asks me about college the most. My dad's just like _- because he doesn't know anything about it really. So, he just tells me like- uh, like, what schools do I want to go to. Like, if I'm wanna leave the house. I'm like, "Yeah. I do." And then he's just like, "Alright, well. You know. Just make good decisions." And my mother, she doesn't really know how to do any of the college stuff. So, I do everything by myself. If I need, like, ques- like help with questions, I just go to my brothers because I guess my brother- my oldest brother, David? He, um, went to St. John's. But, since that was my mother's first child, like, didn't know. So, they made a mistake and then he left and we're still paying the bill for St. John's and he doesn't even go to that school. So, she's like don't make the mistake like your brother did. And I'm like, "I know." So they help me with everything.

The family's first foray into higher education with Rebeca's older brother did not end well, although it is unclear exactly what happened, and so they were extra anxious for Rebeca to make a good decision. They were supportive of Rebeca and wanted her to succeed, wishing she would

make good decisions, but unable to truly guide that decision-making process. Rebeca's educational outlook was surely influenced by the fact that her parents "made a mistake" with her older brother; they are now left paying tuition bills, and he has dropped out without earning a degree. Neither of her brothers were in college at the time of the interviews, which may have also put additional pressure on Rebeca to succeed. Despite David's failed attempt at getting a college degree, Rebeca still considered him a resource when she needed to talk to someone about college.

Being Resourceful: Finding Opportunities and Help Where She Can

Though Rebeca and her family lacked the mainstream social and cultural capital to help her make the most of her educational career in Bedford schools, she had been somewhat resourceful, within her means. Out of the ten students in the study, Rebeca was the best at taking advantage of the resources at the high school. She also used what social capital her family does have to secure employment. Since her brothers are older than her and fluent in English, Rebeca had them accompany her on college tours. And lastly, she went to her guidance counselor, in hopes of getting the help she needed. As we will see below, her efforts yielded some positive results, but overall, she was at a disadvantage, when compared to students from middle-class families who have mainstream social and cultural capital.

One way Rebeca took advantage of attending a "good" suburban school was through her choice of classes. Of all the students I interviewed during their senior year in high school, Rebeca was the only one who had chosen to fill her schedule with classes that sounded interesting to her. Instead of having a lot of free periods and a "relaxed year" like her peers, she decided to take classes such as sociology, AP psychology and AP Spanish. All of the other students in the study had multiple periods free throughout their senior years. Several of them

talked about how that made it so easy to ditch school, because they could just walk off campus during a free period, and then not come back for the rest of their classes. Rebeca was definitely the most conscientious student, taking advantage of what Bedford High School had to offer. The school touts a wide variety of classes, and is proud to be able to offer topics that are not standard in high schools. The other students were only taking the classes required to graduate, and not thinking strategically about college by either taking AP classes and gaining college credits, or bulking up their transcript with more classes to have a more well-rounded application. Despite being the most strategic student in the sample, Rebeca still had a long way to go to have prepared herself for acceptance into an Ivy League institution. She stood out among the students in this study, but she did not stand out among her peers. Although she was taking extra classes and filling up her schedule, she was not doing what it takes to be competitive within the larger pool of applicants to colleges in the United States.

Another example of how Rebeca was taking advantage of some of the resources at her high school is her participation in one of their Academies. Rebeca told me that she was interested in becoming an EMT or working in sports medicine, and had joined the Health Academy at Bedford High School. She proudly explained that the program was relatively new at the school and further explained, "But it's not a lot of us that are in it. Like, uh- They pick certain people to be in it. Like if you're good in school and all that." The selectivity of the program was a source of pride for Rebeca, which is further reinforced by the fact that she included a picture of three articles from the Journal of Emergency Medical Services that she had read for that class.
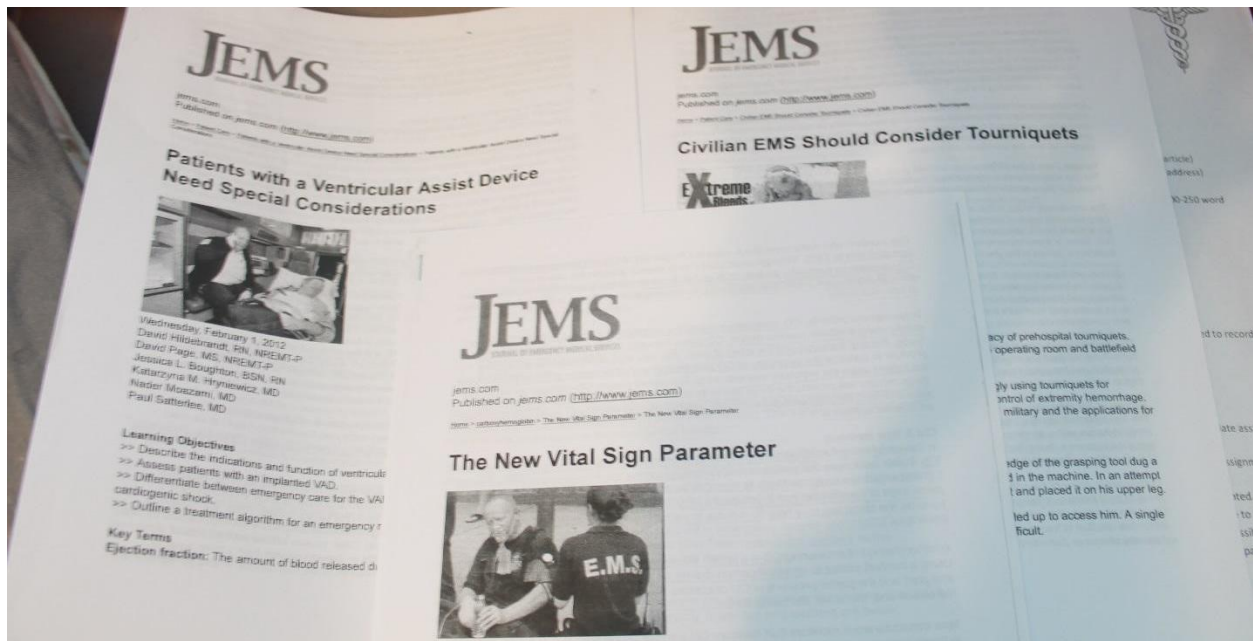
Figure 14. Articles from Rebeca's EMS class that is part of the Health Academy at Bedford High School.

Even though her parents did not have the mainstream social capital to help Rebeca, she used what social capital they did have, to her advantage. One way Rebeca's parents were able to help was by using their family networks. Through a distant cousin, Rebeca was able to secure an after school job at a daycare. She had gotten some experience working with children at a summer camp, and the cousin was happy to hire her. Rebeca was relieved to find employment for the school year, because she needed money for "all these college applications." However, she was struggling with whether to work or return to softball, which she had played for three years and was such a part of her identity at the school, as previously discussed. Aside from needing money for applications, she also wanted to contribute to her family. She explained:

> My mother was talking how she- when she came here- to America, she was like my age. And she had to work like two jobs and give the paycheck to my- well, her mother, to send it to my- her brothers in D.R. So, I was like, I feel bad. So, that's why I like- every time I get my paycheck, I'll give her money or this and that. Or my gramma money. Like, [out of] random. But they don't want to take it, but I'll be like, just take it because you need it. Or just to help.

Rebeca feels some guilt for how hard her parents have worked to provide a good life for her, and she wanted to help them out now that she could. Unfortunately, this kind of pressure to work and contribute to her family would likely take away from her ability to focus on her schoolwork. Rebeca was sensitive to the plight of her parents and did not ask much of them in terms of supporting her academics. From the outside, it may appear that her parents were not that supportive, but Rebeca values what they had done and were doing for their family, and did not expect more than what they could give. While this connection with her cousin was not that helpful in her college planning process, it served the purpose of finding her a much-needed job.

Rebeca had also received help from her brothers, who took her on college visits and proofread applications for her. She explained that her brothers would take her on college tours, and she would rely on them to ask questions. However, not wanting to appear uninterested, she would always ask "a basic question" such as one about the food plan. She would leave the harder, more involved questions to her brothers, such as inquiring about general requirements. Her brothers also proofread her essays, and came through when the teacher giving her feedback had surgery and did not come back to school in time to meet the application deadlines. Rebeca was not the only one to talk about older siblings as a resource for them when looking at colleges, as two others also did. However, Rebeca was the only study participant to describe the extensive help she had received from her brothers. No one else had siblings take them on college visits or read their essays. The two other students just answered that they did have an older sibling as a resource if they needed help.

Regarding support from her peers, Rebeca noted that only three of them were "serious" about applying to college. As she started to explain that she had no one to help her, and so she

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felt like she should help her friends, she came to realize that in fact her friends had college educated, English speaking parents that could help them. She said:

> But like, them, they don't. Like, I guide them to what they do. Because I don't have no one to help me, so I'll just help them. Because they don't have anyone. Maybe Rachel's parents. And my best friend's parents. Because- I guess- I guess their- like their parents went to colleges. And so did my best friend's parents. Like, her mom's a nurse and all that... Like they help- They help with like all that stuff. And like, their parents know really good English, so. I'm like, "Alright."

It is surprising that she saw her role in her friend circle as one of authority, where she needed to help and "guide" her friends, yet she is the one whose parents had not gone to college, and therefore needed the most guidance. The other students did not mention their peers or their peers' parents as a resource for the college application process. This is surprising, given that this middle-class community surely has many college-educated parents in it. However, it is unclear whether the students in this study were friends with students who have college-educated parents. Rebeca was the only one to talk about her friend's parents, and it was not in a context of getting help from them. She only brought it up as she realized that her friends had their own parents to go to as resources while she did not.

No one in Rebeca's extended family had graduated from college yet. She was excited for a cousin who was about to graduate from Nassau Community College in radiology. Rebeca also pointed out that of the cousins who were in college or planned to attend college, all of them were female. She said:

> So, it's only gonna be girls graduating, because none of the boys go to college. And it's only her, my cousin goes to Iona for dentist __ just like all that stuff. So- I think she'll be the second one. And me and my cousin, her little brother, are going to- He's doing den- dent- to become a dentist and I'm just doing sports medicine, so. We'll be the next ones. Well, hopefully.

While expressing excitement for the possibilities, she ended with a tinge of doubt. It is possible that her older brother's experience had given her pause with regards to whether her desires around college would go as planned.

Rebeca did not have people in her life that could help her with the college application process. Her family was constrained by language and experience, putting Rebeca at a great disadvantage compared to her peers who had college-educated parents and/or family members. This was true of most of the other students as well. Only one other student's mother talked about having someone in her extended family to go to. Her two sisters both married men who went to college, and they had successfully gotten their children into college, and she was counting on them to help her daughter as well. Not only did students and parents not talk about having social capital to help with the college application process, they seemed surprised by the question. It appears they felt this was something the school would take care of, and so they did not need to seek outside resources to help.

When the family cannot provide the needed guidance, the next place to turn to is the school. Unfortunately, Rebeca also found herself frustrated with the guidance available at school. When I asked her if the school helped her with college she answered:

> Um- Not really. Like, um- They- We would have college fairs but I- we would just go around to ask students. My guidance counselor really doesn't help with nothing. I'm like- So, I would do like everything by myself. Um. We had- I just found this out. Like on our school web site we have like a checklist of like how to do all the college [things]. So, I'm like, "Why didn't you tell me this before!?"

Rebeca could not help but express anger towards the guidance counselor. She felt she had to do things on her own and discover the resources available for herself. School support with the college application process received mixed reviews from the students. Of the six students whose parents did not attend college, only two were dissatisfied. The four students who were satisfied

did not seem to expect much from their counselors, and were happy with whatever guidance they had received. However, all four with the college-educated parents were unhappy with their guidance counselors, complaining that they did not start early enough in the application process, and had not been proactive with sharing resources with them. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Rebeca provided an example of how the guidance counselor had created a very stressful situation for her that could have easily been avoided. After confirming that Rebeca was interested in medicine, the counselor signed her up for an on-site appointment with admissions for Mercy College. Rebeca felt very nervous and unsure about what this kind of meeting entailed, and thought the counselor could have given her information about what to expect. Instead, Rebeca researched what to do on her own. She said:

> Yeah. I did it online. I was like, uh, 'What do you do on an on-site interview?' And then it just told me-- to do a- like a statement of like why you want to be- go to that school. So, I did that. Just in case he asked for it.

She also asked her English teacher to help her because they had had a guest speaker from Berkeley College, and she had taken notes on what to do; she reviewed those notes with her teacher and used that information to prepare for the interview. After the interview, she was annoyed that she had stressed out and over-prepared. The admissions person from Mercy said she would most likely get accepted based on her transcript, and there was no need to have been so worried. Rebeca felt that if the guidance counselor had explained both the meeting and the criteria that Mercy would use to judge her, she would have been more comfortable about the entire encounter.

I also asked Rebeca if the counselor helped her with picking classes and planning her schedule. She again spoke of her counselor negatively, but in reality, in this example, her

counselor may have been doing something positive for her. Rebeca tried to drop out of AP Psychology at the beginning of the school year and switch to College Algebra instead of Pre-Calculus, because she wanted a free period. Despite the fact that Rebeca knew someone who made that switch, and used that information to argue her side with the counselor, she was told she had to take Pre-Calculus because it's good for college. Rebeca conceded with an, "Okay. Whatever." Although Rebeca was annoyed and was sharing this story as an example of how the counselor did not help her, in this case it was probably in her best interest to not make the change.

While Rebeca made the most of what social and cultural capital she did have, it is clear that there were major gaps that were prohibiting her from making the most of her schooling experience. The school could have potentially filled some of these holes and supported Rebeca in preparing for college and in applying to college. Unfortunately, this was not the case, and she was left to fend for herself.

Chapter Conclusion

There are several takeaways from Rebeca's story. First of all, like most of the other students in the study, she is potentially on the path of selective acculturation. Rebeca had developed a habitus that gave her a sense of belonging in both a mainstream setting in Bedford and a majority minority setting of Latinx people in Fairview. This was partly due to the fact that Bedford is next door to a suburban ethnic enclave that provides reinforcement of the students' Latinx identity.

Second, the students and their parents that did not go to college were highly optimistic about the power of education and had a much stronger belief in the American Dream, most likely due to the fact that they had not experienced the realities of the return on a college education

themselves. The non-college-educated parents emphasized their hardships and how they hoped their children would have a better life than they did. In addition, they focused on happiness as the main outcome they wanted for their children, and encouraged them to choose a job that they would enjoy. Despite this belief in the power of education, all but one of the students whose parents did not attend college still felt they needed something more than just education to be successful in the future. These other attributes mainly were personal characteristics that they did not link to schooling.

And lastly, despite residing in a middle-class community, Rebeca's parents were involved in their daughter's schooling in a way that is more consistent with lower class parenting styles. Because this kind of involvement is not valued by mainstream institutions, it was detrimental to Rebeca's educational career. Rebeca knew her parents care about her schooling and value education, but they were unable to support her in the way that is expected from parents in a middle-class community. This difference in parenting comes from a lack of mainstream social and cultural capital. Rebeca's story speaks to the importance of both social and cultural capital for being able to imagine a future beyond the local options: no matter what the level of engagement and involvement in the school, in the end, the students in this sample lacked the capital to broaden their college options. Despite attending a school with students who possess mainstream social and cultural capital, the students in this study were not acquiring it.

CHAPTER SIX: Jenny

I chose Jenny as a focal case because she is one of the four students in this study whose parents did attend and graduate from college. Her case is representative of this sub-set of students, as well as across the sample of ten students. While all four of the college-educated parents were very talkative and happy to share a lot about their life story, Jenny was already enrolled in college at the time of the second interview, thereby providing an additional perspective as to how the Dominican students in Bedford were faring after graduating from high school. Jenny was a senior when I first interviewed her, and during her follow-up interview two years later, she was in her sophomore year at College of Staten Island.

In this chapter, I present three main arguments. The first is that Bedford provides a context for second-generation Dominican students that supports the process of selective acculturation, whereby these students are able to assimilate to mainstream culture while also developing and maintaining their racial and ethnic identity. Because Jenny was going to school in a middle-class suburban community, she was getting the experience of a mainstream setting, and gaining comfort operating in that context. However, she was also accessing the cultural resources of the suburban ethnic enclave next door, allowing her to gain the skills that let her feel comfortable moving in Latinx spaces as well. This location provides the opportunity to become bicultural and truly feel comfortable in two worlds: mainstream America and Latinx contexts.

The second argument is that when a student's parents have graduated from college, they and their children have a more realistic, and pessimistic, view of the power of education and its potential returns. Jenny is representative of this pattern, observed across the four families with college degrees. Despite having "made it" by owning a home in a "nice" suburban community, these college-educated parents were still struggling to maintain what they have fought so hard to

gain. They were by no means taking their success for granted, and they communicated this struggle to their children. Therefore, their children are more likely to include other things on their list, besides a college degree, of what they need to be successful in today's world. Despite this ambivalence about the power of education, the college educated parents still stressed the importance of happiness, and their desire for their children to find happiness in their future jobs.

The third argument is split into three sections. In the first of those sections, I argue that immigrant status and ethnicity are just as powerful as class in determining parenting styles. While Lareau (2000, 2003) argued that class was the main determinant in differentiating between the *concerted cultivation* and *accomplishment of natural growth* parenting approaches, I found that the parents with a college education in this sample were still acting in ways consistent with a lower-class parenting style. Similar to what Lareau observed with the lower-class parents in her study, the middle class parents in this study saw the school as the one in charge of their child's education, and therefore did not get involved or advocate on their child's behalf. The difference between the college educated parents and those who did not attend college was that the college educated parents had negative opinions about the education their child was receiving while those without a college degree were satisfied and happy with what the school was providing. Despite having specific complaints that they could have taken to the school's administration, they did not feel it was their place to do so. Specifically, in Jenny's case, her mother Patricia felt that it was not her place to complain, since she had not attended high school here in the U.S., thereby discounting the legitimacy of her concerns.

Although it would be expected that parents who attended college in the United States would have gained some mainstream social and cultural capital that would be helpful in the college application process for their children, this proved to not be the case. In the second to last

section of this chapter, I argue that because these parents did not go to high school in the United States, they did not have the traditional experience of applying to college. All of them knew somebody who was attending the college they then applied to and enrolled in, which also happened to be the one geographically closest to them. This has been shown to be some of the most important factors for Latinx students in choosing which college to attend (Pérez & McDonough, 2008). None of them learned about the broader college landscape, and therefore were unable to support their children in navigating it themselves. Rather, they relied heavily on the guidance counselors at the school, and were disappointed and unhappy with the help their children received. College-educated parents in my sample had more negative opinions of the guidance counselors, but they also did not share those concerns with the school.

In the final section of this chapter, I show how this lack of mainstream social and cultural capital is still slowing Jenny's progress in college. Despite being the only one in my sample to enroll in a U.S. four-year college, after graduating from Bedford High School, Jenny was still by no means on-track to complete a college degree. She had had several negative experiences with the administration of her school, and said she wanted to transfer, but was not following through on the steps to do so. She claimed her classes were easy for her, and that her peers were not as prepared as she was, yet she was not doing that well academically. Jenny was continuing to explore her career options using some of her social capital to get a variety of jobs, but she was still undecided about her major, and was not receiving any support or guidance in this area.

Bedford: A Context that Supports Selective Acculturation

In this section, I argue that Jenny was raised in a place that supported her in the process of selective acculturation. Similar to all of the other students in the study, Jenny and her family felt comfortable and at home in the Bedford community. In fact, Jenny's mother, Patricia, went

out of her way to avoid majority minority communities, seeking diversity wherever she moved to. By first exploring Patricia's story of how she came to the United States and found Bedford, we can better understand the context within which Jenny is being raised. Jenny had a sense of belonging in Bedford and other mainstream (middle class and white) spaces, but was also developing her Latinx identity, aided by the proximity of the neighboring ethnic enclave. The only difference between the college educated and non-college educated parents was in their ability to support their child's Spanish language skills. The students with college-educated parents received less support with their Spanish language skills, due to speaking English in the home. Apart from this small language difference, Jenny was making use of the cultural resources in the neighboring ethnic enclave of Fairview, much like the other students in the study, thereby supporting the development and maintenance of her Latinx identity. Therefore, Bedford, with its proximity to Fairview, gave Jenny the perfect context for the process of selective acculturation. She was assimilating into mainstream society while also developing and maintaining her Latinx identity in ways that other second generation students living in different contexts may not.

Jenny's Mother's Perspective on Bedford: Making a Purposeful Choice to Avoid the "Ghetto"

As explained in Rebeca's chapter, it is first helpful to look at the parental habitus in order to provide context for understanding the development of the student's habitus. It also speaks to how she views herself and her place in society, which has, of course, influenced Jenny's worldview. Jenny's mother, Patricia had always had a negative view of isolated ethnic enclaves, and has always strived to live in more diverse areas. However, she still made use of the neighboring Dominican enclave. In this section, I will share my impressions of Patricia, as well as how she came to the United States, and her impressions of the Bedford community.

It was Father's Day, but Jenny texted me that her mother could meet that Sunday at 5 pm. I arrived to Bedford and walked the eight short blocks from the train station to her house. Her house was well-cared for, as were the other homes on the street. Jenny's street was a quiet one, and I was the only one walking. Every once in a while, a car would drive by, but overall, it was very calm, and I saw no one. There were cars in the driveway, so I rang the doorbell and knocked several times, but no one answered. My texts were not returned and my phone call went straight to voicemail, so I sat down on the porch to wait. About five minutes later, a car pulled up to the driveway, and Patricia rushed to introduce herself. I introduced myself in Spanish, not wanting to make any assumptions about English language skills, which I did with all of the parents. She responded in English but I still asked her what language she preferred to speak in, and although she said her English was not great, she said she preferred English. I found her to be quite fluent in English, and we did not need to use Spanish much, although we did a few times. It is important to note that the four parents who attended college completed their interviews in English, whereas the other six parents completed theirs in Spanish. Patricia led me up the driveway to the side of the house, where a sun tent was set up. Underneath was a swing loveseat and a picnic table. She sat on the swing, and I sat on the bench. She did not give me the sense that she did not want me to see the inside of the house, but instead, it seemed she was eager to enjoy the beautiful day and make use of their nicely-manicured yard. In fact, at the end of the interview, she invited me to Jenny's graduation party the following weekend. It was one of the first nice days of the summer, and it was clear the family enjoyed using their backyard, since they had put all of that outdoor furniture and the sun tent there. This is very different from an urban experience where outdoor space is hard to come by. I got the sense that Patricia was very

comfortable in this space, and was making use of the suburban features available to her, such as a private backyard.

Patricia was dressed in black slacks and a top with her hair pulled back. She looked put together, but not dressed up, and wore little to no makeup. Her skin tone was medium, but I also caught a glimpse of her husband, who is from Ecuador, and he was lighter-skinned. Jenny's skin tone was closer to her dad's, although they both would still likely be seen as Latinx. Up to this point in the data collection, Jenny's mother was by far the most talkative. Although Patricia was one of the more outgoing parents, she is representative of the other college-educated parents who felt comfortable talking with me and were quite chatty. These parents would give long elaborate answers or go way off track sharing personal anecdotes with me, giving importance to what they were saying by taking their time and delving into the details. They were not worried about taking up my time, and seemed thrilled that someone was interested in their life story. This was in stark contrast to some of the parents without a college education, who were shy and uncomfortable around me. On the other hand, we were thirty minutes into the interview before I got an answer to the first question I had posed to Patricia. In the end, I walked away with the impression that she was a go-getter. She had crossed paths with many interesting people, and had levied that into opportunities that she took advantage of.

Patricia did not come to the United States until 1996, even though her mother came in 1968 and settled in the Bronx. Her mother worked here in the US and traveled back and forth, leaving her daughter in the care of her mother. This kind of transnationalism is common among Dominicans, going back and forth between New York and the island, more so than with other Latinx nationalities (Itzigsohn, 2009; Kasinitz et al., 2008; Louie, 2006). She explained her mother's decision by saying, "But, uh, my mother didn't want to bring me here because she was

very- extremely concerned about babysitter. And, um- And, you know. Also, the values and the culture, etcetera." Her mother was worried about finding appropriate childcare, a practical concern, but was also concerned about the values and culture of her neighborhood in the Bronx, a majority Latinx community. Patricia lived with her grandmother in the countryside and traveled to the capital to be with her dad on weekends, as her parents were separated. She came to New York to visit her mother in 1996, and her mother worked hard to convince her to stay. However, Patricia felt loyal to her grandmother in the Dominican Republic, had already begun studying finance at a university, and had a job there that covered the majority of her tuition. In addition, Patricia did not like the Bronx, where her mother lived. She did not think she would learn English there, because it was a mostly Latinx neighborhood, and she considered it to be "ghetto."

Most of the parents in my study spoke negatively of other neighborhoods that are majority minority, especially ones in New York City, saying they would not like to live in the Bronx or Queens, because those places are "too crowded" and "too noisy." Most of the students' families were from outside of the capital of the Dominican Republic, from smaller cities and towns, but it was still surprising to hear that they had such an aversion to noise and crowds. In addition, some felt equally negative about the ethnic enclave next door to them, Fairview. In fact, Patricia had a part-time job in Fairview, working with children, and so I asked her if she spends time there, and what she thinks of that community. She said, "Yeah. And, then, you know, uh, we- we go a lot because we go to the supermarket there. Uh. And, also we- we go- I have my beautician there. [laughs]" When I asked her if she would like to live there, she answered, "No, No. I mean, even though I like some big houses over there- but I- I [don't/can't] see myself, you know, either- I- e- I mean, it's not in my plans." From the very beginning, Patricia had a negative

view of majority Latinx communities and she continued to feel that way, as evidenced by her

comments about Fairview. She did not want to move to the United States if it entailed living in

an ethnic enclave, like the one her mother was living in, and thus did not move here until she saw

the opportunity to live in the suburbs. (The details of how she ended up on Long Island will be

shared below.) Patricia did not need to move to the United States and was doing just fine in the

Dominican Republic. She was attending university and meeting all kinds of people. She saw

what kind of neighborhood her mother was living in, and the isolation that went with it, and

decided that she did not want that for herself. She further explained:

> So- Because you know, in D.R., uh- you have the opportunity even though you are poor.
> [laughs] You have the opportunity to [meet] with different people. And, um, you know,
> all kinds of people. Rich. You know. All kinds of people from different, uh- um- part of
> the society.

She felt that moving to the Bronx would be limiting her opportunity to interact with a diverse set

of people, and that was something she felt she was getting in the Dominican Republic. Based on

this, she was happy with Bedford, a diverse community. However, it is important to note that the

Dominican Republic is not a very racially or ethnically diverse place, but there is socioeconomic

diversity. In this case, I believe Patricia was referring to the fact that she could interact with

people of different social classes more easily in the Dominican Republic, and felt that the

concentrated poverty in the Bronx did not provide that opportunity.

Patricia was very positive about the Bedford community, and said she felt comfortable in

it. She said:

> Uh. Bedford? One of the things- if- You know, I'm a practical person. I like, em- places
> nearby hospitals- not too close- but nearby hospitals, nearby, um, main roads, uh, train
> stations. You know, ___ [transportation] in general. Um. E- Food. You know. The
> supermarket and places where everything is not too far. So that's how the- in addition to
> the fact that it is like a neighborhood [family]. You know. Is- um- But one of the things
> that I really like it a lot- like a lot was the fact that was kind of close to –you know-
> places. That's the practical thing. Of course, I like the schools. And I like the, um, kind of

> mixed, you know- because- Uh, probably, now, when I [move/d] to Long Island, it was mixed [now]- It wasn't that mixed __- No. But then, you know, at the time that we moved here, it was different.

Patricia was happy with Bedford's location and the practicalities of having everything she needed nearby. She noted it was not that mixed when she first arrived, something she had said she highly valued. Nonetheless, she spoke positively of the Bedford community and had not had any negative experiences there. As with Rebeca's mother, this was surprising to hear because Patricia looks Latina and spoke with an accent, signaling otherness, and potentially prompting discriminatory actions from those interacting with her in the community. This was a surprising finding from all of the parents, as none of them had had negative experiences in Bedford.

When I asked how she and her husband had decided on moving to this part of Long Island, she explained that her husband's family had settled in the neighboring town of Lancaster, renting a two family home. Patricia and her husband moved into the upstairs part of the house after getting married, and lived there for six years, until the landlord decided to remodel and raise the rent, forcing them to look for another place to live. Since that familial connection was what brought her specifically to Lancaster, I wondered how her in-laws had found this suburban community. She explained:

> My- uh- father-in-law, they live in Lancaster all the- since they came to U.S. Because when they came, I think the- you know- eh- They came and I think there was something about a job that was available in Lancaster. And the- they came and they liked it around here. I mean, - I don't know what they like about Lancaster. Forty years ago, it wasn't like that great. But the beach was there. [I mean, I like beach]. Yes. So, um- Yes. So, of course. Again, they didn't like the city.

So here is another example of Latinx immigrants, this time from Ecuador, settling directly in a suburban community, bypassing the city because they did not like their options there.

I did not get the sense that Jenny's parents were as protective as Rebeca's, which speaks to Patricia's comfort level in the Bedford community. Jenny did need to ask for permission to go

somewhere, but it did not appear that a vetting process was required, as it was with Rebeca. Jenny's mother explained that her daughter having to tell her parents where she is going is part of the "values in the family." Even though Jenny had turned eighteen in January, she was still required to inform her parents of her whereabouts. Jenny had a friend who had made it to the finals on the television show The Voice, and sometimes they would go out in the City. Patricia explained, "They go places. And um- and she always asks. And I say, 'You know, you have to ask because we need to know.'" However, there was an underlying sense of trust in the Bedford community that informed the way the parents handled granting permission to go out to their children.

Most of the students in the study talked about needing permission to go out and having a curfew. It seemed like their parents were stricter when they were younger, but had gradually gotten laxer. Only one student talked about going into the City with friends, and having a very late curfew of midnight. Everyone else was being monitored more carefully by their parents. However, once they asked permission or let their parents know where they are going, they were free to roam Bedford, because their parents feel it was safe. In Lopez' (2003) study, the students, particularly the females, were closely guarded by their parents and not allowed to go out into the neighborhood much without adult supervision, due to the perceived danger in the Washington Heights community. Despite needing to check in with their parents, these suburban students are experiencing a lot more freedom. The parents in Bedford were not keeping their daughters sequestered from the dangers of their neighborhood, like the parents in Washington Heights were. Jenny's parents needed to know details such as where she was going and with who. If she was coming into the City, then they wanted a little more information, such as who would be driving, but in general, she was free to make plans and go out with her friends. The way Patricia

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approached granting permission for Jenny supports the argument that Patricia felt comfortable in Bedford.

Even after the formal interview was over, Patricia and I continued to chat, and I found it difficult to plan an exit strategy. Since Jenny is also a combination of South American and Caribbean, as am I, we talked about the cultural differences between Latinx from different parts of the world. We compared Cuba, where my mother was born, to the Dominican Republic, and Bolivia, where my father was born, to Ecuador. We also talked about Jenny's prom and her college plans. In the end, Patricia offered me a ride to the train station, so that I could catch the next one and not have to wait another hour. The other college-educated parents were also very friendly and seemed comfortable talking with me, and it was often hard to end the conversations with them. They were also more likely to offer me a ride to the train station. On the other hand, the non-college parents seemed relieved when the interview was over, and tended to not strike up casual conversations with me afterwards. It was to be expected that the parents with a college degree would be comfortable interacting with a fellow middle-class professional attending an elite university, while the parents who had not gone to college felt uncomfortable speaking with someone from a higher class status.

As evidenced from our conversation, Patricia is a strong woman who knows what she wants. She did not want to move to the U.S. unless she could arrive to a non-majority minority neighborhood, which I believe she had come to see as an isolated area of concentrated poverty. She made a purposeful choice to avoid the "ghetto," and found a diverse community to live in. Her experiences in Bedford had all been positive and she felt comfortable in this conveniently located suburb. While still requiring her daughter to inform her of her whereabouts, she was generally permissive of Jenny and allowed her to roam freely, especially in Bedford, conveying a

strong sense of trust in her community. Patricia had developed a habitus that felt comfortable in a mainstream context.

Jenny Feels Comfortable in Two Worlds: Bedford and Fairview

In this section, I will describe how Jenny has developed a habitus that allowed her to feel comfortable in both her mainstream, racially diverse middle class suburban community, and a primarily Latinx community. The photograph portion of the data collection proved especially useful in understanding how the students feel about their community, and in this section, I will share the photos that Jenny took. In addition, I will describe Jenny's experiences in Fairview and her level of comfort in Latinx or Dominican spaces. I argue that Jenny is selectively acculturating, similar to the other students in this study. There was a slight difference in her Spanish language development, due to the fact that her parents speak English, but she is still developing and maintaining a Latinx identity.

Jenny only took six pictures to share with me. This was a low number of photos compared to the other students in my sample. The average was twenty-four pictures, but four of the students took eleven or fewer and three of the students took over forty pictures (see Appendix C for the number of pictures each student took). The first picture was of her math homework and she explained that it was something she disliked because it "takes too much time." As with Rebeca, Jenny had no pictures to address the negative prompts such as places she does not feel comfortable in. As previously mentioned, none of the students had pictures responding to the prompts about spaces they do not feel comfortable in, supporting the argument that they all felt comfortable in all parts of their community. The only other negative pictures they referred to were eye-sore houses, like the one Rebeca shared in the previous chapter, that the students

disliked because they took away from the niceness of their neighborhood, or pictures of damage from Hurricane Sandy.

Jenny's second picture was of her graduation tassel, since she was a senior. She said, "And it just reminds me of every day- like, oh __ this is my last year." They were given the option to buy extras, and she mentioned that most seniors hang them on the rearview mirror of their cars. She referred to seniors owning cars as a normal and typical occurrence at her school, an indicator of the community's economic standing. The tassel also evoked a sense of pride about her accomplishment as well as pride for her school. A couple of other students had pictures that represented school pride such as sports teams, school branded sweats, the paw prints from their mascot that are painted heading into the school, and the building where there are plaques commemorating the school's accomplishments in a variety of sports (see Appendix C for topics the students took pictures of). All of these pictures representing the students' school spirit shows their sense of belonging, as well as pride, in their community.

Figure 15. Jenny's high school graduation tassel.

Jenny's third and fourth pictures speak to the calm and safety of the suburban

environment she grew up in. This stands in stark contrast to being raised in an ethnic enclave in a

city. Her third picture was of a thrift store in her "town." She explained that it's "unique and

really nice." There are not many thrift stores around Bedford, but she found that this one had a

great selection of items. One of her friends first took her there because she gets props and clothes

for photo shoots there and so it is a place she liked to go to with her friends. Another place she

hung out with her friends is a sandwich shop near the middle school called Deli Boy. She

explained that a lot of people go there and that they have really good food. Eight of the ten

students included pictures like this of suburban locations and strip malls, showing that they feel

comfortable in all the types of establishments found in Bedford. These pictures also show the

relatively quiet and calm existence of these students. There were no crowds, no places to avoid,

and little traffic, in contrast to the urban settings that ethnic enclaves are often located in.

Figure 16. The corner deli and favorite hangout place for Jenny and her friends.

Jenny's last picture was a partial view of the back of her house. She took the picture

because it was spring, and there was a huge flowering tree that she enjoys. She talked about how

pretty it is, but then the flowers fall and it's gone. Even though you cannot see the house, you can

see that it is a good sized suburban backyard with an above ground pool, which speaks to how

well Jenny's parents are doing. Half of the students included pictures of nature, especially trees,

flowers and one of the creeks that runs through the neighborhoods. This struck me as salient,

given the concrete jungle that is the ethnic enclave of Washington Heights. While Jenny only

took those six pictures, they give us a glimpse into her feeling of comfort in Bedford.

Figure 17. A partial view of the back of Jenny's house.

Jenny's comfort level in Bedford extended to other mainstream spaces. Jenny was one of

the few students who talked about coming into the City to enjoy it. It did not happen often, but

when it did, she and her friends would go to the trendy neighborhoods of SoHo and Chelsea to

take in the "prettiness." Therefore, they are not coming to the City to access or connect with the

cultural resources in the Dominican enclave of Washington Heights, but instead are coming to

enjoy the mainstream cultural offerings of the City. One other student talked about coming to

Manhattan, and two others talked about the Bronx or Queens. However, only the one student

who had lived in the urban ethnic enclave of Washington Heights actually still went there. None

of the other students frequented Washington Heights, and one of the students had never even

heard of it. This was surprising until I learned about the culturally-rich, suburban ethnic enclave right next door to them, Fairview. The one student who had lived in Washington Heights was the only one who still had familial connections there. Everyone else had arrived directly to the suburbs, and therefore had no reason to go to Washington Heights, despite its concentration of Dominican culture.

Because Jenny had played field hockey for her entire high school career, I wondered why she did not include pictures related to sports. This may be because we first met in the spring of her senior year and her sport was a fall one, and the season had ended. It was interesting that despite being involved in a sport at Bedford High School, it did not seem to be a large part of her identity, as it was with the other two students who played sports. She did not take any photos of her field hockey memorabilia or uniform, as Rebeca had with softball. Another student involved in wrestling also included photos of his teammates, which suggested that he had also integrated his participation in school sports as an important part of his identity. When Jenny and I first met in the spring of her senior year, the season was over for the year, and perhaps she had closed that chapter of her life and did not see herself continuing to play in college. She did speak of it fondly, though, and it shows a level of integration into the community. She said:

> …in field hockey, like, I had a group of friends that I still see and I still talk to. And, like, just like every time I see them, I like miss field hockey so much. Because it was like-such like a bonding thing. I think everybody should join a sport, because you can make like so many friends. And like so many laughs. And, like, you'll remember them for like ever.

Clearly, participating in this important aspect of Bedford's identity had made an impression on her. Because Bedford High School is so proud of the wide variety of extra-curricular activities they offer, I expected more of the students to be involved. Aside from the three that participated in sports, only one other talked about being in choir, and insisting her family come to all of her

concerts. The other six students were not taking advantage of this feature of their "good" suburban school.

Although there was strong evidence to support the idea that both Rebeca and Jenny are on a path of selective acculturation, there are some small differences between them. These differences were consistent between the students whose parents attended college and those who did not, and were centered on language. Jenny's Spanish language skills were not being reinforced at home as much as they were for Rebeca. Since both of her parents were fluent in English, she did not need to help them translate when they went out and about in the community. Patricia explained that she speaks to Jenny in "whatever comes out," and Jenny would typically answer in English because her parents understand her. Jenny explained that it's easier for her to speak in English now, although she did learn Spanish first, and so she is just "lazy" around her parents. Her lack of confidence in her Spanish skills surely affects how comfortable she feels in Latinx social spaces and her comfort in interacting with other Latinx people. Patricia pointed out that Jenny was taking Spanish at school, and was getting more practice, as well as direct instruction. She reminisced about when they lived in Lancaster and her older daughter had participated in a dual language program. She said the program was "wonderful," and that her older daughter had learned a lot, including how to write in Spanish, which apparently Jenny could not do. It was Patricia's hope that the high school classes combined with using some Spanish in the home would help Jenny develop true bilingualism. This was true of the other students in the sample as well, as all but one spoke Spanish in the home, at least some of the time. However, only the students whose parents did not speak English or did not speak it well, which happened to be the non-college educated parents, used Spanish whenever they were out and about in the community with their families, therefore reinforcing their Spanish language

skills even more. In Jenny's case, the home is not reinforcing her language skills as much as with the students whose parents did not go to college, and therefore, do not speak English well. Spanish language skills are an important part of the Latinx identity, as they provide a connection to the culture.

Another possible way Jenny could have been developing and reinforcing her Spanish language skills was through her friends at school. As with the other students in the study, Jenny said that her friends were mostly "the same kind of race" and "Hispanic," but added that she also had black and white friends. Most of the students talked about how wonderful the diversity at Bedford High School is, and how everyone gets along and is friends with one another. However, when it came down to identifying their close friends, most of the students in this study are friends with other Latinx students, and therefore not branching outside of their pan-ethnic identity. Despite living in a diverse community, they are forming close friendships with other Latinx students, reinforcing their cultural heritage. This is potentially a missed opportunity, as they are not forming relationships with the students who could help them gain mainstream social and cultural capital, which will be discussed further in a later section.

Interestingly, despite being Latinx, most of Jenny's friends did not speak Spanish. She explained, "They're Spanish, but they don't speak Spanish at home." Jenny saw a use for Spanish in school and wished her friends would practice, so that she could use the language to share secrets at school. Despite making connections with friends of a similar cultural heritage, the youth in my study were not maintaining their language skills with their friends. Instead, they were integrating into the Bedford High School community and speaking English.

However, there is evidence that Jenny had developed a habitus with a sense of belonging in Latinx social spaces. Like Rebeca, Jenny attended church in Fairview, where the services were

conducted in Spanish. She went to Catholic church, and managed to complete the steps up to her confirmation. It had been a difficult task to do, because the classes were during the week and her parents worked. Nevertheless, they persisted, and she reached that milestone. The family does not attend church anymore, though. Her dad was the first to stop, and little by little, the rest of the family members stopped, too. Nonetheless, reaching this important milestone in Catholicism shows that Jenny has developed some cultural competence as a Latinx person, given the rich and complicated history of Catholicism and colonialism in the Americas. Being raised Catholic is a defining feature of being a Latinx person. This was true of most of the other students as well. Eight of the students in the sample attended church at some point in their lives and all of them attended Spanish language services in Fairview, at least for part of the time. Some also attended services in English in Bedford. This is an example of how the neighboring ethnic enclave provides the cultural resources that help reinforce their Dominican identity, potentially leading to the ability to navigate both mainstream and Latinx cultures. Seventy-five percent of people in the Dominican Republic are Catholic, so Jenny's participation in the Catholic church is a way of connecting with her ethnic heritage.

In summary, Patricia had developed a habitus of belonging in Bedford and other mainstream settings, and this influenced Jenny's comfort level in these spaces as well. Therefore, it can be argued that Jenny was in the process of selective acculturation, developing a habitus of belonging in both mainstream and Latinx spaces. Bedford provided support for this assimilation process by being a diverse mainstream suburb located next door to an ethnic enclave. The role of this spatial configuration for the development of selective acculturation is a novel feature of my study.

Conflicting Feelings About the Future: Unsure About What It Takes to Find Future Success

As explained in the previous chapter on Rebeca, instead of assuming that the participants in this study felt education is critical to their future success, I took a step back and asked them what they feel is important, giving them the opportunity to decide what those things are for themselves. Based on Mickelson's (1990) findings that African American students were skeptical of the return on investing in education because they had seen their parents' hardships, I expected that the students whose parents had attended college would be more likely to express doubt in the power of education, and indeed, they did. Even though these families had managed to establish themselves in a fairly "nice" suburb, they were working very hard to maintain that lifestyle, and felt that it was a precarious existence. They seemed to acknowledge that they were among the lucky ones who were able to leverage their college degree into home ownership, and they communicated this to their children. In this section, I argue that Jenny and her mother felt conflicted about the power of education, and were unable to articulate exactly what it takes to find future success. Jenny's ideas were vague and underdeveloped, while her mother was the only one in the sample to be unable to answer the question, having difficulty deciding how one can even measure the idea of success. However, once we got talking about education outside of that specific question, she did explain her doubts about forcing her daughters to pursue higher education, and whether hard work leads to success.

Jenny's Vague Ideas About Future Success

Jenny's ideas about what she needs to be successful in today's world were not very specific or developed. During her initial interview as a senior in high school, she answered, "Most people would say education, a diploma. But everyone's different." It is interesting that she said both education and a diploma, which indicates some understanding of the value of the

credential versus the knowledge you acquire in school. She is confirming that this is a common belief, saying "most people" when answering the question. And yes, this answer does fit in with mainstream rhetoric about how success can be achieved through education. It is unclear why she qualified this answer with the part about everyone being different. This could mean she thinks others might have different beliefs, and it made me wonder whether she was thinking of her mother and the messages she hears from her regarding education and her future, which will be explored in the section below. Jenny was one of eight students to mention education in at least one of their interviews, at either the initial or the follow-up, two years later. Most of the students believed that education was a part of what they needed to be successful in the future. However, only one student described education as the only thing she needed, and it was only in her initial interview, and not in the follow-up interview. While the students do believe education is important, it is just one component of what is needed to be successful in the future. In fact, the students who have a college educated parent all gave answers that revolved around needing connections and/or money to be successful in today's world (see Appendix A for answers to what they need to be successful in today's world). Jenny did not fit this pattern, as she was the only one in this group to not talk about either money or connections, focusing instead on education.

Jenny was in her second year in college at College of Staten Island, a four-year senior college in the CUNY system, at the time of her follow-up interview. This time, when I asked her what she needs to be successful in today's world, she answered, "A positive mind." She shared that she had been getting advice from her trainer at the gym about keeping calm during tests by thinking about a happy place. He told her that if something goes wrong, she should try to remember that it is not the end of the world. This was quite a departure from her original answer,

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moving away from education and credentials, and into a personal outlook towards life. However, it makes sense in the context of her test-taking anxiety. She acknowledged that tests were really difficult for her, and she had been seeking advice from her fitness trainer to address this. It is interesting that she focused on a personal trait that one can control, meaning if a person changes their mindset to a more positive one, they will succeed. Again, there is no cynicism or criticism around society and the opportunities to succeed. To Jenny, if you have a positive outlook, then success is within reach. Again, Jenny's answers were surprising, given what her mother said to me in her interview. However, Jenny was not the only student to give answers related to personal traits. Other students gave answers such as confidence, charisma, dedication, effort, and goal-setting (see Appendix A for answers to what they need to be successful in today's world). These answers also fit into the American ideology of the self-made person and the idea that anyone can pull themselves up by their bootstraps. These answers do not acknowledge the structural constraints that one might encounter, despite his or her persistence or dedication.

Jenny's Mother on Future Success: "I Don't Know How to Measure That"

As previously explained, the parents' perspective is useful because it can provide context within which to understand the student's answers. In addition, the messages the students are receiving from their parents are likely to influence their views on what they need to be successful in today's world. When I asked Patricia what her daughter needed to be successful, she was unable to name anything. After a very long pause, she answered:

> Because, I mean, successful- uh- I mean, people have -   Now we have better resources. Um. You know. It's guaranteed that- not [probably] success, that they be successful in what they do- but at least, you know, they have the- the [support]. Something that we less and less have. Because, you know, uh- we want to be- We are not even middle- a middle class family. Uh. We are poor. [laughs] I mean, uh- probably better off than other people. But we are poor. [I don't get] into that myth. Um- And, um- It is- It's really hard. You know, I know we have a lot of opportunities here and- I mean, for people who want to

lead a decent life. Um. It's okay. I mean, she's- She will be able to do it. Success? I don't know. It is hard. I mean, I don't know how to measure that.

Patricia began her answer by talking about how her daughters have an almost guaranteed chance of being successful because of the support she and her husband are able to provide. She has made a great leap in advancing the socio-economic status of her family by earning an advanced degree and buying a house in Bedford, and feels her daughters have a better chance of succeeding. However, she quickly backtracks on this idea, and explains that while she has more resources than her parents did, and is better off than a lot of people here in the US, they are still "poor," and she cannot actually consider her family to be middle class. She then expresses faith in Jenny's ability to make a good life for herself and take advantage of the opportunities available to her. In the end, she is unsure how to measure success but feels fairly confident that her daughter can "lead a decent life" and take advantage of the opportunities available to her.

Patricia also expressed cynicism regarding her middle-class status, explaining her doubt in the system by saying:

> How many people work hard and don't make it? A lot. Most people buy that if you work hard you'll be ok, but that's not true. Another myth is that we are all middle class. We are not. We are poor. We live paycheck to paycheck.

Jenny is hearing a negative attitude towards the power of education directly from her mother, due to her mother's experience with the limitations of a graduate degree. She was working two jobs and seeing very little of her husband and children during the week. Despite her multiple degrees, she says to Jenny that success is not guaranteed, even if you work very hard at life, which she says is something that "America promises." The American dream rhetoric did not ring true to Jenny's mother, and she conveys this to her daughter.

Patricia was the only parent unable to name at least one thing that their child needs to be successful in the future. However, the other part of her answer was consistent with what the rest

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of the college-educated parents in the sample said. All four of the college-educated parents talked about the realities of society and how their kids would have to work very hard to maintain the lifestyle they had provided for them. None of them showed a blind faith in the benefits of a college degree, often pointing out the competitiveness of the job market. The non-college educated parents were more hopeful about the possibilities that a college education would give their children. This makes sense since they have not experienced the actual returns on a college degree themselves.

Another common theme across the sample was the parents' desire for their children to be happy and have a better life than they did. Interestingly, Patricia did not fit the pattern, being the only college-educated parent to not mention happiness for Jenny. She did, however, talk about how Jenny should decide for herself what she wants to do in the future, couching it within the context of Jenny being the one that would need to do the work required of whatever career path she chose, and so it should be something she enjoys. The other three college-educated parents did talk about happiness as something they wanted most for their child's future (see Appendix B for what the parents want for their children's futures). This is a potentially contradictory desire because they were simultaneously critiquing the power of education. Because of this, one would expect these parents to be more pragmatic about what career their child chooses, but instead, they prioritized happiness. With the non-college educated parents, happiness was also a common answer for what they desired for their child's future. However, all six of these parents also hoped that their children would have a better life than theirs, which none of the college educated parents mentioned.

Jenny's Mother on the Power of Education and Hard Work: "Another Myth"

While Patricia did not have very clear ideas about what it takes to ensure future success, she did have a lot to say about education, specifically, and the realities of getting her daughters to invest in their education. When I asked her what she says to Jenny about education, she answered:

> Very important. I mean, I don't even really say it. I live it… I mean, I don't- It's the level of aspiration… The kids, they will copy the level of your aspiration. Ah- But it's so- it's much more. It's in it. It's the way you- you live, you- uh, do things. Um. It's not about, you know- And I always tell them, "you know, if you don't want to do- go to school- I mean, I ch- I- I firmly believe that you need to go. It is highly recommended that you go. But I'm not forcing you. Because I'm not gonna do- I'm not gonna be the one who's gonna be doing it. And that is your choice. But you gotta do something. And it is important." You know, to have a college education is important. Not just financially. But in general.

Patricia values education, and believes it is important for her daughters to get a college degree, but she is realistic in her ability to "force" them to do what she wants. She knows from personal experience that it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to get through a degree program, and so she believes her daughters have to really want it, and put in the work, in order to achieve it. Patricia is trying to instill a sense of the realities of life in her daughter. This is a very pragmatic way to view the power of education. She conveys its importance but knows that when it comes down to it, her daughters have to want it for themselves.

Patricia's doubt in one's ability to leverage a degree into a good paying job had already influenced her older daughter's college plans. She shared that her older daughter had worked very hard in school, taking many AP classes, and had applied to a variety of schools. She explained:

> But to- you know- in this economy, it's very difficult, you know, to- you know- e- We can [indebt] ourselves forever. So, it is good that you can apply to any college and you can be pretty much accepted and, you know, with the ACT score. But, um- She was- She

applied for Seton Hall. And she was accepted and she was given a scholarship for a little bit more than the- half. But she didn't go, because it was still a lot of money.

So even though her older daughter had worked hard and had been accepted at a four-year university, the scholarship was not enough for the family to be able to afford it. Kim (2004) argues that Latinx students may not be aware of the implications of financial aid packages nor the potential long-term benefits of attending one college over another, which I found to be true in this study. Worrying about her possibilities in this economy and the impact of large debt, Patricia had probably counseled her daughter not to take out student loans to cover the costs. This fits with recent findings that Latinx people are more averse to loans for college than White people (Boatman, Evans, & Soliz, 2017). Instead, her older daughter was living at home and going to a local four-year college. Whether this was a good decision or not remains to be seen. It is possible that going to a more prestigious school could yield a better outcome, but it is also possible that indebting herself at such a young age could negatively affect her ability for social mobility.

In summary, this realistic view of the world was true of all four college-educated parents participating in the study. They were far less hopeful about the power of an education because they had seen the actual return of a degree in the labor market. This critical view of society served as a way to temper expectations for certain outcomes from their children. Though Jenny did not fit the pattern, the rest of the students whose parents went to college support Mickelson's idea that student's views on education are influenced by what their family members have experienced. Because they saw their parents continuing to struggle despite earning college degrees, they also expressed doubts about the power of education.

Parental Involvement: Middle Class Parents with a Lower Class Parenting Style

Because Patricia has not only a college education, but also a master's degree, I expected her to have a different approach to parental involvement than the parents who did not attend

college. I imagined that having earned those degrees would give her the knowledge and the comfort level to be involved in her daughter's schooling in a way consistent with the middle-class parenting behaviors observed by Lareau. As I discuss below, although she did have a more critical view of the schooling experience her daughter was having when compared to the non-college educated parents, she did not feel comfortable going to the school with her concerns. This was true of the other college-educated parents as well. They all had concerns and complaints about the school, but none of them communicated that to the school. In addition, Patricia took a hands-off approach with her daughter's education, letting her daughter make mistakes and learn from them herself. She did not intervene or advocate for her daughter in the way I would have expected a middle-class parent to. The college-educated parents in my sample lacked the sense of entitlement that is typical of white middle-class parents' interactions with social institutions, like public schools. This complicates Lareau's (2000) findings, because class is not the only factor influencing parenting styles. Immigrant status and ethnicity must be taken into account, as we will see with Jenny's case below. However, it is important to note that as was true for Rebeca, Jenny feels supported by her parents and knows they value education, which is consistent with prior research on Latinx parents (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001). As with Rebeca, there were constraints to Jenny's parents' ability to participate in her education, but from Jenny's perspective, they were involved and they cared about her future success. It was surprising that Jenny was not aware of the kind of parenting that a middle-class community privileged. She did not criticize or complain about her parents, nor did she wish they could be involved in a different way. This is different from what Louie (2012) found in her study of high-achieving Dominican and Columbian students. They were aware of the shortcomings of their parents in terms of living up to the expectations of the school, and they did wish their

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parents could support them in the way the school wanted and expected them to. In contrast, the students in this study seemed grateful for what their parents could do, and seemed satisfied by it.

"Maybe Not" So Satisfied with BHS, Yet Unwilling to Intervene

In this section, I will describe Jenny's mother's opinion of Bedford High School. Overall, she was not happy with multiple aspects of her daughter's educational experience, from the lack of discipline to the culture of cutting classes. Despite having strong opinions, she took a hands-off approach, and did not take the concerted cultivation approach that is typical of white middle-class parents. While she had a lot to say about what is wrong with the school, she did not communicate these concerns to the administration there. Aside from not feeling welcome at the school, which she gave as a reason for not sharing her concerns with the school administrators, she also continually qualified her complaints by explaining that she did not attend high school in the United States, and therefore her complaints were not valid.

As her daughters have moved through the school system, Patricia had become increasingly dissatisfied with the schools in Bedford, and specifically the high school. When I asked her if she was satisfied with her daughter's experience at Bedford High School, she answered, "Maybe not." Any time I asked Patricia to reflect on the schools and she had something negative to say, she always qualified it by reminding me that she had not attended school in the US. I found this to be striking, as if she did not feel she had the right to complain or ask for something different because she herself had not attended high school here. There was no sense of entitlement regarding what she wanted from the school system, even though she owns a house in this community and pays taxes that support the schools. Given that the average annual property taxes in Nassau County are over $10,000 a year, one would expect parents to demand a certain level of public services, including from the schools. This is an example of how the

middle-class parents in this study were not participating in their child's schooling in the customary middle-class way. The sense of entitlement, and belief that they know better than the teachers or the school, was not present in this group of parents.

Even though Patricia criticized the Bedford High School, she did believe that the students were getting a better education here than they would have in the Dominican Republic. She explained that it is difficult to compare education systems from the US and the Dominican Republic, but she sees far more resources here, such as "things hanging on the walls and in the classroom that is hands-on" and "the learning experience is a lot better." On the other hand, she sees a difference in the children, and believes that this is due to the school's culture. She explained, "But, when they get to college and they- they're coming from that, um, lack of discipline, they have problems. They have problems." So while she feels that the pedagogical approach to learning is superior here in terms of helping students learn, she does not think this approach translates well to the college environment because it breeds a lack of discipline in the students. One of Patricia's specific concerns was that the kids here do not study, they just do homework, and she feels that is not enough to truly learn. She recalled that when her older daughter was carrying a course load with mostly AP classes, she had to talk to her about studying, in addition to doing the homework, because she was not putting in the work to be able to do well in those classes. She explained to her daughter that it is a privilege to be put in those classes and she would need to "do a lot of work" outside of the assigned homework, in order to maintain her place in them. She tried not to pressure her, and instead, pushed her to think about whether she really wanted it and whether she was willing to put in the work. Patricia felt that the school was not informing students that they need to study and work hard in order to do well in

school. In other words, it takes more than just doing the assigned homework to do well in one's classes.

Patricia also complained about the "culture of cutting, cutting classes, cutting and missing." She explained that when she was in school, the philosophy was, "you go to school every day to each class," but was once again quick to qualify her complaint by saying that she did not attend high school in the United States. One of the other college-educated parents also talked about the problem of cutting classes at Bedford High School. Most of the students talked about cutting classes a lot, especially those that were seniors at the time of their interview. I was surprised by how matter-of-factly the students stated that they would leave campus mid-day and just not bother coming back. None of them seemed to think this was a problem, and were sharing this information in the context of proclaiming how great the school is, because it is an open campus and you can come and go as you please. Clearly, Patricia's concerns were not unfounded.

In addition, Patricia felt that the school had an approach towards the high school experience that puts an emphasis on how things look on the students' college applications, rather than focusing on the value of the experiences in and of themselves. She was unsure how that message got communicated to the students. She explained, "I mean there is a- propaganda—I don't know—something- the way they advertise it, uh- or maybe the way the kids understand that, it's like, you know- it's just for col- college preparation." She says the school has a lot of wonderful experiences and programs for the students, but the students just look at it as another item to add to their resume, even though she feels "it's more than that, it's the experience." She shared a story about a student she remembers, a classmate of her older daughter, who had done everything right in high school and applied to the college of his dreams. Unfortunately, he did

not get the scholarships to cover all of the costs of attendance, and she found this to be a "deception." That student probably thought, "Oh, my god, you know, I did- everything the right way, and still," according to her. She looked at me knowingly and said, "You know? Because that's a myth." Patricia feels that the school is perpetuating this idea that if you check off all the boxes, you will be guaranteed success, but she knows this is a myth, and wants her daughters to take in the experiences for what they are, and not just as a means to an end. In her opinion, the school is putting too much emphasis on filling out one's resume and looking good to colleges, instead of valuing the experiences in and of themselves.

Patricia described her involvement in her daughter's education. Again, she started by qualifying her statements because she did not go to high school in this country, although she clearly still has strong opinions. She said:

> I mean- I don't want to criticize something that I don't know. But I remember that- I mean, I wouldn't- I wouldn't dare to criticize, but- but I always, you know, talk to them about what classes and- and I try to get more of what they said. You know. What do you think you will learn with that class? or Why are you choosing that class? Or the other. Or whatever. I have been talking to guidance counselors in the past. Um. You know. Looking for, you know, a more rounded __. Right. Um. Because, I mean, uh- the school that I'm coming from there were some interesting courses. Uh- It was a mixture of humanities and- and, you know- and science. And the main courses.

This is a very different story from the one I heard from Sonia, Rebeca's mother, who was very satisfied with the school and could only ask very superficially about her daughter's schooling experiences. Because Patricia is more educated, she was able to ask more specific questions of her daughter, and be involved in a more meaningful way than Sonia. Patricia talked about going to the school and meeting with guidance counselors, something completely out of Sonia's repertoire. This was true of all of the college-educated parents. Having that background knowledge around schooling enabled them to better understand the schooling experiences of their children.

Patricia also had opinions about the kinds of classes offered at Bedford High School, and the content they covered in those classes. In the latter part of the quote, Patricia talked about looking for a more well-rounded education for her daughter. She further explained that she had taken classes about art and music, exposing her to "what we consider classic" and "interesting cultural stuff," and she lamented that her daughter's high school did not have these types of classes for Jenny to take. It is striking that she felt her own education in the Dominican Republic was more well-rounded and taught her more about Western European culture, than the education her daughters received here in the United States. Patricia was the only college-educated parent to make this observation about the classes. The non-college educated parents did not seem to know what classes their children were taking, much less have an opinion over their course options or the content of the courses.

Later on in the conversation, I specifically asked if she was happy with the classes Jenny was taking and she said, "They could have had different things. They could have had- em- a number of things that- Because everybody is, you know- __ different- and __. I don't know. A better orientation to the kids, to motivate them more." She criticized the course offerings again, but then returned to the idea that the school culture is not what she would like it to be. She wanted the school to instill certain ideas in its students, motivating them to work hard and study.

Since Patricia had so many strong opinions about her daughters' education, I expected that she would be very involved at the high school, but instead, she took a hands-off approach. As explained in the earlier example with her older daughter and her AP class load, she would tell her daughters that it is up to them to do the work, and that they have to decide whether they want to do it or not. She gave another example of this when she shared that her older daughter had had to re-take a class in the summer, after failing it during the regular school year. She said to her

daughter, "You know, this is a consequence. And I told you that- not to be- I mean, if you don't want to do it, don't do it." This exemplifies her stance towards her daughter's education: It is important, but I can't make you do it, that's up to you. She went on:

> So, she didn't pass it. Because she didn't do the- em- the final project, or something like that. And she was having, like, problems. And [I] said, "Well, you know." So, she went to summer class for that one. And I said, "You know, this is the consequence. This is the consequence. Because you- you couldn't get out of this class, because it was too late in the school year."

This exemplifies Patricia's parenting, not getting involved in her daughter's education in the way a typical middle-class parent would. Failing a class is a costly mistake that is part of one's academic transcript and permanent record, and would surely look bad to college admissions officers. Parents acting in the concerted cultivation way would have intervened with a tutor early on, so that the grade could be improved. Or, perhaps, they would have marched into the school and demanded that the child be allowed to drop the class even though the deadline had passed. Unfortunately, Patricia's hands-off approach may not have been serving her daughters as well as she envisioned, due to the fact that the school's teachers and administrators would likely view her lack of involvement and advocacy as disinterest in her daughters' education.

Because Patricia was not intervening in ways consistent with concerted cultivation parenting, I wondered if she did not feel welcome in the school, as Lareau (2000) argued that institutional racism was a potential reason why parents do not parent in the concerted cultivation style. While she qualified this observation by explaining that her point of reference was her hometown in the Dominican Republic, she felt that the administrators and teachers at Bedford High School do not welcome parents in the way she would expect them to. In her home country, "when a parent went to school, it was something." She means that a parent visit to a school in the

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Dominican Republic carries some weight and is taken more seriously than a parent visit here. In other words, the parent is respected and made to feel welcome. She explained:

> So, the school, the same way- I mean they- the teachers want- uh- the- the, um- the parents to become involved in school. But when they go to school, it's like- you know- I don't know- it's kind of a little distant.

Here, she was referring to the high school specifically, and not the middle school or elementary school in the district, where she says she did feel more welcome. Patricia was aware that the school wants more parent involvement, but she felt the teachers and administrators did not actually welcome her when she did show up. If school officials and teachers were not giving her the attention and respect she expected, she may have wondered whether it was worth bothering to share her complaints with school administrators. Patricia seemed aware that the school wanted and expected a certain kind of involvement from parents, yet because she sensed that they did not give importance to her presence, she did not comply with their expectations.

Feeling Supported Despite her Parents' Limitations and Constraints

From Jenny's point of view, her parents are supportive of her educational endeavors but are constrained by their schedules and unable to attend school events or games. Jenny played field hockey throughout middle school and high school, but her parents had not been able to come to games. She explained:

> But like my parents couldn't really come because my dad works- like, he works from like three to like three in the morning. It's like overnight shift kind of. So like- Yeah. And like- And then my mother, she works like from like nine to like eight. Because she also has like two jobs. So it's like kind of difficult. And that's why we like always use the weekend to like regroup.

When I inquired about weekend games, she explained because her games were in the mornings, her dad would usually be catching up on sleep from his overnight shifts and her mother worked on Saturdays, too, so again, they were unable to attend. I got the sense that Jenny was very aware

of and grateful for how hard her parents work to provide this life for her. The sacrifices they were making with multiple jobs and difficult hours did not go unnoticed. She did not seem to judge them or be disappointed when she talked about how they could not attend her games. Instead, she shared this information in a way that conveyed her acknowledgement of their hard work. The fact that none of the students in this study pointed out that their parents were not participating in school the way other students' parents were is surprising, and does not fit what Louie (2012) found in her sample of successful students. As previously explained, the students in her study compared their parents to middle-class expectations of how parents should participate in their child's schooling, and they longed for that kind of participation from their own parents. A possible explanation is that the Dominican students in Louie's sample were mostly working-class and lived in high-poverty segregated neighborhoods. Perhaps they developed a sense of urgency about improving their futures, whereas the students in my sample were more complacent in their comfortable suburban surroundings.

When I inquired if her family asks about school, Jenny answered:

Yeah. Yeah, they do. My mom usually asks me every day. It's like, "Oh, how was school." And I'd be like, "It was fine." Nothing big. And, like, they care about my grades a lot. As long as I pass.

Although her mother was asking about school daily, the inquiry and answer were both vague. According to Jenny, her mother was not asking about the details and Jenny was not providing them, either. This is different from what Patricia said, as she gave me the impression that she was asking more in-depth questions about Jenny's course schedule and the content being covered in her classes. It's also interesting that she says they care about her grades a lot, but then adds that all she needs to do to make them happy is pass. That is a very low bar to set for her academic achievement. Nonetheless, Jenny felt this checking in with her conveyed that they care.

When I asked if she is able to go to her parents for her homework, she said she can only go to them for Spanish help because, "Either they don't remember or they don't know. Like, social studies homework, they- they wouldn't be able to help." Since Bedford has set up a system of afterschool help, I asked if she takes advantage of it. Jenny said she does sometimes, or she asks a friend or looks on the internet. However, she did not seem concerned about this, nor expected her parents to be able to help her with her academic endeavors, which is surprising given Patricia's graduate degree. I would have expected that perhaps her mother would have been able to provide more direct support with her schoolwork, but that was not the case. A possible reason is the fact that she worked two jobs, and they did not see each other that much. Jenny mentioned that they would use the weekends to re-group and spend time together as a family, since they would rarely all see each other during the week. Again, this was different from what Louie (2012) found in her study, where the students did wish their parents could help them more. In this study, none of the students expressed any desire for their parents to be more involved or more helpful in their educational endeavors.

As for what her parents say to her about the future, she said, "They want me to succeed as much as possible." Again, she felt that her parents wanted the best for her. They would also tell her to "depend on yourself" and "get good grades," which further reinforces their support for her educational endeavors. Since Jenny's mother made it clear that it is up to her daughters to decide whether they want to put in the work to reach success, they were also hearing the message that the only person you can depend on is yourself. They would also say to her, "'Get a job. A good job that you'll enjoy every day.' Cause like I know- like some people in my family, they're- you know- they don't look like they enjoy their jobs. But like my parents, they do." Jenny saw that her parents enjoyed what they do, and her mother corroborated that. She said it was up to her

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daughters to pick a job they like, but she can always give recommendations. This further

supports the happiness theme running through almost all of the cases, where the students

reported that their parents all valued their future happiness, above all else. Interestingly, Patricia

did not say this exactly, as discussed in the previous section, but that is the message that Jenny

was hearing. Patricia was not pressuring Jenny to be something specific when she grows up.

Jenny reported that they would say to her she should do, "Basically anything that makes me

happy." They know it is competitive out there and working hard does not guarantee success,

even though that is what is promised in the US, yet they are focused on her happiness. The

parents did not talk about wanting their children to make good money or have a career with a

high social status, but instead, were focused on the idea that they find something that makes them

happy.

Mainstream Social and Cultural Capital

Patricia and the other college-educated parents, had more mainstream social and cultural

capital than the parents without college educations, but it was still unhelpful in the field of

applying to college for Jenny. For example, Patricia talked about researching schools before

moving into the Bedford community. In addition, she was more integrated with the community

and her neighbors. However, this did not translate into meaningful help for Jenny's college

application process, possibly due to the fact that Patricia did not experience a traditional path to

college nor to her graduate degree. She was lucky enough to have crossed paths with people who

were able to help her, which enabled her to experience upward social mobility and secure a good

life for her family. However, these experiences did not translate into helping Jenny, as neither

her nor her mother were familiar with the broader American higher education system.

Because of their lack of mainstream social and cultural capital that could aid in the college application process, both Jenny and her mother relied heavily on the expertise of the guidance counselors at the school. This, again, is consistent with the separation of schooling and parenting that is common with lower-class families. It is the family's responsibility to raise a respectful and hardworking child, but the school and its professionals are in charge of the child's education. Even though both Jenny and Patricia were dissatisfied with what the counselor was providing, they did not communicate this with the administration. They lacked that sense of entitlement, and did not feel comfortable expressing their concerns. This supports Lareau's (2003) argument that children internalize their parents' approach to their education, and this affects how the child interacts with the school as well. She noticed that the children of parents who used the concerted cultivation approach developed a sense of entitlement, while the children of parents who used the accomplishment of natural growth approach began to distrust schools and operate with a sense of constraint. This is apparent in the way Jenny behaved towards her educational endeavors. She was not proactive, and did not seek out additional help when she needed it. Instead, she took a more laid back approach and did not advocate for herself, distancing herself from the school and its resources, when they did not immediately meet her needs.

Parental Mainstream Social and Cultural Capital

In this section, I will argue that although Jenny's family has more mainstream social and cultural capital than the non-college educated parents, there were still large gaps in their ability to support Jenny through the college application process. The story of how Jenny's family found Bedford shows how Patricia used her mainstream cultural capital to find the best place for her family to purchase a home. For Patricia and the other college educated parents, Bedford was a

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purposeful choice, whereas it was more of a happy accident for the parents without a college degree. As previously explained, Jenny's family was living with her father's parents in Lancaster, but they needed to move out when the landlord decided to stop renting the home. Patricia and her husband had been living with her husband's parents since they got married and had stayed while they started their family. As they began to search for a new place to live, they quickly realized they were priced out of Lancaster and the surrounding communities, which are all known as being desirable places to live. In her search, Patricia discovered Bedford, and was happy with parts of the community, but did not want to live in the part that borders Hampshire, which is known for its majority minority population and low achievement in its schools. It was important for the family to stay in the area, since her in-laws were helping out with after school pick-ups for her daughters, and generally supporting their child care needs. Bedford was still close enough for her family to enjoy the support of her in-laws, which was necessary so that both parents could work and be able to afford a home.

After months of searching, their realtor found a house within their budget in Bedford. Jenny's mother says she looked into the local public elementary school and was pleased. Once the process of buying the house was set in motion, she went to sign up her daughter for school. Because she was not yet a resident of Bedford, she was asked to leave a check for a couple thousand dollars that would be cashed at the end of September if she could not present the deed by that date. Thankfully, escrow closed with just a couple of days to spare and she was able to retrieve her check and not have to pay the out of district tuition. Jenny's parents were the only ones to research the schools in Bedford prior to committing to renting or buying a house in the community. This is interesting because as any realtor can attest, school quality tends to be high on the list of important things that parents look for when considering moving into a

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neighborhood. However, Patricia only looked into the local elementary school and did not consider the district as a whole, nor the quality of the middle or high school. The families in this study ended up in Bedford mostly through familial connections, while a few were there due to sheer luck. Immigration is often driven by connections to relatives, and so this is consistent with prior research on this topic. Nonetheless, the fact that Patricia knew to research schools and did so, shows she had some mainstream cultural capital.

Patricia did seem more integrated into the Bedford community than most others, but it did not seem to lead to the kinds of connections that could be translated into a benefit for her or her family. While she had forged more connections with her neighbors, it did not prove to be useful in the field of the college application process. Because she worked a lot of hours, she said she mostly associated with a select group of friends she had made over the years, including a neighbor of Ecuadorian descent. When she was sharing how much she liked Bedford, she said, "we like it so much because we have a great neighbor. We have a great neighbor." He's "the life of the neighborhood," he has barbecues and he invites everyone, during which they "share good times." This stands in contrast to Rebeca's family, who mostly kept to themselves and did not socialize with their neighbors. The parents with a college education were more likely to talk about associating with neighbors and having friends in the community. Unfortunately, although they were more integrated, they were not sharing information about applying to college. When I asked them if they had people in their lives who knew about college, or that they felt they could go to for help or advice, none of the parents talked about their friends or neighbors as resources.

While I expected Patricia to have been more helpful with her daughter's college application process, the circumstances through which she enrolled in college may help explain the discrepancy. Although Patricia was enrolled in university in the Dominican Republic, she

almost fell into the opportunity to go to college here in the United States. During a visit with her

mother in June of 1996, she reconnected with a friend who had immigrated from the Dominican

Republic to the United States just a few years before that. He was enrolled at SUNY Old

Westbury on Long Island, and Patricia's mother insisted he take her daughter to see the campus.

This friend appeared to be well-connected at the university, as Patricia explained, "He was very

good at it- at that. Because my mother told him, you know, 'Have her register. Have her do it.'"

Clearly, Patricia's mother knew this friend was capable and could get things done for her. Her

mother wanted Patricia to stay and go to school here, and she knew this friend could help her.

Once they got there, there was a very nice Dominican man working at the admissions office, and

before she knew it, she had applied and was taking a test. She said:

> But, you know, Kiko. That's what we used to call the guy- that was his name- his
> nickname. Kiko. Uh- wonderful. A wonderful person with everybody. And he kind of-
> We went from one thing to another and another and, you know, before I knew it- Before I
> left, I was already registered.

Clearly, this was not the typical process for applying to college, nor for enrolling, but Patricia

was using her social capital to gain an advantage. Because she had been questioning her career in

finance and could not picture herself becoming a loan officer at a bank, which is what that degree

in the Dominican Republic typically leads to, she decided to leave behind her studies in her

home country, and move to the U.S. And so, she returned in September, officially moving to the

US and enrolling at SUNY Old Westbury. While the details of each case are different, all of the

college-educated parents had stories like this, highlighting the power of social capital. These

parents used their connections with friends or family to their advantage, attending institutions

where they knew someone who could help them. While this was an advantage in terms of

obtaining a college degree, it did put them at a disadvantage in understanding the larger college

landscape of the US. In other words, while Patricia gained social and cultural capital through her

experiences, it did not transfer to the mainstream field of the college application process for her daughter, because capital is not transposable across fields. Patricia's story supports prior research findings on what influences Latinx students' college choice. Person and Rosenbaum (2006) found that Latinx students were more likely to cite family and friends as the main reason for choosing a college than non-Latinx students.

Once at college, Patricia met her husband, who is from Ecuador. He ended up deciding that college was not for him, and enrolled in a trade school, obtaining certification to be a mechanic. He had been working as a mechanic on the North Shore of Long Island ever since. Patricia finished her degree in sociology at that SUNY campus and started a job at an agency that provided social services. There, she worked under an inspiring woman that became her mentor. Patricia explained, "And she was one of the first ones who said, 'You know. You're going for your masters.' I said, 'Um. Well, I have little children. I don't know.'" Despite having her doubts about pursuing an advanced degree in social work, her mentor encouraged her and found a program at Fordham University that was geared towards working professionals. So, again, Patricia was lucky enough to have someone in her life who found an opportunity for her, and helped her achieve something more than she had imagined for herself. Of course, she put in the hard work to earn the degrees, but in both cases, her connections were critical in taking those first steps towards enrolling. For Latinxes, this factor, knowing someone enrolled at the college, is often more important than college rankings and other factors that are more traditionally used to evaluate and choose a college to enroll in (Person & Rosenbaum, 2006). Patricia's story supports these findings.

As you can see, Jenny's mother possessed some mainstream cultural capital in that she researched Bedford schools before moving there, and was more integrated with the Bedford

community, which could have potentially led to mainstream social capital, but she was still at a disadvantage when compared to a white middle-class parent. She managed to leverage her connections into very positive outcomes for herself, but these experiences did not translate into an advantage for Jenny in terms of planning her future. Like the other three college-educated parents, Patricia did not have the background knowledge to successfully navigate the complicated and multi-tiered college landscape of the United States, neither for herself nor for her daughter. Patricia's cultural capital was specific to fields in the Dominican Republic and did not transfer to fields in the United States.

Relying on the Guidance Counselor: Disappointment from Both Jenny and her Mother

When it came time to apply to college, Jenny was not satisfied with the help from her guidance counselor, although she said she did receive help from her teachers with the letters of recommendation. On the other hand:

> my guidance counselor, she helped, but not as much as I would want her to. She wasn't- I felt like she kind of like wanted me to get it done and didn't really, like, kind of like go-like help me, really.

Jenny felt rushed during her meetings with the counselor, who seemed more focused on getting done and moving on to the next student rather than truly spending the time to help Jenny. She did receive some help, and perhaps this level of help would be enough for a student with the mainstream cultural and social capital to fill in the blanks. Jenny, meanwhile, could not exactly identify what additional help she needed, but seemed to realize that she could have used more help. She did not feel confident enough to advocate for herself and demand more time, or seek additional resources. This, again, supports Lareau's (2003) argument that students internalize their parents' approach to education, as Jenny lacked the sense of entitlement that would have led her to demand more from the school. However, this once again is different from what Louie

(2012) found, as the students in her study sought out other resources and programs to help them with their college applications. The students in this sample seemed at a loss, despite realizing they were not getting what they needed from the school.

When I first met Jenny, it was March of her senior year, and she shared that the timeline her guidance counselors used did not work for her. It felt "too late" for her to wait until the spring, as she bemoaned that the counselor "should have helped me like more in November or December." This was a missed opportunity by the school to really make a difference with a student who was motivated and wanted more information and guidance, but was unable to get it. Jenny was aware that it was late in the application timeline to be receiving help, but she did not take steps to remedy the situation. She lacked the sense of agency to seek outside resources and find what she needed.

Jenny wasn't the only one who was dissatisfied with her guidance counselors. All four of the students whose parents went to college were unhappy with the support the school provided with the college application process. It is possible that this group of students knew enough about the process to realize that the guidance they were receiving was inadequate. One other student agreed with Jenny that it would have been nice to have started earlier in the year. The others complained that the counselors were busy, and did not give them the attention they felt they needed. Of the six students whose parents did not go to college, only two were dissatisfied. The others did not seem to be aware of what they had not received, and were content with what had been provided. It seems they did not have enough of an understanding of the process, and the vast number of resources available, to realize that the school could have done more.

Patricia was also critical of the school's ability to support her daughter with the college application process. When I asked if she felt the school gave her daughter enough guidance in

this area, she answered, "Not really. Uh. I don't know if it is because she had, um, a guidance counselor who for some reason wasn't 100% there." Since she has an older daughter, she had a previous experience to compare this one to. She explained her frustration with the current guidance counselor when the counselor was unable to help her access an online aptitude test that she had previously gotten for her older daughter. Her older daughter's counselor had shared a website and password so that she could explore her interests and get some advice on career choices. When it came time for Jenny to explore her options, Patricia told her to go ask about this test, because she was now too busy and did not have the time to call or go to the school. Unfortunately, the older daughter's counselor had left the school, and the new one claimed that there were no such tests available. Her older daughter's counselor "was walking the extra mile," but the current one, "unfortunately, not so much." Patricia did admit that the first time around, with her older daughter, she was "more ahead of the game," and that the second time around, she told Jenny she would need to do some of the legwork herself, since she had "been so busy the past couple years" and did not have the time to go to advocate on her daughter's behalf, sending Jenny to get the information herself. When the guidance counselor failed to come through, Patricia used her professional network, finding a website through one of her colleagues.

Patricia's experience is consistent with the other college educated parents in the study. Those four parents were unhappy with the counselors, complaining that they did not help enough with course selection and that they did not have enough time to meet the needs of their children. On the other hand, the six non-college educated parents had no complaints about the guidance counselors. This is probably due to their limited understanding of the college application process and the role that counselors can play in it. The college-educated parents did know enough to criticize the counselors, but they did not intervene. Once again, we see the mismatch of class and

parenting style. The college-educated parents in this sample were approaching their child's education in a way consistent with the accomplishment of natural growth, which is typically associated with parents of a lower class.

Despite her having earned an advanced degree, there were still limitations to Patricia's ability to support her daughter with her educational endeavors, and these disadvantages became apparent when it came time to help Jenny with the college application process. This, combined with the parental approach of separating education from the family, compounded their need to rely on the guidance counselor to support Jenny. This supports prior research that found Latinx students rely heavily on family and friends, and high school staff for information about the college application process (Ceja, 2001; Gándara, 1993, 1995; Pérez & McDonough, 2008). Unfortunately, the counselor was unable to provide what Jenny needed, and so both Jenny and Patricia felt disappointed with their experience. Learning from her parents, Jenny also lacked a sense of entitlement and did not seek out additional help from the school, despite feeling her needs were not being met. From the perspective of the school's administrators, it could be argued that perhaps they are not aware of the differing needs of this newer population. They may be assuming that families that can move into this community can provide the additional help outside of school, and that the counselor is but one of many involved in the student's college planning. It is also possible that they had lower expectations of the Dominican students, unfairly judging their potential. Uncovering and identifying these gaps in knowledge on the part of both the student and their family can help districts with changing demographics better serve their new student populations.

College: Still in Need of Support and Guidance

At the time of the follow-up interviews, Jenny was the only student in the sample to be enrolled in a four-year college in the US. (One other student was enrolled at a university in the Dominican Republic, and the next chapter will focus on her.) Despite being in the most promising situation, Jenny was not on a guaranteed path towards earning a college degree. The lack of mainstream social and cultural capital from both Jenny and her mother was still evident in college, and once again, the school was not helping fill these gaps in their knowledge. She had experienced some difficult and stressful situations with the administration, was receiving poor guidance, and had not integrated into her college community. This was partly due to the fact that she had only been able to afford to live on campus during her first year, and she was now commuting from home. There are, however, a few positive signs, such as the fact that Jenny felt well-prepared for her classes, especially when compared to her peers. She was also using the social capital she did have to explore her career options, working with her mother in social work and replacing her cousin at a local law firm. Despite this, one can still argue that Jenny needs more support and guidance in order to ensure she is able to earn a college degree and at the very least, replicate the social class standing her parents have worked so hard to achieve.

Dissatisfied and Wanting to Transfer to Another College

When I met up with Jenny for her follow-up interview, she was in her second year at the College of Staten Island. She was now living at home, after having lived on campus her first year. She spoke of that year fondly, saying:

> My first year I dormed. Which was- uh- a whole different experience. Which I kind of wanted to do, to get- you know- the whole college is all different. So I might as well dorm and get the experience. Um. It was- you know- it was nice. I had a good time. I- you know- learned a lot of things that I didn't know before.

Now, in her second year, she was taking three classes and going to campus two times a week. She explained that the cost is "kind of like out of their reach now," for her parents, propelling her to live at home again. Surprisingly, even though she was already attending a four-year college, she shared that she was planning on transferring to another school, either John Jay or Farmingdale. When I asked why, she said, "It's kind of like- I- And I had a good experience my first, but just like the second year, it's kind of like- kind of like going down. [__ not really] interest me as much it did the first year." It had been a difficult transition for Jenny to return home for her sophomore year, and this may be a big part of why she is now dissatisfied with her college. Her parents had instilled a curfew and had been "very overwhelming," asking "for too much" from her. However, even if she transferred, she planned on continuing to live at home to save money, so that circumstance would remain the same.

I asked Jenny what the best part of attending the College of Staten Island was for her. She answered:

> Like, I met so many- like, awesome people, like, my first year. It was- you know- I still keep in contact with them. But it's just- It's not the same. Because I have to go all the way from Long Island to Staten Island. And, like, sometimes I just want to- I just wish I could- could just go in my dorm room and, like, you know- It would be easier. But it- it's not.

Though she began with the positive experience of having met many other students her first year while living on campus, it had now turned into a negative, because it was a lot more difficult to connect with people as a commuter. Her commute would typically take over an hour, and could take much longer with traffic, as there are a limited number of routes to drive from one island to another. She had not maintained the connections with the people she had met her first year, explaining that it was hard to meet up with them now that she was commuting. Her main friends

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were people from her high school who were also commuting to their colleges. She was, however, having positive experiences and making more meaningful connections in her workplace.

Her first year, she had worked at a retail clothing store in a mall near the college. Her second year, she was working twenty-four hours a week, three full days, at a law firm. She would do her schoolwork in the evenings after getting off work at five, on weekends, and sometimes even while she was at the law firm. She got the job through her cousin, who used to work there, and because of this, she was enjoying the camaraderie. She explained that there were many "Spanish people" working there, and that created a sort of community where they took care of each other. She further explained:

> So, there I have a co-worker- um- She's a Dominican too as well. So, like, obviously we get each other really because- we're both of the same culture. And then, uh- the manager, she um- I think she likes me. I think she likes me. I- you know- anything she needs, I'm there for her. So. And then the boss, he- I don't really- really see him that much. Because he's always like out at a court and- I don't know- something. But, you know, I always say hi to him. Once in a while. And then the other workers, um- I guess, the- the secretary? Yeah. I think that's what you would call her. Um. She- I know her like personally. Like, she's my sister's like best friend.

When comparing how she described her workplace with how she described her peers in college, it is clear that Jenny feels far more connected at her workplace than in college. She said she had made some friends in the dorm her first year, but now, she mostly socialized with her friends from Bedford who were also living at home. One of her freshman year roommates was also from Bedford; although just an acquaintance when they were in high school, she had become a close friend. That friend had also moved back home for her second year. Other than that, she did not describe feeling part of the college community. This may be part of the reason she was considering transferring to another school.

When I asked Jenny if she would be able to keep the job at the law firm if she transferred to another college, she answered, "Actually, I haven't even thought about that. To be honest.

Because I feel like maybe once I get into a school I'll think about it." The fact that she had not thought through her employment possibilities after transferring made me question how seriously she was considering this option. As she clearly needed to work, and had done so both years so far, it was puzzling that she had not thought through where she would work if she changed schools. She did say the law firm was close to her home, and since she planned to continue commuting, it could potentially work out.

When Jenny was in high school, she was interested in studying physical therapy or athletic training. I asked if she was still interested in pursuing a career in that field, and she said that before being interested in that, she had been interested in criminal justice and the idea of becoming a detective, because she likes "to investigate things." This is why she was thinking of transferring to John Jay, given the institution's expertise in criminal justice. However, she said she had not decided for sure, and if she did want to pursue physical therapy, she would just major in psychology and then go into a program afterwards. She had not thought through these plans, and was indecisive about how to proceed. She provided further evidence of her confusion when I asked whether she could stay at the College of Staten Island and get the degree she wanted. She answered:

> If I, like, you know, really- But I'm also, like- I don't know. Like, I guess, like, the past, like, summer, I was also like thinking about it. Um. Like majoring-wise. Because I also-Like, in the summer I work[ed] with my mother and she's a social worker. So, I worked with, um, like one of her- her co-workers who is like a- also a mental health counselor. She's a coordinator and she was like teaching me like a bunch of things. So, [they] also made me, like, explore, like, my options. And that was in the summer. And then now I work at a law firm. Um. Like. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, I also- it's also like giving me- Like, I'm also like exploring my options right now. So, but I do have, like, a- not like a safety, but uh- an idea of what I do want to do. But it could always change. [It depends] on my options that I have. [So, I'm not really] settling down on something. Since I'm just doing the requirements right now.

There is a definite sense of confusion as to what direction to go in for her major, but she is exploring her options while completing the general requirements. The problem is that the requirements may be different at another institution, and so she may need to take additional classes once she figures out where she is transferring to, if indeed she does transfer.

However, it was already fall of her sophomore year and she was not following through on her plans to transfer to another school. She explained:

> Well, I was planning on- I wanted to transfer this com- like, for Spring. But um- I feel like- I don't know. I feel like it might be a little too late. I was thinking __ -I know I [gave in] my application for- for John Jay. I just need to get my transcript. Um. But I still think I might go to advisement. Just in case. Because I know I can sign up for classes [that are] like whenever, really. And then, like, you know, just have it there. Just in case.

She seems to be in need of some guidance in terms of completing the steps towards transferring. Luckily, she was aware that more needed to be done before securing the transfer, and so she planned to go ahead and register for classes for the following semester at her current college, securing her spot there and ensuring she continues to make progress towards those general requirements.

Jenny then shared that going to advisement was harder than it sounded, and was one of the things that she did not like about this college. It reminded me of when she was not getting what she needed from her guidance counselor in high school. She explained that you are not allowed to register without attending an advisement session, yet this process could take hours. She would sit in a room and wait to be called in, being assigned to whoever was available. She was not even sure if the people advising were professors or administrators. She had seen a different person for each semester, and was not assigned a permanent advisor. Once called in, she would be handed a list of classes she was eligible to take and that would fulfill the general requirements, from which she would choose what to take. While it can be appreciated that

students are not just signing up for whatever they want without any guidance, it seems that the process could be more tailored to each individual student and their unique needs. Jenny was not satisfied with this process and hoped it would be different at another school.

She had also had a very negative experience with the logistics of paying for school, and it had caused her a lot of unnecessary stress. When I asked her what she disliked most about College of Staten Island, she answered:

> Um. Mainly, I guess the administrative-wise. Like, I remember I had a lot- Because I had a loan that I took out. So they would, like say that oh, I didn't- they didn't do my loan. And they made like a big issue about it. And, like, I felt like no one was really helping. [Them- __] It ended up like processing. But it just- you know- uh…I just felt like I needed like a little help. I mean, I know you're on your own, but I didn't know anything. So…

She did take some responsibility for being on her own and needing to figure things out for herself, but she also felt that they were being unhelpful and not giving her the information she needed, to be able to understand what had happened with her loan.

She gave another example demonstrating the disorganization of the college, and the stress it had caused her. She said:

> And, um- other things. Like, they- we had this thing called 'CLUE credits.' Where I guess you had to go to certain events and if you didn't do them within the first year, you wouldn't be able to sign up for classes. And I did all of them, but they were saying that I didn't. And it just made like a whole big hassle about it. And it stressed me out- and [then where] I kind of didn't want to deal with it anymore. And like now I have to go to [where] like advisement where like they suggest me classes. ___ other whole little- So. That's kind of the reason why I'd to like leave. [And it's] out of the way.

In the college's attempt to orient new students and have them attend certain informational events, they had instead created a situation where Jenny was forced to deal with their mistaken hold on her ability to register. The administrative side of going to college had been a mostly negative experience for Jenny. In the following section, I will note some of the positive things about her college experience thus far.

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Well-Prepared, but Still Not Doing Well

Jenny was pleased to share that Bedford High School had prepared her well for her college classes. She said:

> Yeah, but- like, it actually helped a lot. Like, there's some people who, um- didn't know how to write research papers. And, like, my school, we would always write a research paper every year. Some- They didn't even know how to do, like, anything. Also, like, math-wise. Um. It was- There are some- some things people didn't know and I learned it in school and they didn't.

Jenny was proud that her high school had required her to write research papers, and that she was now able to do so in college. She expressed surprise that her peers had not had that experience. Her pride was further expressed when she said, "Yeah. Because they didn't know and I knew. I was like, 'That's awesome.'" While it is wonderful that Jenny felt well-prepared for her classes, it is also disheartening to think that her peers were so ill-prepared. Perhaps Jenny could have handled attending a better ranked college that would challenge her, and connect her with peers who were equally prepared for college. This phenomenon, known as undermatching, is especially common among low-income students, minorities, and first-generation college goers (Smith, Pender and Howell, 2013). While students who enroll in a community college are less likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree than those who attend a 4-year college (Long & Kurlaender, 2009), they are also less likely to graduate if they attend a less selective 4-year college (Bowen, Chingos & McPherson, 2009). Indeed, researchers have consistently found that the type of college a student attends influences their persistence, degree attainment, the likelihood of attending graduate school, and how satisfied they are with their college experiences (Baker & Vélez, 1996; Hossler, Braxton & Coopersmith, 1989; Tinto, 1993). Therefore, Jenny may be at risk of not earning her degree, or be less likely to attend graduate school, having long

term consequences for her life course. In fact, it seems that her classes were generally too easy for her. When I asked if she felt they were at the right level, she answered:

> I felt like- Um. I don't know. I felt like I kind of knew what was going on. Like, I remember English class-wise, like, it was, you know, the same- the same as if I was kind of like in high school. The only thing harder was probably math. Like it's just that math and then it's like- Oh, wait. Let's put it up like five more notches. Um. Other classes. Like history class. I like knew what was going on. So, I felt comfortable taking those classes.

Because she seemed to be saying that she was not being challenged enough, I expected her to say she had done very well in all of her classes. However, that was not the case. Describing her grades her first year, she said they weren't the best, but they weren't the worst either, adding, "Like, I know I could have done better. In some of the classes." This seemed to contradict her previous statements about the level of the classes. Because of this, I asked if she had sought help, and she said she had not gone to office hours or looked for any additional support. She wished she had gone to speak to her professors about her test-taking skills because she felt her anxiety was getting in the way of performing well. Unfortunately, she did not communicate this concern with anyone, and so no modifications were made. This provides further support for Lareau's (2003) argument that the approach that parents take with their involvement in their child's education is transferred to the children themselves. Just like when she was in high school, Jenny did not have a sense of entitlement that comes from the concerted cultivation approach of middle-class parents. Instead, she had developed a sense of constraint, and did not see how she could be proactive and push the school to meet her needs.

According to Jenny, her mother was not asking about school as much, because she was seeing how dedicated to her studies her daughter was. She said her mother had noticed how she was "going to the library and like really focusing. So, it's kind of like she doesn't really ask." Indeed, Jenny did say one big difference between college and high school was that she now had

to study. She said, "School-wise, you know, it was- it was good. It was way different. You actually have to study. You actually ___ - You actually have to study." This was something Patricia had previously complained about, and so perhaps she was now satisfied that her daughter was not just doing homework, but truly studying. Patricia may have also been happier with the courses available. She had complained about the kinds of classes at the high school, but now, Jenny was taking a class on 19th century art and going to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She was finally getting that education in the classics that her mother so desired for her.

Although there are a few positive aspects of Jenny's college experience thus far, we can see that she is still struggling and could use more support. It is by no means inevitable that she will earn a four-year degree from College of Staten Island or any other institution she transfers to. While I was hopeful that Jenny might be a student forging ahead and on track to earning a college degree, that was not the case. Just like in high school, Jenny exhibited the lack of entitlement typical of those who had been parented in the accomplishment of natural growth style. She still had not learned to advocate for herself and to push the school to meet her needs. In addition, she had not connected with her peers and did not have a strong support system around her. Instead, she was connecting with fellow Latinx people at her workplace, distancing her from the peers at school that could support her pursuit of a college degree. While she felt well-prepared to handle her classes, especially when compared to her peers, she said she was still not doing well, and could do better. It is unclear whether she was undermatching at this institution or not. And lastly, her mother seemed to be less involved than before, a cause for more concern about Jenny's ability to get through college.

On the other hand, Jenny is doing better than many Latinx students, having enrolled in a four-year college directly after finishing high school. Although the number of Latinx students

enrolling in college has increased (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010), they continue to lag behind White Americans. Latinx students are also more likely to enroll in community college compared to White students (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). Therefore, Jenny has a better chance of earning a bachelor's degree than the average Latinx student in the United States by having enrolled at College of Staten Island.

Chapter Conclusion

There are several takeaways from Jenny's story. The first is that, like the other students in the sample, she is on a path of selective acculturation, and is developing a bicultural identity. She is learning to navigate mainstream fields, while also accessing the cultural resources of the neighboring ethnic enclave, and those of her family, to gain skills to navigate Latinx social fields as well. This was evident in her follow up interview, when she shared the connection she felt with the other "Spanish" people at her workplace. Whether this signals upward mobility remains to be seen, but her journey is precarious thus far.

Second, the students and their parents that did graduate from college are far more realistic and pessimistic about the power of education. The parents have seen the constraints of a return on the investment of a college degree and are highly skeptical that everything will turn out ok for their children, if they are just able to pursue higher education. The students are receiving this message and also doubting whether they can maintain the lifestyle their parents have worked so hard to provide for them. Although Jenny did not fit the pattern for students with college educated parents, she did not contradict it either. She was vague in her answers, which makes sense within the context of her mother's inability to define what future success would look like for her daughter.

And lastly, despite having earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree, Jenny's mother was participating in her child's education in a way consistent with lower-class parenting styles, complicating Lareau's (2000, 2003) argument that class is the main determinant for how a parent approaches their child's education. Based on these findings, it is imperative that we also consider ethnicity and immigrant status. Even though she is informed enough to have complaints about Jenny's schooling experience, she does not feel entitled to express those opinions to the administration. In addition, Jenny's mother has been unable to support her daughter's college application process in a meaningful way, maintaining that the school is in charge of the educational aspects of her child's life. This may be due to the fact that Jenny's mother does not have the mainstream social and cultural capital to help her daughter with this process, not having experienced the traditional path to college in the United States herself. This lack of mainstream social and cultural capital continues to disadvantage Jenny as she struggles through the first years of her college education.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Narcisa

For the final findings chapter, I chose to focus on Narcisa, who was in twelfth grade when I first met her. I also interviewed her sister for this study, who was in tenth grade during the initial interview, but this chapter will focus on the older of the two sisters, Narcisa. This family was unique in that they came to the United States with the intention of returning to the Dominican Republic. Hence they have a different viewpoint than the other families in the study. Dominicans are often thought of as one of the more transnational Latinx groups (Kasinitz et al., 2008; Louie, 2006), and Narcisa's family is representative of that trend. In fact, many social and political forces have led to this high degree of transnationalism, making the Dominican Republic dependent on migrant remittances as one of the main sources of hard currency, and as a source for funding political races (Itzigsohn, 1995). Indeed, the Dominican Republic encourages transnationalism by allowing dual citizenship, which includes the right to vote in Dominican elections, even from the United States. The Dominican Election Board of New York, in charge of setting up polling locations, provided sixteen locations in the state for its citizens to vote in a Dominican presidential election in 2004 (Elliot, 2004).

A couple of students in the study did talk about potentially going to college in the Dominican Republic, often because their parents suggested it, but they all eventually wanted to live and work in the US. This was the only family that was definitely returning to its home country. In fact, they were settled into their new lives in the Dominican Republic when I followed up with them two years later. Narcisa was enrolled in a university, and her younger sister was finishing up high school.

In this chapter, I will present four main arguments. The first is that students in Bedford were assimilating while developing and maintaining their Dominican-ness, leading towards

biculturalism. However, they are first and foremost assimilating to mainstream American culture, which is highlighted by Narcisa's experience adjusting to life in the Dominican Republic. Though Narcisa seemed highly connected to her Dominican heritage and comfortable in Latinx spaces in the U.S., likely due to her parents' orientation towards their temporary stay, she found that when she moved back to the Dominican Republic, she did not feel as comfortable as she had hoped she would. She was attending college with Dominican students that did not speak English, and the general atmosphere of the place was not cosmopolitan enough for her liking, lacking 'diversity' and 'open-mindedness.' Therefore, Narcisa's case adds an interesting perspective to the question of how much the students in this study are developing a Dominican identity. While they may be developing biculturalism, they are more American than not. Being comfortable in US Latinx or Dominican spaces does not transfer to spaces in the Dominican Republic. This was particularly striking in light of how little their mother, Victoria, had integrated into the Bedford community. Victoria was the only parent to speak negatively of American culture in general, admitting she had never felt comfortable here. Because of this temporary orientation to her life in the U.S., I would have expected Narcisa to be less assimilated to American culture, but this was not the case.

Second, while the other students in the study whose parents did not go to college were more likely to believe in the American ethos, that hard work leads to success, Narcisa's answer in her first interview did not fit the pattern. Surprisingly, she pointed out the competitiveness of the job market. However, in her follow up interview, she cited the need to acquire a variety of skills in order to be successful in the future, once again focusing on things an individual must do for themselves, which was a typical answer from students whose parents did not attend college. From Victoria's perspective, Narcisa has to achieve very little in order to be considered

successful, only a job or career. Because she was not getting much guidance from her parents about what it takes to make it or the role of education in securing a successful future, it was surprising that she had any ideas at all about what she needs to succeed.

The third argument is that, despite living in a middle-class community, Narcisa's parents are participating in their daughter's education in a style consistent with lower class families. This was to be expected, given their lack of experience with the US educational system, characteristic of the other parents in this study. While Victoria's lack of opinion on the schools and the quality of the education her daughter was receiving may have been exacerbated by the fact that she knew her daughter would simply be able to enroll in college in the Dominican Republic, it is unlikely that she would have participated in a different way had she planned on staying in the U.S. Victoria also did not need to worry about acquiring mainstream social and cultural capital to give her daughter a competitive edge in the college application process, though, I doubt this was a purposeful decision based on her future plans to return to the Dominican Republic, but instead, based on her class status. Even though Victoria was not involved in Narcisa's education, Narcisa still felt supported by her parents and believed that they valued education.

Lastly, I argue that there are both benefits and drawbacks to having relocated back to the Dominican Republic for Narcisa. Her parents were able to provide a level of support that would not have been possible had they stayed and she had attended college here in the U.S. However, she was not fitting in very well, so much so that she had already transferred to another college for her second year of studies. She was also talking about moving back to the U.S. for a graduate degree and to work, which would potentially put her at a disadvantage, having earned her bachelor's degree in Spanish as the language of instruction. Therefore, while it is too early to

determine the long-term consequences of having gone to college in the Dominican Republic, we can already see both some advantages and disadvantages for Narcisa.

Bedford: A Temporary Place to Save Some Money

Because of the family's plan to return to the Dominican Republic, Narcisa's mother, Victoria, was one of the least integrated into the Bedford community in my study sample. She had strong opinions about American culture, and had never felt comfortable in the U.S. To her, the United States was a place to save some money so that she could return to her country, and live a better life. It is not uncommon for Dominican immigrants to keep businesses and homes on the island to return to in the future, which are cared for by family and friends in the meantime (Itzigsohn, Cabral, Medina & Vasquez, 1999). Bedford felt lonely and isolated for her, and she saw the family's stay in the U.S. as a sacrifice that she and her husband were making in order to provide a better future for their daughters. She was the only parent to have a negative view of Bedford and the United States in general.

Narcisa provides an interesting contrast to the other students, especially regarding her assimilation and the development of her biculturalism. Despite always knowing she was here in the United States only temporarily, she still managed to integrate quite well into the Bedford community. She developed a habitus that reflects a high level of comfort in U.S. mainstream fields, just like the other students in this study. Narcisa was also developing and maintaining her Dominican identity, perhaps more so than the other students in the study, as preparation for moving back to the Dominican Republic. She was practicing her Spanish a lot in the home with her parents, as well as out and about in the community, and was also spending time reading in Spanish, in an attempt to be more prepared to receive instruction in that language for college. And similar to the other students, Narcisa also used Fairview as a cultural resource, enjoying the

Dominican restaurants and general atmosphere there, learning to feel comfortable in a majority

Latinx place. However, her comfort level in navigating Latinx fields in the U.S. did not transfer

to Dominican fields, as Narcisa later found herself feeling uncomfortable attending college in a

small town in the Dominican Republic. Itzigsohn (2009) found that second generation

Dominicans often do not feel at home in the Dominican Republic, reflecting the boundaries of

transnational belonging. They visit the island often, but cannot picture themselves living there, as

they do not feel they truly fit in. I argue that even though Narcisa was developing both her

American and Dominican identity, and felt comfortable in both mainstream and Dominican

contexts here in the U.S., she was far more integrated into the American culture and felt out of

place back in the Dominican Republic.

Their Mother's Perspective on Bedford: "Actually, I've Never Liked It Here"

The sisters met me at the Dunkin' Donuts near the high school during their Spring Break.

They had not confirmed they would be there by replying to my text, and just showed up during

the block of time I had told students I would be there, so we charged ahead with the interviews.

They both had taken their pictures and brought the cameras with them, which was actually rare,

as most of the students would show up unprepared. After we completed the interview for each of

them, they called their mother, who gets home from work at noon. She agreed to do the interview

that same day, and we walked to their house together. I remember thinking it was quite a walk

from the school, as they led the way and we wound through many different residential streets. I

felt completely lost, because we were off the main roads, but I followed along, since they clearly

knew the route. I noticed that although some streets had bigger houses than others, all of the

neighborhoods were well-cared for and so quiet, especially compared to the City. Narcisa

sweetly offered to carry my bag at least four times during our walk. She said she understood how far it can feel with a heavy book bag, since she does this walk all of the time.

As we approached their house, I noted that it was one of the smaller ones on the block. We entered directly into a living room that had two couches and a huge TV, but somehow still felt a bit empty and not very lived-in or homey. There were not a lot of knick-knacks around, and the walls were mostly bare. A very popular Spanish language show was on called *Caso Cerrado*, and we watched it for a bit. It translates to Case Closed, and is similar to People's Court or Judge Judy, making it easy to get hooked into any episode being aired. Because Victoria seemed very nervous, I decided to watch TV with her and make small talk for a bit, in hopes of helping her relax. She offered me a typical Dominican dish called *sopa de pata de res,* which is a stew of cow foot, but I politely declined. She was dressed casually in slacks and a top, wearing little to no make-up.

When I suggested that we get started, Victoria told me that she is uneducated, and may not understand big words. It was then that I realized how intimidating this interview was to her, and I tried my best to explain to her that there was no right answer, but that I wanted to learn about her experiences here in Bedford. Nevertheless, her answers were very short and repetitive. She mostly answered with yes or no, and would often laugh nervously after each answer, which was typical of the non-college educated parents.

Victoria explained that they had arrived directly to the majority white suburban community next door, Richmond, and lived there for about five years before moving to Bedford. Her husband had come to the US many years before but traveled back and forth. They met in the Dominican Republic and got married there, but it wasn't until six years later that she was able to join him here in the States, a common story among Dominican immigrants, where the father

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immigrates first and works to get settled before bringing the rest of the family (Duany, 2008). Both of Victoria's daughters had been born in the Dominican Republic, but were under four years old when they arrived to the US; they were essentially raised here. When I inquired about how they knew about settling in these suburban communities versus the Dominican enclave in New York City, she said it had been "a chain," where her father in law had come first to this area and brought his son (her husband), who then brought her. None of the other students and their families in this study planned to move back to the Dominican Republic.

At the time of our interview, Victoria had been in the United States for thirteen years and had come "a completar un poquito de ahorros para hacer algo en el país de uno" (to complete a bit of savings in order to do something in one's own country). The family's plan had always been to work hard here, save money, and then move back to the Dominican Republic. Their timeline was based on when their oldest, Narcisa, would graduate from high school, as they wanted both their daughters to go to college in the Dominican Republic. Therefore, as soon as Narcisa finished up at Bedford High School, they would move back to the Dominican Republic, and Narcisa would begin college there. Meanwhile, her younger sister would attend an international school, and finish her high school studies there, earning a high school diploma equivalent to what is earned here in the US.

Victoria did talk a little about her impression of the Bedford community, and noted, "Nunca- En realidad a mí nunca me ha gustado aquí, Nueva York. Estamos por- porque necesitamos un poco de ahorros nada más." (Never- Actually I've never liked it here, New York. We are here because- because we need some savings, nothing more.) Because she arrived to the US with the intention of only being here temporarily, she had engaged very little with her community and the school. She explained her reasoning for returning to the Dominican

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Republic, saying, "Porque aquí está muy dificíl todo. En el país de uno es difícil, pero aquí está más difícil. Todo caro. La renta cara." (Because here everything is too difficult. In one's own country, life is difficult, but here it is more difficult. Everything is expensive. The rent is expensive.) In addition, she felt uncomfortable with American culture. She explained, "Sí, uno se siente solo. No es igual que en el país de uno, [tu ves] ___ mucha comunicación." (Yes, one feels alone. It's not the same as in one's country, [you see] ___ a lot of communication.) Due to the language barrier, she had been unable to connect with others here, and felt that Americans just do not communicate as much as people do in her home country. She added, "No hay vecinos. Pues, allá uno disfruta los vecinos. Cuela un cafe. [laughs] Se siente afuera. Ya tiene compañero para compartir cafe. Pero aquí ni siquiera miran a uno. [laughs]" (There are no neighbors. Well, over there you enjoy the neighbors. Strain some coffee. [Laughs] You sit outside. You have someone to share a coffee with. But here, people don't even look at you.) This disconnection she feels with her community extends to her limited engagement with its institutions, such as the public schools. None of the other parents spoke negatively about American culture, nor expressed any desire to leave the country. While the college educated parents were critical of the realities of the current job market and the value of a college degree, they never talked about living somewhere else. Victoria had no intention of staying in the U.S., and this influenced her level of integration into the Bedford community. Although it is common for Dominicans to plan on returning to the island after saving enough money to buy land or start a business there, most never return or only return temporarily (Pantoja, 2005).

Feeling Comfortable in Two Worlds: Developing Biculturalism

After we finished the interview, the sisters offered to walk me over to the other Dunkin' Donuts by the train station for my next interview. The younger sister was much shyer, and so

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Narcisa did most of the talking. She talked about voting and mentioned that she was a Democrat. She asked me about my background, and I shared my parents' heritage. She explained that her family is from a town up in the mountains of the Dominican Republic called Jarabacoa. Another one of the students that was participating in the study was also from the same town, and their families knew each other back on the island. Although Narcisa was sad about leaving, she was hopeful that perhaps the other student would come visit her family, and they would see each other in the Dominican Republic. As we walked, they also talked about the neighborhood. They both liked that the high school was right next to a strip mall giving them easy access to some businesses like the bagel shop, a Subway sandwich shop, and the movie theater. Narcisa also pointed out a hair salon that does Dominican hair, and I noticed a sign that said they do "all kinds of hair." Some Dominicans have African ancestry, and can have thick, curly hair that not all hair stylists know how to work with. They also pointed out the nearest *bodega* (deli), which was not very close to their house, and they lamented this fact. (In New York City, a *bodega* can be found on nearly every corner and is never too far away.) The sisters seemed very connected to their Dominican identity, which may be due to the fact that they were raised knowing they would eventually move back there.

Narcisa took the second most number of pictures of any of the students, a total of forty-eight (see Appendix C for number of pictures each student took). Some were repeats, when the picture came out blurry on the first try, or sometimes she would get closer to what she was actually trying to show me. However, I found her pictures to be thoughtful, and she was able to explain why she had included each photo. One of the recurring themes was the damage that Hurricane Sandy had caused. We were meeting about five months after it had hit, but the aftermath was still evident. Narcisa took several pictures of the wooded area that lined the train

tracks near her home, and talked about how all of the downed trees had been caused by Sandy. She also took a picture of one of the High School buildings that had been damaged (Figure 18) causing a serious over-crowding problem in the other buildings. The roof had been torn off, and they were still doing repairs five months later. You could see the chairs stacked in the hallway, and the building was cordoned off with bright orange construction netting. There was also a picture of a large dumpster in front of a house that was full of wooden planks. She explained that people were still fixing their homes that had been damaged in the hurricane. Narcisa's dismay at the damage done by Sandy shows how much she feels a part of the Bedford community. There was genuine concern for her neighbors and the school.

Figure 18. Damage to Bedford High School by Hurricane Sandy.

Narcisa felt comfortable in all parts of Bedford, as evidenced by her pictures. For example, in response to the prompt about taking pictures of places she feels comfortable in, she took ten pictures of different businesses she frequented, from Checkers, to CVS, to the movie theater next to the High School. Like the other students, she did not have pictures of places she did not like or did not feel comfortable in, showing she felt welcome and a part of the Bedford community. She also took several pictures of the wooded area along the train tracks near her house, pointing out the trash found along the walkway (Figure 19). It was not a lot of trash, and I was struck by how upsetting she found this, and how proud she seemed about the overall cleanliness of the community. This further establishes her feeling of belonging in Bedford, as she cares very deeply about a small amount of trash.

Figure 19. Trash by the train tracks in Bedford.

Aside from the photos of the trash near the train tracks, Narcisa also had one photo of an

abandoned house that she didn't like in her neighborhood (Figure 20). She explained that

"there's a few around," and it was probably "because of the recession." She also included a city

sign from a center median that said "Welcome to beautiful Bedford," and she commented that it

was indeed beautiful, and that "there's not a lot of bad parts." It was interesting that she thought

there were some "bad" parts of Bedford, as none of the other students talked about any bad parts

of Bedford- although one student did explain that Bedford is divided into two parts based on

class. This student was the only one who had moved to Bedford from Washington Heights, the

urban Dominican enclave, and because of this, she was far more aware of class differences than

the other students. She explained that living on one side highway running meant you were more well off than those living on the other side, and that her fellow students at Bedford High School would judge each other based on that. Having learned this from her, I found it surprising that none of the other students talked about the class differences in Bedford. While Narcisa was unable to articulate those differences, she was aware of the presence of good and bad parts of Bedford.

Figure 20. Run down house in Narcisa's neighborhood.

Even though all but one of the students did not talk about class differences within Bedford, several of them, including Narcisa, spoke negatively of surrounding communities that are majority minority, such as Fairview, as well as areas of New York City like the Bronx and

Queens. This shunning of areas that have a high concentration of Dominicans was an interesting juxtaposition with the students' pride in their cultural heritage. While they remained connected to their background, they do not want to be immersed in that community. All of the students preferred Bedford, and did not want to live in areas with a lot of "Spanish" people. This was true of the sisters as well, even though they would be moving back to the Dominican Republic.

Comparing school districts and communities is ingrained in the suburban culture of Long Island, as it is common knowledge that areas with majority minority populations have lower-performing schools (Wells, Ready, Fox, Warner, Roda, Spence, Williams & Wright, 2014). In fact, many of the students in this study talked about how the students from majority minority school districts were crossing the boundary and coming to start trouble at their school. Therefore, the fact that the Dominican students in this study felt that the neighboring Dominican enclave is not as good as where they live shows just how much they have integrated into Bedford. They had adopted the community's mentality of judgment and comparison, deeming the majority minority communities as less desirable than where they live. The interesting part is that Bedford itself is ranked lower than many of the majority white areas surrounding it. Nonetheless, it is not at the bottom of the rankings, and therefore, the parents in Bedford must maintain that separation as a way to reinforce their identity as a "better" suburban community.

Narcisa explained that one community next door is "predominately, like, white, Caucasian. So, like, the environment is different, you know. She said, "it's not like they're rude in Richmond," and she did have family there, but it was not her preferred place to be. It is interesting that she assumed I would think people in Richmond, a whiter community, would be rude to her. She did not say she felt welcome, but instead, focused on the fact that they are not rude to her. This gave me the sense that they were not the most welcoming either.

Another defining aspect of Bedford as a community is that its members consider themselves to be diverse. Narcisa has also adopted this view of Bedford and spoke about it with pride. Through this lens, she took pictures of five different "places of worship," because "there's like different religions, because there's a lot of different people living in Bedford. So, it's very diverse." These pictures included a Baptist church, a Korean Presbyterian church (Figure 21) and a building where the Sai religion is practiced, a religion typically associated with India. However, when I inquired whether her family attends church, she explained that they go to Fairview for Spanish language Catholic services. Despite showcasing the diversity of the places of worship in Bedford, her family still had to go to the town next door to find what they desired. Narcisa's pictures highlight what all of the students said they liked about Bedford and what makes it a unique place: the diversity of the people, and that they all get along.

Figure 21. One of the many places of worship in Bedford.

Narcisa took a few pictures that spoke to how she fit in at Bedford High School. It appears she was not as integrated in the school as in the community; nor was she taking advantage of the features of a good suburban school. One picture was of her physics classroom, where she complained that it was boring and hard to understand. Besides her classroom and the damaged building, she had two additional photos of her school, one of the baseball field (Figure 22), because she liked baseball and was a Yankees fan, and one of the sports plaques on a school building, saying:

> Um, I just took a picture of that. Because it's like our school is known for- they have good people- __ like sports-teams. Like basketball and football. So, I took a picture of that. And wrestling. Like, they're known for that, I guess.

When I asked if she attended games, though, she said only once in a while. While the school identity revolves around sports, she is not a part of it as either a participant or a fan. She is aware that the school is known for that, but is not participating in that key piece of the school culture.

Figure 22. Baseball field at Bedford High School.

Three students in the study were involved in organized sports at Bedford High School, and two of them included pictures relating to that experience. All of the other students neither participated in sports nor took pictures related to the sports program at the school. However, a couple talked about going to games. The sports culture at Bedford High School is very strong, and I would have expected more of the students to talk about either being on a team or going to games. In fact, most of the other students were not participating in clubs or other extra-curricular activities, of which the high school has an extensive array of options. It is unfortunate that the students were not taking advantage of this opportunity, which is part of why Bedford High School has a good reputation. Not all of the options available at this suburban school are typically found in urban, majority minority schools. The students in this study were lucky enough to be attending a school with a lot of additional resources, but not all of them were reaping the potential benefits of these opportunities.

While the majority of Narcisa's pictures were descriptive of Bedford, there were a few that gave more insight into her personality. First of all, she took five pictures of whatever nature she could find in her neighborhood. She shared her love of plants and flowers, but was unable to find many examples, since it was early Spring. The final picture that gives a sense of Narcisa's identity was of an American flag (Figure 23). When I asked her why she had taken that picture, she hesitated and then said, because it represented liberty. I wondered if she identified as American, and she responded that she considers herself Dominican. When I spoke with Narcisa two years later, she was enrolled at a new university in the Dominican Republic, after transferring. Although she considered herself Dominican, she explained that there was no one she felt she could connect to at her first university, because everyone was Dominican. She was hopeful that this new setting in a larger city would help, because there were more students from

abroad and students who spoke English. Despite Narcisa considering herself Dominican, she later found herself not connecting to Dominicans in her home country, because she had been raised in the US. Once again, this highlights the difference between a bicultural and transnational habitus. Including the sisters in this study, and having followed up with them after they moved back to the Dominican Republic, provides another perspective to how the students make sense of their identity. It was surprising to hear that Narcisa was not feeling as comfortable as she had hoped in the Dominican Republic. The idea that feeling comfortable in Latinx spaces in the U.S. does not necessarily transfer to spaces in the Dominican Republic will be further explored in the final section of this chapter on Narcisa's college experience.

Figure 23. American flag in Bedford.

As I have explained, language is an important part of staying connected to one's Latinx identity. As their friends were not primarily Latinx, both girls said they did not use Spanish in school very much. Narcisa said she would only speak Spanish if she was speaking with someone

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who did not speak English. Therefore, even though her parents spoke to her in Spanish and she would respond to them in Spanish, she still spoke in English at school with her friends. She said that she and her sister did translate for their mother when out and about in the community, but she quickly pointed out that Victoria's English was "getting there." She said she sometimes spoke in English with her to give her the chance to practice, and that her dad "knows it," so she did not need to worry about him. Although Narcisa was not practicing her Spanish with her friends, she did respond to her parents in Spanish, and was therefore still getting a lot of practice, which would be critical to her transition back to the Dominican Republic.

In summary, despite Narcisa's parents' plans to only be in the United States temporarily, Narcisa had assimilated to life in Bedford. She felt comfortable in all parts of the community, and had adopted an understanding of race and class that emanates from there. Her parents, on the other hand, had not assimilated as much, and were very critical of American society. Victoria felt isolated and alone, and had not liked any aspect of Bedford. She was eager to return to her home country and feel more social again.

Different Ideas About the Future Success

Interestingly, Narcisa did not fit the pattern I described earlier for the students whose parents did not attend college, at her first interview, but she did fit the pattern in her second interview. At her first interview, Narcisa demonstrated an awareness of the competitive job market and the stratification of college degrees, something that none of the other students whose parents are not college educated were able to articulate. Two years later, she focused on the need to acquire skills to keep up with our changing world, listing things like knowledge of new technologies and knowing multiple languages, personal traits described by students whose parents did not go to college.

Meanwhile, Victoria had a very simple idea of what constitutes future success: a career or job. She did not elaborate on what she hoped for her daughters, other than that she wanted them to decide their career or job on their own. Narcisa confirmed what her mother said about choosing something she likes for her future job. College did not come up in Victoria's answers, yet their life plan was revolving around the timing of their oldest enrolling in college in the Dominican Republic, showing they were clearly committed to the pursuit of higher education for their daughters.

Future Success: Skills and Personal Traits

When I asked Narcisa what she needed to be successful in this world, as a senior in high school she responded:

> You have to be intelligent. And you need to have like people skills, I guess...charismatic. And [pause] a good education. Because now it's really- like a lot of people go to college, so you need to have like a really good education to get a really successful job and stuff...It's really competitive.

She started out with personality traits such as intelligence and charisma, traits that are not necessarily gained or taught in a school setting. But after some thinking, she added that education is important, and talked about the competitiveness in the labor market. She differentiated between kinds of education, and emphasized that a "really good education" is what would help her compete and get a job in the future. Her awareness of the competitive labor market was surprising, given her parents' lack of experience with the return on college degrees in the workforce, contradicting Mickelson's (1990) findings as well. It is unclear how Narcisa came to this understanding, as it would not be expected from a student whose parents have not had experience with the return on a college degree. The other students with realistic views of the labor market all had college-educated parents. Narcisa was the only student with non-college-educated parents who talked about the competitiveness of the job market and the devaluing of a

bachelor's degree. This contradicts the idea that students learn about these realities from their immediate family, as Narcisa was not seeing the poor return on a college education with her parents.

During her follow up interview as a sophomore in college in the Dominican Republic, Narcisa responded that success required that you:

> acquire as much knowledge as possible...Like, you need to know about technology and how it's- Like, each day technology is improving and you need to keep up to date with that. You need to know about different cultures and maybe speak a few languages, to have that under your belt, you know. Just in case. And, um- I don't know. You know. Just be prepared for anything, because- Yep. Because the world keeps changing every day, you know.

Two years later, Narcisa's answer is now more focused on acquiring information, particularly regarding technology, cultures and languages. She had moved away from her view of a competitive labor market and was now more focused on gaining skills. Perhaps this is related to her previous idea in that having this additional knowledge would make her more competitive. Or perhaps she is seeing the value of getting her college degree in Spanish as the language of instruction because she thinks it might make her more competitive.

Her Mother on Future Success: What You Need is a Job

Victoria was quite shy in her interview and did not elaborate much on her answers, even though the interview was conducted in Spanish. Narcisa was able to articulate what her parents say to her about education, but Victoria's answers did not provide much insight from her perspective. She did answer what her daughters' need to be successful in today's world, saying, "A career. A job." Given Victoria's vague answers and her own experience in the labor market, the insight that Narcisa had regarding the competitiveness of the labor market was quite unexpected. Victoria measured success as having a job, which is a very general goal that does not convey a deep understanding of what one might need to be successful in today's world. It

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also implies a low bar to set for what she considers success. As long as her daughters find jobs in the future, she will consider them to have achieved success. It seems that she is valuing economic independence above all else. There is no acknowledgement about how different kinds of jobs might affect their quality of life. It may be that because Victoria assumes her daughters will earn a college degree, they will definitely have a better job than she does, and therefore she does not need to be specific about the kind of job they should strive for. In her eyes, a job you can get with a degree must be automatically better than a job that does not require a degree.

When I talked to Victoria about her daughters' future, she did not have a lot to say. I inquired whether she pictured them having a specific job in the future, she said, "mmm. Como que ellas decidan. [laughs]" (mmm. Whatever they decide.) Like most of the other parents, she wanted her daughters to decide for themselves. I wondered whether she enjoys her own job, and she said, "A veces es un poquito difícil, pero -por el idioma- Eso es lo que tengo que hacer. [laughs]" (Sometimes it's a little bit hard, but- because of the language- It is what I have to do.) As was common with the parents who do not have a college education, she was doing what she had to do to provide for her family, but did not enjoy her work. She did not imagine her daughters working in the healthcare field, because they did not like it. While she did say she wanted her kids to be happy, she was not as emphatic as the other parents were about wanting them to have a better life than she did. The rest of the parents who did not attend college were particularly adamant about their children having a better life than theirs (see Appendix B for what parents want for their children's futures).

Narcisa confirmed that her parents were open to whatever she wants to pursue in her future studies. They did not suggest a specific job or career for her, saying, "No. They just tell me what you want to be. But, you know, I have to go to college." They want her to have better

jobs than they do, and hence they insist that she goes to college. They assume that will automatically lead to a job superior to the ones they have had. Most of the other students said their parents did not dictate a specific career for them, but instead, wanted them to pick something that made them happy. The parents confirmed this in their interviews, saying that what they wanted most was for their children to find a job they enjoy.

In summary, Narcisa adds a new perspective to the findings of this study. First of all, she did not fit the pattern for students whose parents did not attend college. She was surprisingly aware of the competitiveness of the labor market and the realities of finding a good job. This was especially unexpected, given Victoria's poorly-developed answers. She had a very basic answer for what she feels her daughters needed to be successful in the future, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the realities of society. At the follow-up interview, however, Narcisa's answer was consistent with the pattern found among the students with non-college educated parents, focusing on personal traits.

Parental Involvement Mismatch: A Lower Class Approach in a Middle Class Community

It was to be expected that the parents who did not attend college might feel uncomfortable actively participating in their child's education, and this was true for Victoria. She was parenting in a style consistent with what Lareau (2000) found with lower class parents. As with all of the parents in this study, she was unlikely to advocate on her daughters' behalf. She felt she was in charge of raising her daughters at home, but the school was in charge of the education, so she did not need to be involved, nor did she feel qualified to be involved. Much like the other parents without a college education, Victoria did not have any negative opinions or complaints about the school. There was a clear separation between parenting and educating the

child, and she was relying on the expertise of the school to do the job of educating Narcisa and her other daughter.

Because the teachers and administration at Bedford High School were accustomed to working with non-immigrant parents, they may have had certain expectations of how a parent should be involved, and may be judging parents who do not conform to these expectations as bad or uncaring parents. There is an unspoken set of rules that the school has regarding parent involvement, and it appears that the parents in this study are unaware and may be unwittingly acting in a way that labels them and their students in a negative way. Despite not being involved in their education in a middle-class fashion, the parents do support their children, as do those of the other students in this sample. From Narcisa's perspective, her parents valued education, and were supporting her in her studies by asking how she was doing daily. Narcisa did not expect anything more from her parents, and was satisfied with the level of involvement her parents provided. For the other students in the study, their lack of knowledge about the college application process made them rely heavily on their guidance counselors. However, Narcisa did not need help with college, and therefore had not asked much of her counselors. She was satisfied with the support the school provided.

Satisfied with BHS: "It's Fine. Yes."

Victoria exhibited the type of parental involvement common with lower class families. She had very little to say in her interview, and generally responded to every question with a yes or no. I got the impression that she was unsure about her answers or why I would be interested in them; despite my best efforts, I got very little insight into how she supports her daughters in their education. When I asked how she feels about the school her daughters attend, she answered, "Está bien. Sí." (It's fine. Yes.) She was equally enthusiastic when I asked whether she was

satisfied with the courses her daughters are taking at the high school, saying, "Sí. Sí." (Yes. Yes.) I wondered if she felt welcome at the school and whether that was perhaps limiting her engagement with it. She answered, "Oh. mmm. [laughs] La comunicación es un poco difícil." (Oh. mmm. [Laughs] The communication is a bit difficult.) She explained that "Aparecen algunas que hablan español" (Spanish speakers appear sometimes) facilitating her interaction with educators. She was quick to add, "Sí. Pero como se mira, son bien los profesores." (Yes. From what I see, the teachers are good.) Given her limited involvement at the school, she was unable to share much on her opinions regarding her daughters' experiences there.

I tried to get an overall impression of what she says to her daughters regarding education, and she responded, "¿Cómo le dice? "Deben estudiar." Que- ¿Usted le dice qué?" (How do you say to them? You must study. What- do you say?) It was as if she felt she cannot say anything to her children about schooling. She seemed at a loss for words as to what a parent would say to their child. It is unclear whether she felt she could not tell them what to do, or whether she felt she did not have the experience with school to be able to give them concrete advice. Despite being unable to articulate her thoughts surrounding education, her expectations of them to attend college came through clearly. Their plan had always been to move back and have the sisters attend college there.

Victoria felt her daughters were very good students, and she had not had to provide much help with their studies. She noted:

> Ellas son bien estudiosas. Nunca las mando a hacer tarea. Y cuando tienen algo- Cuando estaban más pequeñas tenían- así que no- Se preocupan siempre por la tarea. Un día no la podían hacer y se ponen a llorar. ___ ___ son bien responsables. (They are very studious. I never send them to do homework. And when they have something- When they were younger they had -so I did not have- they are always on top of their homework. One day they could not do it and they cried. ___ ___ are so responsible.)

Since they are good students, their mother has felt it was unnecessary to engage with their schools and teachers. When they were younger and the homework was less complicated, she said she did help them. But now, Victoria felt they were conscientious students and would follow through on what they needed to do. She did not feel she needed to worry about them. Because she had her plan of where the sisters would attend college, she did not see a need to be so vigilant or involved in their schooling here, nor was she equipped with the tools to do so, had she wanted to.

Feeling Supported Despite her Parents' Limitations and Constraints

Through the interviews with Narcisa and her younger sister, I was better able to understand the extent to which their family values education. It was difficult to assess this based on the interview with their mother, Victoria, but both girls said that their family valued education and supported them in their educational endeavors. Indeed, they were able to provide concrete examples of this. Both of them said that their parents were able to attend their activities and conferences at school. Narcisa said her parents check in with them every day about school and how it is going, saying, "Yeah, they ask me about how'm I doing in school. I'm a good student. They don't really- [worry]. Yeah." While saying that her parents do check in with her, she also said that her parents do not have to worry because they are both doing well in school. This more laid-back approach makes sense given their orientation towards returning to the Dominican Republic in the near future.

This approach was also evident in Narcisa's answer to my inquiry regarding what her family says to her about education and school. She answered:

> Oh, they want me to do well, but they don't pressure me to get like [always] ___. Like, if I do bad on one test, [then they're ___], "Oh my gosh.' It's like the end of the world. But they want me to do good. And they want me to go to college and all that. And decide like what I want to do.

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Narcisa knows that her parents value education, but they are also not feeling pressure to compete and get into the best college possible. Narcisa explained to me that the university system in the Dominican Republic is very different from the US, because over there, you just enroll yourself at the campus you want to attend. There is a placement test, but according to her, there are few requirements, and no stringent criteria used to judge applicants. If you want to go, you go. Given this understanding of what they needed to do to continue their education post high school, no one in the family was especially concerned that the girls be among the best students at Bedford High School.

Traditional ways of supporting one's children in school, such as helping with homework, had proven impossible due to her parents lack of familiarity with the English language. Narcisa said she would only ask her family for help with her homework if it was for Spanish class. However, she was also quick to say that she rarely need support with their homework. In response to my inquiry regarding homework help from her parents, Narcisa said, "Just my Spanish. I don't really need help, though." She said her friends or the internet would provide help if she needed it from time to time.

This brings to question whether Narcisa was being challenged enough in her classes. I wondered the same thing about most of the students in the study. They rarely needed help with homework and found their classes to be easy. Several of the college-educated parents talked about this, sharing that they wished the school had pushed their children harder. One parent even said she had never seen her daughter with a book throughout her entire high school career, yet she was getting good grades, so the classes must be too easy for her. She compared it to her own experience in the Dominican Republic, where she had studied much harder than she had ever seen her daughter do here. Nonetheless, because Narcisa did not need support with her

schoolwork, she had not encountered the disadvantage of not being able to get help from her parents. Therefore, Narcisa was satisfied with her parents' involvement in her education.

Mainstream Social and Cultural Capital: Do They Need It?

Narcisa did not need to acquire mainstream social and cultural capital to aid her in the U.S. college application process, because of the family's plans to return to the Dominican Republic for her college. However, I still asked Narcisa, her sister, and their mother the same questions as the other students in the study. Although Victoria did not have to engage with the US system, she did allow that she had several nieces who attended college in the US. However, she said they would not be helpful to her daughters, saying, "No con tanta experiencia. Tu ves, como son joven todavía." (Not with much experience. You see, they are still young.) She discounted their experience with the US college system due to their age, despite the fact that the nieces had gone through the application process themselves, and could surely have shared what they had learned from it. Despite the potential stock of social capital in her relationship with her nieces, she did not view them as an asset.

Obviously, Narcisa did not have the same needs as the students in the sample who were planning on attending college in the US. Despite this, I wondered if she would also feel her counselors were not providing the support she needed. Narcisa's assessment of the quality of the guidance counselors was that they were "pretty good," and that they had helped and encouraged her. She also said that teachers were willing to help. All you had to do was "ask like a teacher like you're really comfortable with, they'll help you." Perhaps because Narcisa was not looking for advice on how to apply to college, the counselors were able to support her with other issues, and therefore she felt satisfied with their help.

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Most of the other students were unhappy with their counselors because they did truly have a need for their guidance. Some shared stories of misinformation, forgotten letters of recommendation or general lack of information they were seeking. Therefore, although Narcisa was satisfied with her experience, it was not representative of the other students in this study, who planned on applying to colleges in the US. Because she had not asked much of her counselors, she had not experienced any disappointment.

In summary, Victoria's approach to her daughters' education was consistent with lower-class parenting styles, where the school takes care of their education, and she takes care of raising them right. She was not worried about their schooling because she saw them working hard, felt they are "good" girls who would do what the school required of them. From Narcisa's perspective, she felt supported because her parents would say education is important. Her parents had laid out their life plan, and it revolved around the timeline for Narcisa to go to college in the Dominican Republic, clearly communicating to Narcisa that she was expected to attend. Despite feeling supported, she did not feel pressured to do extremely well, and this is probably due to the fact that she would be pursuing higher education back in her country of birth. She did not need to participate in the competitiveness of getting into a top tier school, in an attempt to maintain her family's comfortable lifestyle. In Narcisa's case, her non-participation in the frantic race to maintain middle-class status makes sense. And because of these plans, she has also had a more positive impression of her guidance counselors, as she did not need help with college planning, and so she felt she received adequate support from the school.

Back in the Dominican Republic: Not Exactly What She Expected

When I contacted Narcisa for her follow up interview, the family had already been living in the Dominican Republic for nearly two years. She was enrolled in a university in the second

largest city in the country, after having transferred from a smaller school in a smaller town, nearer to her parents' hometown. Narcisa's parents were able to provide a different level of support in the Dominican Republic than would have been possible had she enrolled in college in the United States. For example, they were able to cover her entire tuition and living expenses, taking away the additional burden of having to work while studying. This is particularly important with the Latinx community, as they are more averse to taking out educational loans than White students (Boatman, Evans & Soliz, 2017), thereby greatly limiting their college options. Being in the Dominican Republic enabled Narcisa to attend a four-year university and live near campus without the burden of loans. In addition, her family connections had potential for helping her with her business degree and with finding a job once she graduated.

However, Narcisa was not fitting in as she had expected to, which is why she had transferred to a larger school with a more diverse student body. Her first college experience was among locals who did not speak English, in a small town that was not cosmopolitan enough for her. Despite only being in her sophomore year, she was already talking about pursuing a graduate degree back in the US, or moving back there to find a job. The benefits and drawbacks of the family's decision to move back provide an interesting contrast to the students in this sample who remained in the US for college.

Parents Able to Provide a Different Level of Support for Narcisa

One significant advantage of having Narcisa attend college in the Dominican Republic is that her family was able to provide a level of financial support that would not have been possible here in the US. First of all, the university had much lower tuition, and her parents were able to pay out of pocket for her education, not burdening her with any debt. Narcisa explained, "With like- uh- I don't know. I could pay here like $30,000 for my whole career. But not including like

food and like whatever." In addition, the cost of living was also much cheaper in the Dominican Republic, and her family was able to pay for her apartment within walking distance of the school, as well as all of her food and incidentals. She said her parents were taking care of everything so she could focus on school, and therefore she was not working while in school. The other students in this sample who were attending college at the time of their follow up interviews were juggling the demands of both college and part time jobs.

Narcisa's parents also could devote more time to her, since they were no longer working. When they were living in the United States, they were limited by work schedules, long hours, and a general unfamiliarity with how to support Narcisa's educational endeavors. Once back in the Dominican Republic, they had the time and money to support Narcisa in a way that the students who remained in the U.S. for college could not expect to receive. They could do things like pick up Narcisa from the city where the university is located, about an hour and a half drive from their hometown, and bring her home every weekend so they can be together. Narcisa said:

> But my mother- um- she picks me up, uh- weekly. So, she um- she tries to prepare like meals or whatever, so I can bring it here. Yeah. Yeah, 'cause my mother, she really cares about my nutrition. Every day she asks me "What did you eat? What did you eat? Did you eat something healthy?"

Her mother also prepares meals for Narcisa to bring back to her apartment for the week. Providing this level of care and support is unique, and would only be possible in the Dominican Republic, where her parents do not have to work anymore, and everything is less expensive than on Long Island. While this is not the kind of support that is valued by U.S. mainstream institutions such as its public schools, it has value and a significant impact on Narcisa's college experience. She did not have to be burdened by finding a balance between work and school, the worry of paying tuition, nor the day to day struggles of feeding oneself as a young adult on her own for the first time.

The support for college was bounded, though. Narcisa was receiving instruction in Spanish, and her parents still did not have the knowledge regarding her chosen topic of study, which was business. When I asked Narcisa about getting help with her classes, she answered, "Um. Better to find someone at the university because I don't think my parents would __." However, her extended family is a source of support. She explained, "But you could give me some- like, not my parents, but like my uncles and stuff, they own businesses, so maybe that- they could give me some feedback and- whatever." Narcisa explained that she had family members in the Dominican Republic that she could go to as she learned about business administration, because some of them own businesses and have the experience and knowledge to support her. In addition, they can provide important connections for Narcisa when it comes time to finding a job. She said:

> Uh, yeah. Um. My- Like my uncle has a lot of connections here, so he's- He tells me like, 'Oh, if you want, you could work in a bank or- whatever.' Or like I could get a job easily here because, you know, I know English. And- Like, yeah.

Narcisa feels reassured that her extended family is doing well in the Dominican Republic, and will provide important support during her studies and after she graduates and is looking for a job. For Narcisa, Dominican social capital will be helpful as long as she decides to remain within the Dominican field, in order to gain an advantage. She seems unaware that these connections would not help her were she to return to the United States.

Dominican social capital was also mentioned by one other student who had well-connected family members in the Dominican Republic. She shared that her family was in politics, and that her grandmother even knew the President; she was considering interning in the Dominican Republic to get some experience, since she was also interested in politics. However, she pointed out that the social capital she would gain through that experience in the Dominican

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Republic would not transfer back to the U.S., where she intended to live and work, and she had her doubts about the value of doing it. In this case, the student was very aware of the fact that social capital does not transfer across fields, and she made the decision not to pursue an internship in the Dominican Republic, since she pictured herself living in the United States.

Aside from Narcisa (and her younger sister) and the student just described, none of the other seven students talked about having connections in the Dominican Republic, and none of the students talked about having this kind of social capital here in the US. Two students did discuss needing connections to succeed in the future, but they hoped to gain them through their future experiences. Therefore, Narcisa has the possibility of gaining a major advantage in having returned to the Dominican Republic that the other students who remained in the U.S. did not have, assuming she decided to live and work there after college. Nonetheless, Narcisa was currently experiencing advantages based on the fact that the cost of living and the cost of college is much lower in the Dominican Republic, and that her parents had more time to dedicate to her well-being.

Not Fitting in and Wanting to Return to the US

Although others in this study talked about going to college in the Dominican Republic, Narcisa is the only one who actually did so. Other students that talked about this option were often quick to point out that this would not be a good idea if they wanted to return to the US to work, because the social connections made there would not transfer over to the US context. Narcisa, however, did not see the drawbacks of pursuing her college degree in the Dominican Republic. During her follow-up interview, she noted that she very much wanted to return to the US to do a Masters, because it would be "way easier" for her in terms of receiving instruction in English versus Spanish. It was only her sophomore year in college, and she had already

transferred to another university where there were more English speaking students and people from all over the world. She felt she could not relate to the students at her first university because they were Dominican students who only spoke Spanish. In addition, she shared that the overall feel of that smaller city was not to her liking. She felt it was not ok to be different there, whereas in New York, individuality was encouraged. This was stifling to her, and she had decided to move to a bigger city with a better university and a more diverse student body. It was surprising that Narcisa felt so out of place in the Dominican Republic, as Louie (2006) found a high level of transnationalism and comfort moving back and forth among the Dominican college students she studied. Louie does acknowledge that some of the respondents did not consider themselves natives of the Dominican Republic, but instead, somewhere between a native and a tourist. Although Narcisa's parents had good intentions when making their plan to only be in the US until their oldest finished high school, Narcisa felt more comfortable in diverse and English speaking settings. I speculate that Narcisa may be disadvantaged in the future if she does return to the US for a graduate degree or to enter the workforce, because her undergraduate degree may not be as highly valued as one earned in the States.

Overall, Narcisa felt she was doing ok with her college classes at her second university. She said that the classes were harder because of the language, but not the content. Other than math, which was taught differently than at Bedford, she felt the classes were at the right level and do-able for her. Although she did not have a guidance counselor or advisor, she said the school provided printed guides that explain which classes she needed to take to earn the degree. She felt this was sufficient, and that she was on the right track to graduate. She explained that she had read a lot of books in Spanish and watched TV in Spanish to practice before moving to the Dominican Republic.

In summary, while Nathai's parents had all of the best intentions with their plan to move back to the Dominican Republic so that their daughters could attend college there, doing so posed problems for Narcisa. She was not feeling at home as much as she had expected and found her first college experience to be too small-town and sheltered for her. Luckily, they had the means for her to transfer to a larger university in a larger city, which seemed to have helped, although she still wanted to return to the US to continue her studies or enter the labor force. On the other hand, Narcisa's parents were able to provide a level of support that would not have been possible had they stayed in the United States.

Chapter Conclusion

While the first two findings chapters highlighted some of the patterns found across the sample, as well as the differences between those students whose parents had attended college versus those that had not, I felt compelled to share the outlier story of Narcisa's experience. Even though Narcisa did fit some of the findings previously discussed, she also provided a contrasting case, because of her family's move back to the Dominican Republic. The temporary nature of the family's stay in Bedford affected everything, from Narcisa's and her mother's outlook towards education, to their engagement with the schools. The difference was particularly striking for their mother, who admitted she never liked it in the US, and had not integrated much with the Bedford community. Despite supporting her daughters' Dominican identity development and their Spanish language skills, Narcisa had become more American than not. This was particularly evident when Narcisa recounted her experience at her first college in the Dominican Republic. She had not fit in there, and although she had transferred to a more diverse college and cosmopolitan city, was already talking about pursuing a graduate degree or looking for a job in the United States. On the other hand, Narcisa's parents were providing a different level of

support in the Dominican Republic than would have been possible had they stayed in this country. These benefits may outweigh the drawbacks, but it is too early to tell. Nonetheless, Narcisa's family highlights the transnational nature of the Dominican community, and the implications of returning to one's home country after raising one's children in the United States.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Discussion Chapter

Initial Research Questions and Expectations

This research project was guided by the following questions.

1. How do second generation Dominican high school students growing up in a diverse, middle-class suburb make sense of their experiences within their family, community and school?

   a. How do these experiences affect their assimilation into U.S. society?

   b. How do these experiences influence their ideas about future success, and the role of education in reaching it?

2. How do the parents of these students make sense of their experiences in this diverse, middle-class community?

   c. How do these experiences inform their definition of success for their children and the role that education plays in achieving it?

   d. How do the parents' beliefs and actions around education affect their children's views of education?

Because so little research has been done in suburban communities, I had to first begin by understanding this community, as I could not assume it would be like other communities where Dominicans reside. Comparing the neighborhood and its schools to the Dominican enclave of Washington Heights served as a backdrop to begin exploring how the Dominican residents of Bedford were experiencing their community. In addition, there were many unknown factors about my participants and their families, including the availability of cultural resources, parent education level, socio-economic status, and how and why their families had decided to settle in Bedford. Because the low density of Dominican people in Bedford did not constitute an ethnic

enclave, I wondered if the families would use Washington Heights in New York City as their connection to cultural resources. I was very curious to find out how these Dominican families had ended up living in Bedford, and whether it was a purposeful decision or a matter of chance. While traditionally, immigrants first arrived to ethnic enclaves in cities and then moved out to the suburbs after reaching a certain level of success, I puzzled over whether this group was representative of the new trend in immigrant arrivals to suburban communities (Massey and Capoferro, 2008; Singer, 2008; Logan, Alba & Zhang, 2002).

It is possible that immigrants are moving to the suburbs to support longstanding residents who are better off, providing the services, such as childcare, food preparation, and landscaping, that higher socio-economic communities use to maintain their lifestyle. In this case, the immigrant families might not be middle-class, but may be pooling their resources to live in a middle-class community. I considered if this were true in Bedford, and if my sample of students would feel that they were not part of the community. If their parents were working service-oriented jobs that supported the lifestyles of the better-off families in the community, would that affect how the students got along with their peers at school?

Another possibility was that these were middle class Dominican families that had moved from the ethnic enclave to the suburbs, fulfilling their American Dream by assuming middle-class jobs, buying homes and delighting in suburban amenities. Yet another possibility was that they were middle class Dominican families that arrived directly to this "nice" suburban community because they could afford to do so, bypassing the urban enclave of Washington Heights. Were these parents able to get a good job or a college degree that enabled them to arrive to a "better" location? Despite being a majority single-family home community, there was still

the possibility of living in one of the few apartments in Bedford, or of families sharing the rent of these homes, in order to afford living in the community.

After gaining an understanding of how they had arrived to this community, I then sought to understand how this context influenced their assimilation process, as it has been previously argued that context plays a large role in determining one's assimilation path (Lopez, 2003; Carter, 2005; Louie, 2004; 2012; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). I pondered which path these students were most likely heading down, as so few studies have looked at Latinx youth in this kind of suburban community. Despite recent critiques of segmented assimilation theory, I remained open to the finding evidence to support any of the three paths.

Because my interest in the students' educational outlook came from reading about the experiences of Latinx students in urban schools, and how those experiences had influenced their ideas about the role of education in their lives (Lopez, 2003; Carter, 2005; Louie, 2004; 2012; Zhou & Bankston, 1998), understanding the context was just as critical for this piece of the study. I wondered what kinds of experiences the students were having in this suburban community, and in their school, and how that shaped their outlook towards education. Prior research shows how negative experiences influence one's views on education, and how the context of concentrated poverty sends a message of neglect to those living there (Lopez, 2003). This is communicated in a variety of ways, including through the physical space. For example, public institutions in these neighborhoods, such as the public schools, tend to be rundown and neglected, thereby communicating to their students that they are not worth investing in. Students' experiences in their schools and communities would likely influence how they view education, and what role it can play in their future success. Why invest in a system and play the game when it is rigged against you? Therefore, I felt it was critical to understand these Dominican students'

comfort levels in both the school and the larger community. Additionally, I considered how being exposed to mainstream society and middle class white Americans at their school would influence their outlook. Given the drastically different context of this study, I probed whether the students were having positive or negative experiences on a daily basis.

Once I got a picture of how the students were experiencing their community and school, I then wanted to know about their educational outlook, and whether they bought into the idea of the American Dream. Would they be more likely to believe that if you work hard you will succeed, given that their parents have been able to raise them in this "nice" middle class suburban community? Did they feel they were already living the American Dream, and if so, were they concerned with reproducing and maintaining their socioeconomic status? I did not know if they would be looking to maintain what their parents had achieved, a process of social reproduction, or if they were looking to improve upon it through upward mobility.

As the students considered which colleges to apply to and where to enroll, I questioned where they were getting their information on the college application process. What supports were their families able to provide, and how did that differ for the students who had a parent that attended college versus those where neither parent had attended college? What support was the school able to provide? Louie (2012) found that nonfamily supports were critical to finding success, and I mulled over whether the students had other sources of support, and if so, who or what they were. Latinx people place differential values on the source of information about college (Kurlaender, 2006), and I puzzled over whose information the students in this study valued and acted upon. The ability to follow the students and see some of their academic outcomes two years post-high school was helpful in providing an assessment of how they were faring, and how the resources they were using influenced their decisions on where to enroll.

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The Benefits of an In-Depth Qualitative Study

Although there has been some research on Dominicans, it has mostly been focused on those residing in New York City (Kasinitz et al., 2004; 2008; Lopez, 2003), which has the second largest concentration of Dominican people after the capital of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo. This study provides a new context within which to explore traditional issues of assimilation and the development of students' outlook towards education. Though my sample is small and nonrandom, limiting its generalizability, it can generate new lines of inquiry about social processes and social contexts (Louie, 2012). The purposeful sampling I employed is, I argue, a good way to do an in-depth exploration of a community that has not been previously studied.

Using an in-depth qualitative approach with one specific group of Latinx provides insight into the nuances of the assimilation process, one's views on education and one's future plans. It highlights the heterogeneity of the group labeled Latinx, as well as the drawbacks of using only large-scale surveys. Such a focus helps to better understand how one group is making sense of their experiences in a diverse suburban community. By focusing on the largest Latinx group in the Northeast (not including Puerto Ricans who are American citizens), and one of the groups with the worst academic and socio-economic outcomes (Kasinitz et al., 2008), I provide insight into how this community is faring in one kind of suburban context. It is important to be cautious and not lump all suburban locations into one group as, of course, there are large differences among suburban communities, with some resembling poor "urban" contexts, and others more clearly middle-class communities.

There are many great in-depth qualitative studies of different groups of immigrants in urban contexts (Lopez, 2003; Carter, 2005; Louie, 2004). There are a few set in smaller cities,

such a study of the Vietnamese community in New Orleans (Zhou & Bankston, 1998) and the Dominican community in Providence, Rhode Island (Itzigsohn, 2009), that are not usually considered to be key immigrant destinations, but none focus on the experiences of Dominican students and their parents in their community and school. The suburbs provide an interesting context to study, especially on Long Island, because of the highly segregated nature of the school districts in Nassau County (one of the most segregated areas in the nation, containing 56 districts in a small area). My participants are living in one of the "better" districts, based on standardized test scores and college-going rates, but are right next door to a "bad" district that serves mostly Dominican students, and provides access to cultural resources that reinforce their heritage. This study has profound implications for understanding how Dominicans are experiencing this context, in order to be able to better address their needs.

A study focusing on a group of Latinx youth's views on education from the perspective of the student and their parent has not yet emerged. Indeed, many researchers who have looked at aspirations and views on education have used large-scale surveys with students, looked at all Latinx people together, and not considering the parental views, weaknesses that I address in this study design (Bohon, Johnson, & Gorman 2006). As Louie (2012) argues, immigration and education are inherently familial, and interviewing both the students and their parents gives richer data on the relevant assimilation and educational processes. Since I am bilingual, I was able to interview the parents in the language they felt most comfortable in, and in some cases, the only language they spoke fluently. This helped capture a more complete picture of the Dominican families living in this community, including a less advantaged population, that might be missed with other research methods. Prior studies have also shown the influence of parents' educational level and the type of job they have on the educational outlook of their children

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(Lopez, 2003). I anticipated that the students' understanding of success and the role education plays in it would be based on, and influenced by, their parents' life experience, and thus built this possibility into my study design. Including the parental perspective enriches our understanding of the interrelatedness between parental and student outlooks towards education.

This study also broadens the concept of educational aspirations by asking multiple open-ended questions that provide rich data and uncover the nuances of this concept. Instead of assuming that parents and students think education is important to success, I took a step back and first asked how they define success, before then asking what role education plays in their future plans. In doing so, I avoided a common trap in which researchers superimpose their own values on those they study (Pallas, 1999). By being open to their ideas about what is needed, I did not impose upon my participants the idea that education is integral to future success. This kind of rich data can only be gathered through in-depth qualitative work, such as in this study.

Findings and their Implications

Assimilation

While it is not possible to know the life outcomes of such young people, we can begin to understand what assimilation path they are most likely traveling. As with several recent studies and critiques of segmented assimilation theory (Waters et al., 2010), I found no evidence of downward assimilation. Despite interacting with the nearby suburban Dominican enclave of Fairview and taking advantage of the cultural resources there, the students in this study did not feel connected to that community or the people living there. Therefore, I do not believe they were on a path of rejecting the mainstream, leading to downward assimilation. While the possibility of integrating with their less well-off co-ethnics in Fairview was there, the students in this study made it clear that living in Bedford was what they preferred, and where they felt most

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comfortable. They enjoyed accessing the cultural resources next door, but they viewed that community as a less desirable place to live.

The fact that the students felt comfortable in Bedford and had not had any negative experiences was a surprising and unexpected finding. Because the influx of Latinx people into this community is relatively new, I expected more community resistance to the demographic changes and a stronger bias against the Dominican families in and out of school. The use of photo elicitation interviews proved especially helpful in assessing the comfort level of the students, and in demonstrating that they had developed a habitus that feels comfortable in a mainstream field such as this suburban, middle-class community. This level of comfort may be connected to the fact that the parents in this study were not supporting the needs of the better off within Bedford through personal service work, as I had previously pondered. There were two main narratives of parental careers. Some parents had gotten a college education and purposefully looked for a suburban community to buy a house in. Another group of parents toiled without a college education in service occupations, but worked in surrounding towns, and not Bedford. Therefore, the students in this study did not feel separated from their peers, since none of their parents were actually supporting the lifestyles of those in the community in which they live.

Because it was so surprising that none of the students had pictures of places they did not feel comfortable in, I was left to wonder whether the photo elicitation method was effective at capturing feelings of discomfort and not belonging. It makes sense that it would be awkward to pull out a camera and take a picture in a place you do not feel comfortable in. Perhaps if more of the students had used their cell phones instead of the cameras I provided, it would have seemed less obvious that they were taking a picture, and that could have helped them feel more

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comfortable taking the picture. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the possibility that photo elicitation interviews may not be the best method to bring forth feelings of discomfort and not belonging.

Since the students felt that they fit into mainstream culture, it was possible that they would reject their cultural heritage and go down the path of traditional or upward assimilation. This path has been found to be least common among Dominicans (Waters, et al., 2010), and I saw little evidence of it. There was no evidence of an abandonment of the Spanish language or Dominican ethnic practices in these families. These students were connected to, and embraced, their ethnicity, developing a habitus that feels comfortable in Latinx fields. For example, all but one of the students spoke Spanish fluently, and they all spent significant time with their families and extended families. The parents clearly prioritized the maintenance of Dominican cultural practices. For example, almost all of the families attended Spanish language Catholic church services in Fairview, and all of them wanted their children to speak Spanish fluently.

This finding left me wondering how much the students would identify with being Dominican or Latinx had Fairview, and its Dominican enclave, not been next door. How far would families be willing to travel to access their co-ethnics? Surely there are many Latinx immigrants arriving to suburban locations that are not nearby to a Latinx enclave, leaving them without access to cultural resources. Would this affect their ability to maintain Dominican cultural practices or maintain their Spanish language skills? I imagine that it would make a difference, as Fairview was such an important part of the Bedford Dominican families' narratives.

The students, however, were not just identifying with being Dominican. They were also latching onto a pan-ethnic identity of Latinx, which many referred to as "Spanish" or "Hispanic."

Less than twenty percent of the Latinx people living in the Bedford School District are from the Dominican Republic, but there are many other Latinx countries represented in the community (see Chapter Four). In fact, I remember when I first held meetings about the study, as students walked into the classroom, they expressed surprise at who was in the room. I found them asking each other, "You're Dominican?" It seems that they did not know which country the students were from, but they were aware of the other Latinx youth, and those were their closest friends. The students mentioned friends from Ecuador and Central America, but often did not know which country their friends' families had come from. They also mentioned having some friends of Puerto Rican heritage, but often noted that they were not as "Spanish" as the others, as most of them did not speak Spanish. I argue that the Dominican students in this study were likely developing bicultural identities. They seemed to be confident and comfortable in mainstream society, yet they were also comfortable with the pan-ethnic Latinx culture, and were maintaining that connection to their heritage through family, language, and other ethnic practices. While some have found that those Latinx people that identify with a pan-ethnic label tend to be poorer and less assimilated (Portes & MacLeod, 1996), others have found that choosing to identify with the pan-ethnic Latinx label is a complex phenomenon that can vary even within individuals and different contexts (Jones-Correa & Leal, 1996). More recently, it has been argued that adopting a Latinx pan-ethnic identity is a sign of assimilation into mainstream society, as the label is distinctly an American creation (Itzigsohn, 2009). As was discussed in the findings chapters, the students in this study counted fellow Latinx students as their closes friends, adopting a pan-ethnic identity. The students in this study were proud of their Dominican heritage, while at the same time, connecting with other Latinx students at the school, due to their shared cultural background.

The fact that all of the students used the term "Spanish," and not Latinx or Hispanic, was surprising. Of course, the Spanish language is a unifying characteristic of most Latinx countries, but these students were not speaking in Spanish to their friends, and in fact, some of their Latinx friends did not even speak Spanish. Perhaps school observations or interviews with the school staff would have provided some insight as to whether this term was something the students had picked up from Bedford High School.

Another way they were developing and maintaining their Dominican identity was by relying on the cultural resources in neighboring Fairview, which was another unexpected finding. Due to the proximity of this enclave, and the fact that they did not have familial connections in Washington Heights, Fairview was serving as a place to develop and reinforce their cultural heritage. Interestingly, despite benefiting from the resources in Fairview, both the students and parents had negative feelings towards that community, and would not want to live there. Some of the reasons they gave were that there are too many Spanish people there, it is too loud, or it is not as safe as Bedford; all characteristics consistent with outsiders' stereotypes of a Latinx enclave, generally, and Fairview, specifically. Though they did not have the expected connection to the ethnic enclave, these families still had a nearby enclave they could access for cultural resources, while not having to live there and experience the drawbacks of isolation and concentrated poverty, nor attend a poorly-performing school.

However, as explained in Chapter Two, Waters and colleagues (2010) found that a person's assimilation path does not matter for socioeconomic outcomes or any other outcome they were able to measure. They argue that it is not the key mechanism in explaining the variety in outcomes among the different immigrant groups. Although Fairview is providing support for the maintenance and development of the families' Latinx identity, it is not providing advantages

in mainstream fields. Ethnic embeddedness can be helpful it if connects immigrants to co-ethnics with significant resources (Waters et al., 2010). In this case, Fairview is a place of lower socioeconomic status than Bedford, and the people in Fairview are not likely to provide the kind of social and cultural capital that would help those in Bedford. If anything, it could work the other way around, with Fairview residents benefiting from connections to the higher-status residents in Bedford. For example, Fairview has a lower college-going rate than Bedford, suggesting that Bedford residents would have social and cultural capital to share that would pass on advantages to those in Fairview. Even though the students in this study were potentially undermatching in their college choices, they were all still enrolling in college, which is a far better result than for the majority of Dominicans growing up and going to school in Washington Heights or Fairview. Therefore, in regards to improving the outcomes of the Dominican students in Bedford, a connection to Fairview is unhelpful. However, I argue that there is still a benefit, in that the students in this study were being provided with a majority Latinx field in which to develop and maintain their Spanish language skills. While previous studies have not shown a relationship between being bilingual and income, Gándara (2015) found that there is a compelling relationship between the two, though it depends on other factors such as age, geography, and levels of linguistic competence. The students in this study may be developing stronger Spanish language skills than they would have if they lived in a diverse suburb without a neighboring ethnic enclave. And given the large number of Latinx people in the New York City metropolitan area, as well as the Northeast in general, it is possible that these students may be viewed more positively by future employers, assuming their Spanish language skills have been strengthened by the presence of the enclave next door.

Therefore, the students can most likely be classified as in the process of selective acculturation. It is too early to tell if the students in this study will be able to sustain the lifestyles their parents have provided for them. On the other hand, all of the students who participated in the follow up interviews and had graduated high school were attending college, which is no small feat. Kasinitz et al.'s (2004) comprehensive study of the second generation in New York City found that only a quarter of Dominicans aged 24-32 who grew up in the New York metro area had earned a Bachelor's degree. Bedford's college-going rate, a combination of those enrolling in two-year and four-year colleges was ninety percent in 2016. Although we do not know what percent of these students graduate and earn their degree, nor do we have the breakdown by race and ethnicity for this college-going rate, we can speculate that the degree earning rate for Dominicans in Bedford is likely higher than the rate for those Dominican students growing up in New York City.

In thinking about the experiences of the Dominican families in Bedford, and the significant role that the neighboring community of Fairview played in their lives, I am led to wonder how common of an occurrence this is in suburban areas across the country. It is possible that this situation is not as likely to occur in other less fragmented areas, because it is likely that the school district boundaries in Nassau County play an important role in defining the communities, and differentiating between them. On the other hand, segregation is definitely not a uniquely Long Island phenomenon, and therefore it is plausible that neighborhoods similar to Bedford and Fairview exist next to each other in other locations. In that case, though, the students from those two neighborhoods might be going to school together, changing the dynamic I observed in Bedford. In this study, the students enjoyed visiting Fairview, but viewed it as a different and less desirable place to live than Bedford. These kinds of distinctions might not exist

without the school district boundaries that define these communities. I speculate that without the presence of Fairview, the Dominican families in Bedford would be more likely to follow the path of straight-line assimilation into the mainstream.

The fragmentary nature of suburban school districts in Nassau County provides these contexts in which stark differences between neighborhoods, aided by residential segregation, are reinforced by separate school districts (Wells et al., 2014). Therefore, places like Bedford can provide recent immigrants, like the Dominican families in this study, the benefits of a mainstream middle-class community with good schools, while also being able to access the cultural resources of a neighboring ethnic enclave, such as Fairview, without the drawbacks of actually living there. The families in this study had access to their own racial/ethnic cultural capital next door, aiding in the maintenance, for the parents, and development, for their children, of their Dominican identity, thereby supporting biculturalism.

As I have noted, Nassau County is one of the most fragmented places in the United States, and therefore, provides a context where a place like Bedford can be right next door to a place like Fairview, with very real consequences for those living on one side or the other of that boundary between the two. A 2009 Long Island Index report concluded that the fragmentation in Nassau County has produced school district-level disparities in terms of funding, demographics, and student outcomes. Unfortunately, this configuration is unlikely to change, as the reputation for each district is self-perpetuating, and further reinforced by the housing market (Wells et al., 2009). Property values have become so strongly linked to the reputations of these districts that this cycle would be very difficult to break, and there is likely a lack of public will to consolidate school districts, as no one wants their home to lose value. Although this high level of fragmentation is costly and leads to higher local property taxes (Bischoff, 2008), possibly

making this system unsustainable in the future, it is difficult to convince people to consider the public good over their own self-interests (Labaree, 1997).

However, there are areas of the country that are far less fragmented than Nassau County, and the Northeast in general, yet are also experiencing an increase in immigrant arrivals. In county-wide school systems, for example, it is possible that a highly segregated school with poor outcomes like the one in Fairview would not exist. Immigrants might settle throughout the county, and since schools are assigned based on one's residence, they would likely be spread out across schools as well. However, if immigrants were settling in one part of the county, a system of unequal schools could easily develop. Unlike a system of fragmented districts, though, a county district would be able to address this issue by reassigning students more equitably across schools and also maintain equal funding across the schools. That is nearly impossible to do across district lines in highly fragmented places like Nassau County.

What this study shows is that the conclusions of prior research on immigrants in urban contexts cannot automatically be applied to a suburban context. My findings motivate more research, as more and more immigrants head to a variety of suburban locations. The traditional immigrant story has been one of arrival to an ethnic enclave in a city followed by an eventual move out to the suburbs signaling "I've made it," which can happen in one generation, or perhaps a few. There is the idea that moving out of an enclave and into the suburbs is a fulfillment of the American Dream. However, now that so many immigrants are arriving directly to the suburbs, this story does not always fit. Bedford has a reputation as a quiet and hard-working community, with good schools. One might think that living there means a family has reached its goals, and the next generation will undoubtedly succeed. But living in a "nice" neighborhood and attending a "good" school do not automatically give families an advantage or

guaranteed social reproduction, nor upward mobility. In this context, success is not a given, and there are still constraints and challenges. On the other hand, the students in this study are enrolling in college at a higher rate than their counterparts in Fairview or Washington Heights, so there is an advantage to being raised in Bedford. It remains to be seen whether this college-going advantage enables the students to maintain or improve upon what their parents were able to provide for them.

By delving deeply into one context, we are able to explore how the structural and cultural features of a place influence the lives of the Dominican students in this sample. In this study, I focused on socioeconomic status, racial and ethnic composition, the local labor market, type of family household, language isolation and school outcomes as elements of "place." Such a focus furthers an understanding of how place is experienced by different groups of people. We can see how the structural and cultural features of a place have profound implications for an individual's life experiences and life outcomes. Taking this in account as we continue to explore how immigrants are adapting to different contexts will be helpful in understanding assimilation processes.

Future Success

Research on aspirations typically relies on surveys, and a set of untested or untestable assumptions about desirable outcomes. Instead of assessing how important the students felt education was to their future success, I asked an open-ended question, giving them the space to talk about other things, and possibly not even name education as something they needed to be successful. In addition, by focusing on Dominicans, this study also addresses a weakness in the educational aspirations literature that treats Latinx as a monolithic group (Bohon, Johnson, & Gorman 2006).

This study complicates Mickelson's (1990) findings regarding abstract and concrete views on education. She found that a majority of African-American students had positive abstract views, believing in the idea that education can lead to success. However, she found differences in their concrete views, where those who had seen their family members struggle and not get a good return on their investment in education were less likely to believe in the power of education for themselves. She argued that these concrete views of education explained why African American students did not work as hard in school, not seeing the point of investing in their education when it would not lead to a bright future. In my sample, the students had similar concrete attitudes towards education, across the board. They all approached their schooling in a similar manner, worrying about getting decent passing grades, but not striving to be the best or challenging themselves in any way. I found it surprising how little the students in this study had bought into the competitive nature of suburban schooling as described by Demerath (2009), or sought out their own resources after being disappointed in the support the school was offering (Louie, 2012). I believe these students were experiencing suburban complacency based on the comfort-level their parents had afforded them. They did not have a sense of urgency about planning for their futures in order to help their families. The fact that they were living in a "good" neighborhood and going to a "good" school seemed to actually work against them in terms of motivating them to seek out additional resources and take concrete steps towards their future. Therefore, these findings complicate the idea that concrete views are determined by perceptions of family members' returns on their educational investments. The students in this study seemed to be influenced by the context within which they lived, rather than the experiences of their parents in the labor market.

I also found differences in students' abstract views on education, based on whether they had a parent who had attended college or not. Those whose parents had not attended college generally believed in the power of education, and in the American ethos of hard work leading to success. In their cases, I argue that this belief was detrimental to their college planning, leading to a blind faith in everything working out fine, if they just were to enroll in college. On the other hand, the students with college-educated parents did not believe in the American Dream as much, and felt conflicted about the power of education. This may be because they had seen the realities of the limited return on a college degree for their parents, and knew that their place in this middle-class community was precarious. Their parents' experiences seemed to temper the students' abstract views, complicating Mickelson's previous findings that the majority of students have positive abstract views on education.

The differences described above between the students whose parents attended college and those who did not likely came from the messages they were receiving from their parents. Because I also interviewed the parents, I was able to see that they were saying very different things to their children. The parents with a college education were far more critical of the power of a degree, and communicated this to their children. Perhaps because these parents had invested in higher education and were still struggling, they had been forced to confront the limited returns to a college education. On the other hand, the parents who had not had the opportunity to pursue a degree had a more romanticized notion of what that degree might bring. They had not been forced to see the reality of the diminishing returns on one's investment in higher education. These parents felt strongly that if their children went to college, they would have a successful future. It did not matter what college they went to, nor what they chose to study. This "laid back"

approach of assuming that enrolling in college is a guarantee to success was communicated to the students and clearly influenced their belief in the power of education.

Parental Involvement

The findings in this study complicate Lareau's (2000, 2003) argument that social class is the main factor in determining parenting styles. While I did find evidence consistent with her description of the accomplishment of natural growth style, we must reconsider which parents are likely to parent in this style. Based on Lareau's class-based argument, one would have expected that the parents with a college education would be more likely to parent in a way consistent with what she identified as middle-class parenting, or concerted cultivation. However, in this study, all of the parents, regardless of education level, were parenting in a lower-class style. Therefore, this study provides evidence that class alone is not a good predictor of parenting, and ethnicity and immigrant status also need to be considered. This has huge implications, as college-educated immigrant parents may be acting in ways that are unintentionally detrimental to their children's ability to replicate their parents' educational accomplishments. In that case, the second generation may experience downward mobility. Indeed, that was a concern in this study, as there was a mismatch between the way the parents were participating in their children's education and the type of community they live in.

While I did not focus on the school administrators' and teachers' views on the increasing number of immigrant families and their perceptions of the families' engagement with the schools, I speculate that they might view the parents' involvement in a negative way. Bedford High School has a stable teaching staff, and most of the teachers have been there for their entire careers. One student commented that many of the teachers, particularly those who are White, had taught in Bedford for a long time, and did not know how to relate to the growing number of

Black and Latinx students. This comment came from the one student who had moved to Bedford from Washington Heights, and was particularly insightful regarding race and class. Because of the older teaching staff, the race of the staff, and the fact that the demographic changes have occurred in a relatively short period of time, I think it is unlikely that the Bedford teachers have been able to adjust their expectations to accommodate a non-mainstream approach to parenting. It is likely that this would be true for school administrators as well, although the students in this study did not comment on how long those staff members had been at the school.

Differences in values have been blamed for the parenting style of lower class families. Although the accomplishment of natural growth parenting style can be perceived as not valuing education by those in mainstream institutions, the parents in this study did care about their child's education, and their children conveyed that. This is consistent with previous studies that have found Latinx parents value education and see its use for upward mobility (Stevenson, Chen & Uttal 1990; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba 1991). The students in this study felt supported by their parents, despite their limitations and constraints on participating in a way mainstream middle-class parents do. Contrary to what Louie (2012) found, the students in this study did not long for more parental involvement, and did not compare their parent's involvement to their peers' parents. Louie found that the Dominican and Columbian students in her study did compare their parents' ability to be involved with their peers, and noticed that teachers paid more attention to these students, which only made them want their parents to be more involved. The Dominican students in my study did not seem aware of what middle-class parenting looks like, and therefore did not see the need, nor have a desire for, a different kind of involvement from their parents. This was also surprising, and I attribute it to this suburban complacency idea discussed above. I

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argue that their comfortable upbringing was contributing to their lack of urgency and agency in their educational pursuits.

Another reason sometimes used to explain the parenting style of lower class families is the presence of institutional racism. In this study, all of the parents felt comfortable and welcome at the school. Although the parents in this study did not provide any examples of blatant racism, it is still possible that institutional racism was being conveyed in subtler ways, and observations at the school might reveal this. Just as I was surprised that the parents had not experienced any racism in the larger Bedford community, I was equally surprised by the fact that the parents had not experienced racism in the schools. This was an unexpected finding, as all of the parents and students I interviewed would likely be identified as Latinx, even though there was a variety in skin tones among the participants. The final reason often used to explain these differences is the lack of mainstream social and cultural capital, which will be discussed in the next section.

Another common theme was the desire the parents had for their children to have a better life than they did. In fact, it seemed that what they wanted most for their children was happiness. Surprisingly, this desire translated into parental involvement consistent with the accomplishment of natural growth approach. Even the college-educated parents who talked a lot about the realities of society and the current labor market still did not pressure their children to get the best grades, take the hardest classes, or apply to the best colleges. They were not talking about their children being productive members of society, helping to change the world, or being the best at something. Their focus was on the mental well-being of their children, which may have come across as them being uninterested in education to the educators at Bedford High School.

The fact that the parents in this study were not able to translate their dreams and desires for their children into concrete actions to help them left me wondering why this was so. I

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speculate that this may be evidence of the Dominican parents' lack of assimilation into the middle-class culture of personal advancement described by Demerath (2009). The white families in his study had "cultural competencies" that allowed them to manipulate the school system to their advantage. On the other hand, he found that the African American families in his study did not have the "dispositions or know-how to secure these sorts of advantages for their children" (p.176). The same was true in this sample of Dominican parents. As we have made progress towards equitable education for all public school students, white parents have developed ways to continue gaining advantages over others. Demerath (2009) described the way parents supported their children's educational endeavors by intervening and manipulating policies, creating a culture of competition in the school. The parents in this study did not see school as a place where one competes for resources. Perhaps because they had not yet experienced disappointment from U.S. institutions, they trusted those in the school would act in the best interest of their children. It did not occur to them that a counselor might give more time to one student over another, or that if a parent demanded more from the counselor, they would receive more. I believe that if the parents in this study had been made aware of this, they would have acted differently, as they all wanted what was best for their children.

While I argue that all of the parents were using the accomplishment of natural growth style of parenting at the time the study was conducted, I should point out that the college educated parents did act in a way more consistent with middle class parenting by choosing Bedford as a place to settle and raise their children. These parents did look into different suburban communities and considered the schools as part of their decision, even though they ended up choosing mostly based on the prices of the homes. If they had already made the purposeful choice to settle in Bedford, perhaps they felt they had done what they needed to do,

and now the community itself would provide the benefits to their children through their schooling experiences. They may have felt that by making the sacrifices to live in Bedford, they could then step back from their children's educations, and instead focus on earning enough to maintain their lifestyle there. For the non college educated parents, settling in Bedford was more of a happy accident, and so I do not believe they were acting in a way consistent with middle class parenting.

Mainstream Social and Cultural Capital

Overall, the parents and students in this study lacked the mainstream social and cultural capital that could be translated into positive outcomes in the college application process. Though it has been argued that working-class and poor children, in particular, need additional resources, I contend that the students in this study also needed this help, despite living in a middle-class suburb. Stanton-Salazar (1997) found that successful students were able to get this much-needed information from people in their lives such as teachers, counselors, or mentors. I found that the students in this sample did not have anyone in their lives that was able to fill in the gaps in their knowledge regarding college. Louie (2012) found that students also gained this valuable information through collective enrichment programs, such as Upward Bound, that are typically found in urban locations with a history of concentrated poverty. Interventions that support students' educational endeavors are not readily available in communities such as Bedford, putting students like the ones in this study at a disadvantage.

This was particularly evident when it came to the college application process. One would have expected that the parents with a college degree would have been able to help their children in a meaningful way. This proved to not be the case, because the parents had not taken a traditional route to their college experience. And since none of the parents had attended high

school in the US, they had not experienced this pressure and race to bulk up their transcript and resume in a way that would make them more competitive in the college application process, something that is typical of a "good" middle-class community.

Due to their lack of mainstream social and cultural capital, the lack of other people in their lives who might provide this, and the lack of intervention programs in Bedford, parents were left to rely on whatever support the school and its guidance counselors could provide. Since the influx of immigrant families is a fairly recent phenomenon, the school was either not equipped, or perhaps not aware, of the needs of this population. The behavior of all the parents, college-educated or not, was consistent with the parenting style of accomplishment of natural growth. They lacked a sense of entitlement, and did not advocate on their child's behalf. Applying to college was considered part of what the school is in charge of, and they trusted that the school was doing its job and helping their children to the best of its ability. Unfortunately, this was a missed opportunity by the school to make a difference in these students' lives and help them make good college decisions.

The irony of the accomplishment of natural growth parenting style is that parents are inherently trusting the schools to do their job and educate their children to the best of their ability. Unfortunately, this may prove to be a mistake, as public schools have a long history of institutional racism and neglect. The Dominican families in this study must also consider that the Bedford School District does not have a history of educating recent immigrants, and so it could be in their best interest to question the established schooling practices. In fact, Hill (2017) found that Black parents did need to distrust schools and educators as a way or protecting their children from untrustworthy behaviors and policies. The difference between Black parents and the Dominican ones in this study is possibly that since the Dominican parents were not educated

here in the United States, they had not experienced the racism and neglect of the public schools for themselves. There may also be an element of immigrant optimism, as they have not been here long enough to have experienced generations of institutional racism and neglect that many Black families and communities have. The Dominican families, in this study in particular, have managed to "make it" to a "good" suburban community, and therefore are even more likely to have faith in its institutions.

Extended family and siblings were also mentioned as a potential resource by many of the students but again, they were not able to provide what the students in this study needed. Although Louie (2012) found that students were relying heavily on nonfamily connections for help with school, the students in this study lacked those people in their lives. Not one student mentioned a teacher who had taken a special interest in them, or any other kind of adult mentor that could have helped these students plan for college and make the most out of the resources Bedford High School offered. None of the students talked about wanting or needing this kind of support with their educational endeavors, as the students in Louie's study did. The students in this study seemed complacent and therefore satisfied with what they knew, while at the same time unaware of their needs.

From the accounts in this study, we can see that just living in a "nice" community isn't enough. The parents don't have the mainstream cultural capital to impart to their kids and the school assumes they do, because of its history of serving mainstream middle-class students. These parents have managed to buy or rent their way into this community, but it's not enough unless the school or other intervention programs support them in bridging the gaps. These communities and schools that are not used to serving families from a less advantageous background, and may not know how to make up the gap, or even know that a gap exists.

Gonzalez, Stoner & Jovel (2003) identified teachers, counselors and school administrators as potential agents of institutional neglect and abuse when thinking about the factors that work against students gaining the valuable information about college that they need to acquire. I believe that Bedford High School is doing a disservice to these students, whether they are aware of it or not.

Although the students did not report having any negative experiences with their teachers, it is still possible that they are being treated differently than the other students. The students may not sense it, but teachers and counselors alike can act in ways that are detrimental to the students' futures without being openly negative or racist. The idea of benign neglect can help explain how the Dominican students in this study are not getting the most out of their educational experiences in Bedford. While not being overt with their actions, teachers and administrators can subtly neglect students, with long term consequences on their educational trajectories. It is possible that school staff does not believe in the potential of the Dominican students, and therefore is acting in ways that do not help them develop to their full potential. This may also explain why it appeared the students were under-matching in their colleges. If the school staff do not believe the Dominican students can accomplish more, they are going to steer them towards the lesser options.

Looking at a specific group of Latinx in a suburban context provides insight into how or if mainstream cultural and social capital is acquired by a non-dominant group. It highlights the idea that availability and exposure to mainstream social and cultural capital does not guarantee it will be acquired as well. Acquisition is just the first step, but it needs to be activated to gain an advantage. Lareau (2000) argues that there is an additional step to this process, as even activation of cultural capital does not guarantee educational success. She proposes considering it a three-

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part process consisting of the possession of cultural resources, the activation and investment of the resources, and lastly, the attainment of an advantage from the investment. Lareau suggests it can be helpful to consider two kinds of capital, activated and unactivated. In fact, I discovered that the students in this study are not as integrated as one would have expected, based on their preference for the diversity in Bedford and how they talked about everyone getting along is what makes that place so great. However, for all but one of the students, their close friends were other "Spanish" kids, and their friend groups were not reflecting the diversity present at the school and in the community. It is unclear whether those friends were coming from the same disadvantaged background with regards to the college application process, but none of the students in this study mentioned their friends as resources for this kind of information. Again, this complicates the idea that just going to school with white Americans and being exposed to mainstream cultural and social capital is enough to transfer these advantages to a non-dominant group.

This finding supports the idea that while there are benefits to the simple act of integrating students in a classroom, it is just the first step in a much more involved and complicated process. Although I did not ask many questions about this topic, I did ask the students and parents about whether the district and schools recognized Dominican culture or celebrated the diversity of Latinx students. I received many puzzled looks from parents, and the students shared that there was an international day when they brought food representing their culture. The impression I got was that Bedford is touting its diversity, but is not doing the kind of work that is required to achieve meaningful integration of students (Wells, Fox & Cordova-Cobo, 2016). The district could likely improve their efforts in this area, beginning with a close examination of their pedagogy and curriculum.

Place

When considering the idea of emplacing a study, although it is a theoretically difficult concept to turn into empirical work, I demonstrated one possible way of bringing context to the forefront. Place is particularly important when looking at the assimilation of immigrants, as the variation between places has a great impact on the outcomes of those living there. What I learned from this endeavor is that place is a fluid concept that is defined by those living in it. I could not have learned about the critical role Fairview was playing in the lives of the Dominicans in Bedford, had I not gone into the field and spent time doing in-depth interviews. Yet, there is another place that played a big role in the lives of these students and their families, that I did not incorporate into the framework, and that is the Dominican Republic. It is interesting to consider the role of a place that they are not physically in, yet the students feel connected to and proud to be from. This has the potential to add another dimension to the idea of emplacing a study, by including places that inform the person's understanding of him or herself, whether they visit that place regularly or have only heard about it from their family.

Since Bedford can be considered a middle class community, the Dominican families in this study have managed to carve out a fairly good life for themselves. Their economic trajectory from the Dominican Republic to Bedford shows great growth and promise, as they have improved their lifestyles significantly. The parents have worked very hard to secure a good life for themselves and their children, so much so that it remains to be seen whether the children can improve up or maintain that status. The largest gains are usually seen in the second generation, and then there can be a decline. In this study, the first generation, the parents, managed a significant leap forward, many without even completing a college degree. Therefore, it puts a lot of pressure on the second generation to keep moving forward. Further research on immigrants in

suburban locations is necessary to see whether a new pattern of economic mobility emerges across generations of immigrants.

Even though the families have settled in a middle class community, the parents are participating in their child's education in a way consistent with the lower class. In this case, there is a mismatch between the place the parents have chosen to live in, and the way they approach schooling. What I cannot determine from my data is whether this is problematic, given that the place itself is providing so many advantages to the children. The advantages of living in Bedford, from the quiet safe streets to the good schools, may be enough to counteract any negative effects that may come from parenting through the accomplishment of natural growth. The students in this study did not see it as a problem, and it is outside the scope of this project to know whether it was problematic from the viewpoint of the school's teachers and administrators. It is possible that the lower class parenting style does not pose significant problems for immigrant students when the place itself provides many advantages to those residing in it.

Lastly, it is interesting to consider the role of place in immigrant optimism. It is possible that a place like Bedford will extend the life of the optimism to further generations because the families are experiencing life there in such a positive way. They are not coming away with a negative impression of the social institutions, such as the schools, and therefore seem to have a high level of trust that those institutions are doing their job to the best of their ability. It is possible that the families in this study may believe in the educational system longer than those arriving to cities, especially urban enclaves that tend to be plagued with low-performing schools. If they are not experiencing disappointment with their experiences in a place like Bedford, we can speculate that they will continue to feel optimism towards their futures.

Policy Implications

This study provides an in-depth understanding at how a group of Latinx youth is faring in a diverse suburban community. Indeed, many people assume that living in the suburbs, especially one like Bedford, indicates success, and that this success will be passed on to the next generation. One problem that stems from this assumption is that interventions have been focused solely on addressing problems in urban ethnic enclaves, areas of concentrated poverty, or in urban settings in general. With the increase of immigrants arriving directly to suburban communities, there is a growing need for a broadening of contexts to include as sites for intervention programs. The poor outcomes of Dominicans in general provide evidence that this group continues to experience disadvantages despite the diversification of their place of settlement (Kasinitz et al., 2008).

The "solutions" the experts call for are mainly designated for disadvantaged groups in urban settings, and intervention programs exist in cities where immigrants have traditionally been concentrated. College preparatory programs that are implemented in majority minority schools have been found to be very successful (Knight & Marciano, 2013) For urban immigrant families, such interventions focus on trying to fill in the gaps they have in their mainstream cultural and social capital, in an attempt to improve their outcomes. Some programs stress the importance of college readiness, early exposure to colleges, and support with the application process, often through long-term programs that create cohorts of disadvantaged students that help each other out and provide them with peers with similar goals. These programs are not as prevalent in suburban settings, and we must therefore examine the problematic nature of the following assumption: if families are able to afford a suburban community, then they possess the information and connections needed to maintain or improve their socio-economic status. It is

possible that programs such as the ones existing in urban settings could help these suburban families identify the gaps in their knowledge, and learn how to get the most out of the privileged community they are residing in.

This issue should matter to others, because Latinx' presence in this country continues to grow (Fry, 2008; Fry & Passel, 2009; Humes et al., 2011; Flores, 2017) and so their future will greatly determine the future of this country. Given that schools are the main social safety net in this country, school districts can benefit from the findings in this study, because they can understand the different needs of this population, and then begin to address them. Suburban communities can benefit from this information, and use it to better support these newer arrivals. Ignoring population changes in one's community and not adapting to changing needs can, and will, likely lead to problems in the future, so these findings may prove useful when considering policies that shape their communities.

Since the findings in this study suggest that neither the parents, family, nor friends were able to provide guidance for the college application process, and that the students relied on their school, even something as small as realizing this group of students needs more support with college, and increasing funding for more guidance counselors and comprehensive college planning programs, could make a big difference. For example, Dimmitt (2007) found that students who participated in career development curriculum showed a better understanding of career possibilities, greater self-efficacy, and an increase in school engagement. Programs like this can help students understand the relationship between academic choices and careers (Long & Billups, 1999). However, programs operated without a guidance counselor, such as online programs, have been found to be significantly less effective than programs run by counselors (Whiston, Brecheisen & Stephens, 2003). And the effectiveness of counselors in assisting

students with career development and college planning is well supported by researchers (Blackhurst, Auger, & Wahl, 2003; Long & Billups, 1999; Mau, Hitchcock, & Calvert, 1998). Perhaps due to the fact that the demographic changes are rather recent, the district may not have yet realized the different needs of this new population. It may be operating under the assumption that it is not the sole source providing information to the students. Educators need to realize that both the parents and the students need information about the particulars and processes of the tiered American higher education system.

Future Studies

One possible next step is to begin testing out some of the more successful interventions previously used in urban settings in a variety of suburban communities that are now experiencing demographic changes, such as increases in non-majority families. Perhaps using this study as evidence of the gaps in knowledge that need to be filled, suburban districts can be convinced to invest in supporting these families in new ways. Or organizations that have concentrated their efforts in urban settings can expand their offerings to suburban communities. We would then need to study the results from these interventions to see if they are effective in this new context with this different group or if something completely new needs to be developed.

We also need more qualitative, in-depth studies of other Latinx groups and other racial/ethnic groups to compare to, in order to flesh out the similarities and differences. In addition, there are a variety of suburban contexts to study, as they are quite heterogeneous, and we cannot assume the findings from this community would transfer to another one. Bedford has a diverse and well-performing school but that's not always the case. There are suburban communities that are just as segregated with a high concentration of poverty as there are in "inner cities." Additional studies of Latinx sub-groups in a variety of suburban settings will help

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to paint a more complete picture of the experiences of second-generation students and their

families in these newer destinations. Only then can we begin to identify and address their needs.

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Appendix A: Table with Answers to "What do you need to be successful in today's world?"

Students with Non-College Educated Parents	Student Initial Interview	Parent Interview	Student Follow-Up Interview
Adelina Mother: Disabled, not working	My education, that's all I need; hard work	Prepare yourself (study)	Connections, do well in school, do what you need to do
Rebeca Dad: landscaper and construction	Good grades, a goal to reach, stay out of trouble	A good education, a good profession, have a good job later, an honest life	A high school diploma, job experience, community service
Soledad Mother: housekeeper	Morals, open-minded, see everybody's perspective	Success is something you make for yourself, set a goal and achieve it, make a plan	n/a
Narcisa Dad: custodian Mother: elderly care	Intelligence, people skills, charisma, a really good education	A career and a job	Knowledge, technology, awareness of different cultures and speak a few languages
Valquiria *same as Narcisa (sisters)	Confidence, know what you want, determination	*same as Narcisa (sisters)	A really important job, a career, study and try your best
Yesenia Dad: Machinist Mother: Unemployed	A good educational background, support	Separate herself from her parents, study hard to be someone, obedience	n/a
Students with College-Educated Parents			
Rodrigo Dad: Accountant Mother: Secretary	Know people	A good education, more education than you needed before because of the competition	Money, education but can also be a legal hustler, knowledge

Alicia Dad: Accountant Mother: Court translator	How to handle money, experience, effort	Go to college four years, graduate	Want to say education but that's not right, dedication will get you somewhere
Christy Mother: Nurse	College, money, connections	Focus and determination, able to interact with other people	n/a
Jenny Mother: Social Worker Dad: Mechanic	Education, a diploma, a degree, but everyone is different	It's not guaranteed, I don't know how to measure that	A positive mind, when something goes wrong, it's not the end of the world

Appendix B: Table with Parents' Answers to "What do you want for your child's future?"

Students with Non-College Educated Parents	Parent's answer
Adelina Mother: Disabled, not working	Better life, happiness, do what comes from inside your heart
Rebeca Dad: landscaper and construction	Better life, opportunity to go to college, take her time, follow her heart
Soledad Mother: housekeeper	Better life, take your time, happiness
Narcisa Mother: elderly care	Better job, no pressure
Valquiria	*same as Narcisa (sisters)
Yesenia Mother: Unemployed	Better life, college but it has to come from her, a job she likes
Students with College-Educated Parents	
Rodrigo Dad: Accountant	Happy, a job he likes because that will lead to more money
Alicia Mother: Court translator	Whatever makes her happy
Christy Mother: Nurse	Happy with her job which will lead to more money, no time to find yourself in college, needs a plan
Jenny Mother: Social Worker	They are the ones that have to pick

Appendix C: Table with Pictures by Topic

Students	Businesses, strip malls, and churches	Residential streets and homes	HS campus (buildings, fields, classrooms)	HS sports related	Schoolwork or homework	Future plans	Dominican Identity (food, flags, etc)	Friends and Family	Nature	Other
Narcisa	14	4	5	1	0	0	0	0	12	6
Valquiria	14	13	10	1	0	0	0	0	12	7
Rebeca	4	4	5	5	0	1	0	0	1	0
Jenny	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Soledad	1	0	3	0	0	2	2	1	1	1
Rodrigo	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	3	0	0
Christy	1	1	2	0	0	2	2	2	1	0
Adelina	3	0	3	1	1	3	2	4	1	1
Yesenia	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	34	0	12
Alicia	4	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	2	4

Appendix D: Interview Protocols

Instructions for Student Participants on Taking Pictures

Take pictures of the following topics. Use the attached log to keep track of which picture corresponds to which number on the list.

1.…places you like in your neighborhood or community.

2.…places you don't like in your neighborhood or community.

3.…places you like at your school.

4.…places you don't like at your school.

5.…what is important to you.

6.…something that represents who you are.

7.…something that represents where you come from.

8.…something that is meaningful to you.

9.…something you would miss if you moved away

10.…something that represents your future.

11.…a place where you feel you belong.

12.…a place where you feel you don't belong.

13.…the place where you spend most of your time outside of school.

14.…something unique or special about Bedford.

Initial Student Interview Protocol

Family

Tell me about your family. Who lives with you? Siblings? Extended family? When did your family come to the U.S.?

How do you identify yourself racially? Culturally? Is this different from who your parents are? How so? Do you like being _____? Why or why not?

What language does your family speak to you? What language does your family use when out and about in the community? Do you translate for them?

What kind of rules do you have at home? What do you need to ask permission for? Are you allowed to go places without adults? Do your siblings have the same rules?

Where do you do your homework? Do you feel comfortable there?

How much of your time outside of school do you spend with your immediate family? With your extended family? What language do you speak to your family in when at home? What about when you are out in the community?

What kinds of things do you do with your family? Are there different kinds of things you'd like to be able to do? Like what? Describe a typical weekend.

Does your family participate in school activities? (conferences, back to school night, games, meets, performances, etc.)

Does your family help you with your homework? Why do you think that's so? How would you like your family to help you with your homework? Why?

Does your family ask you about school and your classes? What does your family say to you about education and school? What do they say to you about your future? Do they tell you what field they want you to work in?

What does your mom do? Your dad? (or whoever they live with) Are these the kinds of jobs they have always had? If they have changed, why do you think that happened? Do you think they like what they do? Why or why not? Would you like to have the same job in the future?

Do your parents ever talk to you about your future plans? What do they say? What do they want you to be or do? Do you agree with them?

Community

Where do you live now? How long have you lived there? Where did you live before?

Describe your neighborhood. What kind of housing is around you? (Apartments? Houses?) Who are your neighbors? (Race, Class)

What is it like living in this neighborhood? Do you feel comfortable in all parts of Bedford?

Have you had mostly positive or mostly negative experiences with your neighbors? How about at stores in Bedford? In other public spaces in Bedford like parks or the waterfront? Describe an example of a positive experience. Describe an example of a negative experience? Which is more typical?

Have you visited other neighborhoods nearby or far away? How are they the same? How are they different? Do you spend a lot of time outside of Bedford?

Tell me about your closest friends. Are they the same background as you? Do you like it this way or do you wish it were different? What kinds of things do you do with your friends? Are there things you'd like to do but aren't able to? Like what?

Are you able to buy Dominican products in your community? Are there Dominican restaurants? Hangouts?

Do you picture yourself staying in this neighborhood or living somewhere else when you leave home? If somewhere else, where? Why?

School

Describe your school. Do you like going to this school? What would you change about your school?

Does this school make you feel important? Would you want to go to a different school? What type? Why?

Do you like your teachers? Do you think they like you?

 Do you feel comfortable in your classes? Are your classes at the right level for you?

Do you use Spanish in any of your classes? Do you speak to other students in your classes in Spanish? How do the teachers react?

Do you use Spanish with your friends at school, but outside of the classrooms?

Are you involved in any extra activities here at school? Which ones? Why did you join? Are there other activities you would like to be involved in? Why haven't you joined?

Do you think your background is valued at school? Do your teachers talk about it? Do they make your culture feel important?

How do you feel about doing well in school? Are good students respected by the other kids? What do you think makes a student popular at your school?

Educational Outlook

Tell me about your classes. What are the teachers like? What are the kids like?

Are all your classes the same? Are all your classes full of the same students? Why or why not?

Do you work hard in school? Do you think other kids at this school work hard?

Do you care about this school? Do you think other kids at this school care about it?

Do you know what any of your friends' parents do for their job? Do any of those jobs sound interesting to you?

What are your future plans? What do you want to do? Do you plan on finishing high school? Do you want to get a job or continue your education? What kind of job do you want?

If you want to go to college, do you know someone who went and can help you apply?

Do your teachers ever talk to you about your future plans? Does the school offer you help or ideas about future jobs or careers? A guidance counselor? Workshops? Is there something the school could do differently that you think would be better or more helpful?

What do you need to be successful? Do you think you can get these things? Why or why not?

Do you have people you can ask for help or information about these things? Who are they? If not, why not?

Would you say you are a good student? Why or why not?

Parent Interview Protocol

Community

When did you come to the U.S.? Why? Where did you arrive to? When did you move to Bedford? Did you consider other places? Where? Why did you choose Bedford?

How would you describe Bedford? Is it what you imagined? How so? How not?

What is it like living in this community? Do you feel comfortable in all parts of Bedford?

Have you had mostly positive or mostly negative experiences with your neighbors? How about at stores in Bedford? In other public spaces in Bedford like parks? Or the waterfront? Can you give me an example?

Do you spend time in other neighborhoods nearby or far away? How are they the same? How are they different?

Tell me about your friends. Do they live in Bedford? Are they Dominican? Do you like it this way or do you wish it were different?

Are you able to buy Dominican products in your community? Are there Dominican restaurants? Hangouts? Do you go there often?

Do you picture yourself staying in this neighborhood or living somewhere else later in life? If somewhere else, where? Why? Do you picture your child living in Bedford in the future? Why or why not?

Family

How do you identify yourself? And your child?

What language do you typically speak to your child in at home? What language does your family use when out and about in the community? Have you had your child translate for you?

Does your child have rules? Do they need to ask permission to go somewhere? Are they allowed to go places without adults? Do all of your children have the same rules?

How much time do you spend with your extended family/relatives? Where do you get together? Where do they live? What language do you speak to your relatives in?

Are there people in your circle of family or friends who have experience navigating the U.S. higher education system? Can your child go to them for advice in planning their futures?

School

Are you happy with Bedford High School? Why or why not? What would you change about the school?

Does this school make you feel welcome? Would you want your child to go to a different school? What type? Why?

Do you think your child's background is valued at school? Why or why not?

Do you like your child's teachers? Why or why not?

Are you satisfied with the classes your child is taking? Why or why not? Do you help him/her choose classes?

Are you able to participate in school activities? (conferences, back to school night, games, meets, performances, etc.)

Are you able to help your child with his/her homework? Does your child ask you for help? Is there someone else your child goes to?

Do you think parents have to get involved for a child to be successful in school? What is your role in your child's education?

Do you encourage your child to get involved in any extra activities at school? Which ones? Why? Are there other activities you would like your child to be involved in? Why hasn't he/she joined?

Educational Outlook

What do you say to your child about education and school? What do you say to your child about his/her future?

Do you think your child works hard in school? Do you think other kids at this school work hard?

Do you care about this school? Do you think other parents care about it?

What do you do for a living? And your spouse? Are these the kinds of jobs you have always had? If they have changed, why did that happen? Do you like what you do? Why or why not? Would you like your child to have a similar job in the future? If not, what kind of job would you like your child to have?

Do you have friends or family members with the kinds of jobs you would like your child to have? Do you encourage your child to talk to them for guidance?

What do you say to your child about his/her future plans? What do you want him/her to do?

Does the school offer you help or ideas about future jobs or careers? Have you met with a guidance counselor? Does the school offer workshops? Is there something the school could do differently that you think would be better or more helpful to you in planning your child's future?

What does your child need to be successful? Do you think he/she can get these things? Why or why not?

Do you have people you can ask for help or information about these things? Who are they? If not, why not?

Follow-Up Student Interview Protocol- For Those Attending Bedford High School

Family

Who lives with you? Siblings? Extended family? Any changes?

Do you still translate for family? Can you share a recent example?

Describe rules you have at home. What do you need to ask permission for? Are you allowed to go places without adults? Do your siblings have the same rules?

Where do you do your homework? Do you feel comfortable there?

How much of your time outside of school do you spend with your immediate family? With your extended family? With friends?

What kinds of things do you do with your family? Are there different kinds of things you'd like to be able to do? Like what? Describe a typical weekend.

How does your family support you in school activities? (conferences, back to school night, games, meets, performances, etc.)

How does your family help you with your homework? How would you like your family to help you with your homework?

Does your family ask you about school and your classes? What does your family say to you about education and school? What do they say to you about your future? What do they picture you doing when you finish high school?

Do your mom and dad have the same jobs? (or whoever they live with) Are these the kinds of jobs they have always had? If they have changed, why do you think that happened? Do you think they like what they do? Why or why not? Do you see yourself having the same job in the future?

What do your parents say about your future plans? What do they want you to be or do? Do you agree with them?

Community

Do you still live in the same part of Bedford do you live in? How long have you lived there? Where did you live before?

Describe your neighborhood. What kind of housing is around you? (Apartments? Houses?) Who are your neighbors? (Race, Class)

What is it like living in this neighborhood? What is it like hanging out in the rest of Bedford?

What kinds of experiences have you had with your neighbors? What about at stores in Bedford? In other public spaces in Bedford like parks or the waterfront? Would you say your experiences are mostly negative or positive? Why do you think that's so?

What other neighborhoods do you visit outside of Bedford? What are they like? How are they the same? How are they different? How much time do you spend outside of Bedford?

Tell me about your closest friends. How are they like you and how are they different? Do you like it this way or do you wish it were different? What kinds of things do you do with your friends? Are there things you'd like to do but aren't able to? Like what?

Where do you picture yourself living in the future? Why there?

School

What is it like to go to Bedford Senior High? What is the best thing about your school? What would you change about your school?

How does going to this school make you feel? Would you go to a different school if you could, and if so, why?

What are your teachers like? Can you tell me about your favorite teacher? Your least favorite teacher?

What is it like in your classes? Who is in your classes? Do you feel comfortable there? Are your classes at the right level for you?

Tell me about using Spanish at school. When and how do you use Spanish at school? How do the teachers react?

What extra activities are you involved in at school? Why did you join? What do you get out of being a part of ____? Are there other activities you would like to be involved in? Why haven't you joined? What about activities outside of school?

How are you doing in school overall? How do you feel about doing well in school? Are good students respected by the other kids? What do you think makes a student popular at your school?

Tell me about groups or clicks at school. Who hangs out with whom? Why do you think that's so?

Educational Outlook

What do your friends' parents do for their job? Do any of those jobs sound interesting to you?

What do you see yourself doing in the future? What kind of job do you want?

Are you interested in going to college? Do you feel you have people you can ask for help?

What do your teachers say about planning for the future? How does the school help you plan for your future? What could the school do better?

Who can you talk to about planning for your future? Tell me about them.

What kind of student are you?

What do you need to be successful in today's world? How do you get these things?

Follow-Up Student Interview Protocol- For Those Who Have Graduated High School

Background

What are you currently doing? Working? Studying? Both?

For Those Enrolled in College or Other School

What are you studying? What classes have you taken?

What is it like going to school at _____? What is the best thing about your school? What would you change about your school?

How does going to this school make you feel? Would you go to a different school if you could, and if so, why?

What are your professors like? Can you tell me about your favorite professor? Your least favorite professor?

What is it like in your classes? Who is in your classes? Do you feel comfortable there? Are your classes at the right level for you?

Tell me about using Spanish at school. When and how do you use Spanish at school?

Are you involved in any extra activities at school? Why did you join? What do you get out of being a part of ___? Are there other activities you would like to be involved in? Why haven't you joined? What about activities outside of school?

How are you doing in school overall?

How is attending _____ different from going to Bedford HS? How is it similar?

Describe the process of enrolling. Was there an orientation? Were you able to attend? Did you find it helpful?

Describe the process of choosing courses. How did you decide what to take? Were you able to enroll in all the courses you wanted to enroll in?

Do you have a plan for each year or are you deciding as you go? Do they provide information or guidance on what to take?

How are you financing school? Was the school helpful in figuring this part out?

For Those Working

Where are you working? What do you do there? How many hours a week do you work?

How did you get this job? Tell me about the process. (Application? Interview?)

What is it like working there? What is the best thing about working there? What would you change about your job?

How does working at this place make you feel? Would you work somewhere else if you could? If so, why? And where?

What are your co-workers like? What kinds of experiences have you had with them? Positive or negative? Do you spend time with them outside of work?

What is your boss like? What kinds of experiences have you had with him/her? Positive or negative?

How do you feel you are doing at this job? Do you see yourself staying there?

Family

Who are you currently living with? Siblings? Extended family? Roommates? Any changes?

Do you still translate for family? Can you share a recent example?

If living at home: Describe rules you have at home. What do you need to ask permission for? Are you allowed to go places without adults? Do your siblings have the same rules?

How much of your time do you spend with your immediate family? With your extended family? With friends?

What kinds of things do you do with your family? Are there different kinds of things you'd like to be able to do? Like what? Describe a typical weekend.

How does your family support you in your new job or new school?

Does your family ask you about your job and/or your classes? What does your family say to you about education and school? What do they say to you about your future? What do they picture you doing in the future?

Community

Where do you currently live? How long have you lived there? Where did you live before?

Describe your neighborhood. What kind of housing is around you? (Apartments? Houses?) Who are your neighbors? (Race, Class)

What is it like living in this neighborhood?

What kinds of experiences have you had with your neighbors? What about at stores? Restaurants? Would you say your experiences are mostly negative or positive? Why do you think that's so?

What other neighborhoods do you visit? What are they like? How are they the same? How are they different? How much time do you spend outside of your current neighborhood?

Tell me about your closest friends. How are they like you and how are they different? Do you still hang out with your high school friends?

Where do you picture yourself living in the future? Why there?

Educational Outlook

What do you see yourself doing in the future? Do you feel you are taking the steps needed to reach that goal? What could you do differently?

Have you been able to find people to talk to about your future plans? Who?

What do you need to be successful in today's world? How do you get these things?