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Exploring the Community Cultural Wealth of Low-Income Collegians of Color in their Transition from High School to College

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Exploring the Community Cultural Wealth of Low-Income Collegians of Color
in their Transition from High School to College

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Educational Administration

by

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May, 2018

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Dedication

To my dear husband Adam, without whom, none of this could ever have been done.

Acknowledgements

First, to the young people who shared their stories with me –thank you for your time, your candor, and your contributions. You are an inspiration, and we should listen to your wisdom.

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Abstract

This narrative study explores the transition from high school to college for eight low-income students of color who participated in a college access mentoring program, the College Admissions Project (CAP) while in twelfth-grade. A community cultural wealth (CCW) lens guides this research and is used to examine student experiences. CAP alumni who enrolled in an institution of higher education in the fall semester immediately following their high school graduation are the participants in this study. A narrative approach to inquiry is used because the author is interested in the particular experiences of a few individuals. Emergent themes include: early development of college aspirations, choosing a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) or a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), and the effects of community college enrollment on students' educational experiences and goals. This study has implications for practice in the area of college access programs as well as theoretical applications which extend a CCW framework to additional communities of color beyond Latina/o communities. In the area of practice, supporting positive peer relationships could make college access programs more effective. Student voice is also important to the participants in this study. Students should be part program development and evaluation processes so that programs are designed to best meet their needs as they exist, rather than as adults see them. There is some evidence that a CCW framework is applicable to the experiences of these students. Informational and social capital were most commonly referenced by participants, and efforts to help students further develop these assets would help to support their college transition processes.

KEYWORDS: college access, college choice, community cultural wealth, New Orleans, students of color

Chapter 1: Introduction

Despite decades of research and programmatic interventions, access to postsecondary education remains inequitable along lines of race and class (Carnevale & Strohl, 2010; García & Guerra, 2004; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018; St. John, Hu, & Fisher, 2011). Although increasing numbers of students of color have been enrolling in postsecondary institutions, their enrollment rates still lag behind those of their White peers, with the exception of Asian students (United States Department of Education, 2015). As Holland (2017) notes:

... in spite of their postsecondary aspirations, many African American and Latina/o students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, undocumented students, and students who are the first in their families to pursue a college degree continue to be under-represented among college enrollees and graduates (p. 796).

According to the most recent data available from NCES, immediate college enrollment rates have increased for students from all racial and ethnic groups, except for Black students whose immediate college enrollment rates have stagnated, as displayed in Figure 1 (NCES, 2018). Rothwell (2015) found that increased access to postsecondary education seems to be benefiting White and Asian students over other groups.

College enrollment is also affected by students' socioeconomic status. According to NCES, high-income students enroll in postsecondary education at higher rates than their middle-income and low-income peers, even when the low-income students are more academically qualified (NCES, 2014). More recent data show that although gaps between high-income and low-income students have narrowed, they persist. "The enrollment rate

for those from high-income families (83 percent) was higher than the rate for those from low-income (67 percent) families ... in 2016 (NCES, 2018).”

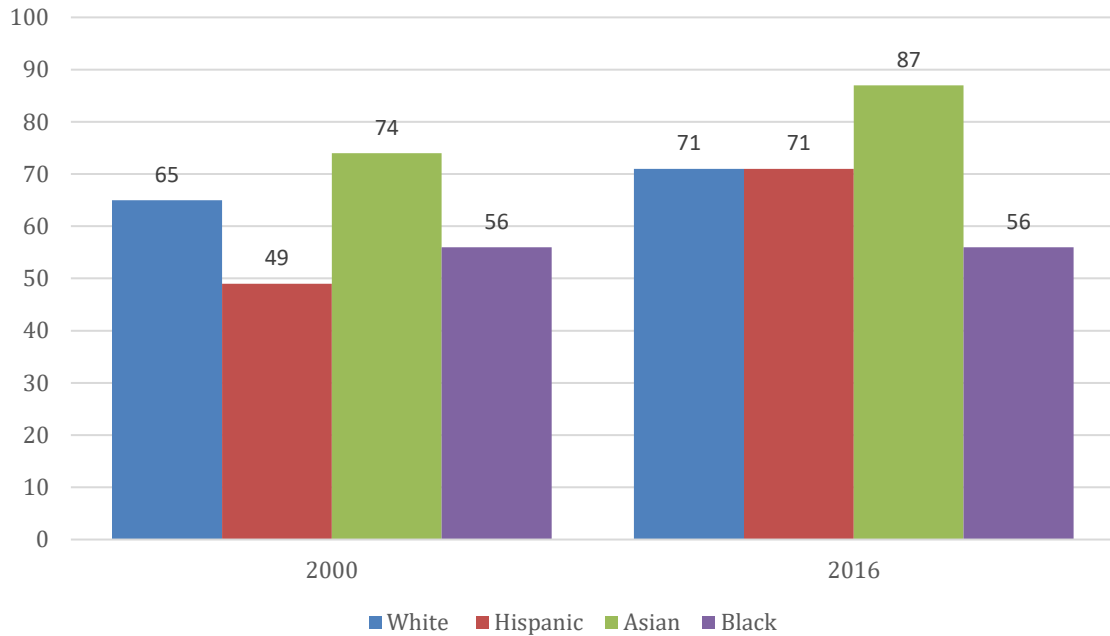


Figure 1. Immediate College Enrollment Rates by Race/Ethnicity. College enrollment rates in 2000 and 2016 for various racial and ethnic groups.

Most data on immediate college enrollment, such as those available through NCES, look at student enrollments by race/ethnicity or income, not both. Statistics that show the enrollment rates of students who occupy the intersection, that is low-income students of color, are not widely reported. NCES reports on enrolled undergraduates who receive a Pell Grant (a proxy for low-income status) by race. A 2015 NCES report looked at characteristics of students who received Pell Grants in 2011-2012. These data show all enrolled students who received a Pell Grant in 2011-2012, not just those who entered college for the first time: 33.5 percent of White students received a Pell Grant, 61.9 percent of Black students, 50.0 percent of Latina/o students, 33.8 percent of Asian students, 54.0

percent of Native American students, and 45.2 of students who identify as belonging to two or more racial groups (NCES, 2015).

Another source of data on students who immediately enroll in college after high school is The National Student Clearinghouse. Their High School Benchmarks Reports consider the influence of school-level factors related to socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity, but not individual student characteristics. The Clearinghouse refers to schools as high-poverty or low-poverty and high-minority or low-minority. According to the Clearinghouse, in the fall of 2015, 51 percent of all 2015 high school graduates from high-poverty high schools enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following graduation, as compared to 76 percent of graduates from low-poverty high schools. For fall 2016, these numbers were 53 percent and 77 percent, respectively. Looking at graduates of high-minority versus low-minority high schools, 57 percent of graduates from high-minority high schools in 2015 immediately enrolled in college, whereas 68 percent of students from low-minority high schools enrolled; and for 2016, 57 percent of graduates from high-minority high schools enrolled and 69 percent from low-minority high schools (National Student Clearinghouse, 2016; 2017).

Low-income students and students of color who do successfully enroll at a postsecondary institution are underrepresented on selective college campuses (McDonough & Fann, 2007). The phenomenon of under-matching of student ability and college selectivity has been growing in prominence in education research and policy literature (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2014), as well as in popular media in recent years (Meraji, 2015). Under-matching is when students who might qualify for admission at more selective institutions enroll at less selective intuitions (Smith, Pender, & Howell,

2013). Rothwell (2015) suggests that college enrollment, undermatching, and college completion are all affected by earlier educational experiences, which are likely to be “lower quality” for students of color, particularly Black and Latino/a students, and low-income students: “racial differences in attendance and completion at the post-secondary level reflect, to a large extent, gaps at the pre-secondary level. Black, Hispanic, and low-income children attend lower quality elementary and secondary schools, as measured on a number of important dimensions—such as test score performance and teacher experience” (p. 8).

The college-going disparity based on race/ethnicity and family income has led to significant investment in programs to promote college attendance for qualified low-income students of color. College access programs often aim to help students develop college aspirations as well as navigational capital; both the intent to enroll in college as well as the ability to successfully move into and through social institutions that were not designed to be inclusive of low-income people or people of color (Yosso, 2005). Common activities in which students may participate in such programs include: college visits, panels/group conversations with admissions representatives or college alumni, mentoring, and assistance with the college and financial aid application processes.

The College Admissions Project (CAP) is one such program. Operating in New Orleans, Louisiana, CAP aims to decrease the enrollment gap between high-income and low-income students through one-to-one mentoring, college visits, and financial assistance for entrance examinations and application fees (S. Hargrove, personal communication). Belonging to a historically underrepresented racial or ethnic group is not a qualification for a student to participate in CAP, but given the schools in which CAP operates, a majority of the participating low-income students are also students of color. Because low-income

students of color continue to be underrepresented as collegians, despite significant attention to this problem, it may be that their individual experiences enrolling in postsecondary education may not be well understood. Programs in place have, for the most part, not closed the college enrollment gap for low-income students of color (Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005).

To decrease the disparities in college enrollment for low-income students of color, it follows that their experiences need to be understood, valued, and the forms of capital that they may possess be recognized. If years of programmatic interventions have not produced significant improvements in college enrollment for low-income students of color as a group, then for the students who do successfully enroll, there may be more individualized and particular reasons for their successes. When historically underrepresented students successfully navigate the transition from high school to college, they may be drawing upon sources of support that are outside of the programmatic interventions offered to them (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009). Ford, Moore, Whiting, and Grantham (2008), although examining gifted education, make a similar observation about the need to better understand successful students from historically underrepresented populations. “Most studies have focused on the educational and social problems of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students and their families, particularly those living in poverty, and virtually ignore those diverse students who are educationally and socially successful” (p. 84).

Community cultural wealth (CCW) provides a framework which may help educators and educational researchers understand the experiences of low-income students of color who have successfully enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following high

school (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Martinez, 2012). When these students articulate their college enrollment experiences as active participants through narratives, not simply as passive objects of programs and procedures, it is more likely that practitioners and researchers can provide useful supports.

Practitioners and researchers may be able to glean insights from the experiences of low-income students of color who are able to successfully enroll in college; and analysis of their narratives of attaining success and enrolling in a postsecondary institution may also be useful to other students from similar backgrounds, and to educators seeking to design effective college access initiatives.

Problem Statement

For low-income students of color, obstacles to accessing postsecondary education are particularly persistent (García & Guerra, 2004; Holland, 2017; Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2010). These obstacles include lack of access to accurate information and college-going networks (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009). Improving college access for low-income students of color is essential to developing the human capital of our nation as a whole, as well as individual communities of color most affected by current inequities (Freeman, 2006; Yosso, 2005). Enabling more young people from such communities to obtain a college education develops the financial and social capital of these communities; capital which frequently goes underdeveloped (Freeman, 2006; 2004). College access is part of the solution to generational urban poverty and is essential to providing young people of color with the tools to challenge the deficit assumptions that are commonly held about them and their communities (Delgado Bernal, 2002; García & Guerra, 2004; Kiyama, 2011; Rodriguez, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005; 2006). Students of color

may possess forms of capital that are not recognized when a traditional conceptualization of cultural capital is used (Carey, 2016; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Rodriguez, 2013; Yosso, 2005). When low-income students of color, who are often placed at-risk and may face structural challenges to college attendance, make a successful transition from high school to college, they may be drawing upon these alternative forms of capital to make their educational transition (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Yosso, 2005).

The deficit perspective has been described as “the idea that students, particularly of low-SES backgrounds and of color, fail in school because they and their families have internal defects or deficits that thwart the learning process” (Valencia & Black, 2002, p. 83). This deficit perspective may also dictate which students are viewed as college-bound and which students are not. CCW directly opposes the deficit perspective by identifying what sources of strength might be developed for marginalized students (Carey, 2016; Holland 2017, Murillo, Quartz, & Del Razo, 2017; Yosso, 2005). Urban communities with large populations of people of color and large low-income populations cannot afford to allow valuable human capital to be undeveloped or underdeveloped.

Cities such as New Orleans, where the author resides and where this research is situated, are home to many low-income students of color who can benefit from effective college access supports. Among all 2015 New Orleans public high school graduates, the rate of immediate college enrollment in the fall following graduation was 63 percent. For 2016, this rate was 59 percent (Louisiana Department of Education, 2018). This decrease, while small, in rates of immediate college enrollment among high school graduates in New Orleans is concerning, especially considering the past decade of educational reform and a

stronger push for students to pursue postsecondary education (Sims & Rossmeier, 2015). Inequity of access to postsecondary education has and continues to limit the development of human capital in low-income communities of color (Freeman, 2006). Because generations of people of color have not had access to higher education institutions, inequitable access to higher education persists.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this narrative study is to explore the educational transition from high school to college for low-income students of color who also have participated in a college access mentoring program, the College Admissions Project (CAP). While exploring student experiences in their transition from high school to college, the researcher is most interested in if students use forms of CCW to navigate their educational transition. Specifically, the author is interested in if students rely on alternative forms of capital (aspirational, linguistic, familial, navigational, social, spiritual, and resistant capital) that are typically unrecognized in the dominant conceptualization of cultural capital but would be illuminated using a CCW framework (Carey, 2016; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Holland, 2017; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Yosso, 2005). Such forms of capital may have a preventative effect against students falling victim to summer melt—a well-known phenomenon in the enrollment management world where a qualified and admitted student who has taken action to enroll for the fall term, fails to complete the process and begin attending his or her chosen college or university once classes begin.

Research Questions

This study of the college transition of low-income students of color is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do low-income students of color describe their immediate transition from high school to college?
2. What forms of capital do low-income students of color draw upon to successfully navigate the transition from high school to college?
 - a. How do students describe their experiences in a college access program (CAP) in relation to the forms of capital used to successfully enroll in postsecondary institutions?

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Capital and Social Reproduction

The concept of cultural capital is most closely associated with French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1973) and later with Bourdieu and Passeron (1990). Cultural capital is a component of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory of social reproduction. Bourdieu and Passeron explicitly connect social reproduction to education, arguing that schools serve to reproduce social inequalities rather than enabling class mobility (Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Viewed from this perspective, the language and behaviors associated with students from lower socioeconomic classes are not valued or validated within educational institutions. This leads to poor educational attainment, correspondingly low-income work prospects, resulting in a second generation of poor students facing limited opportunities for social mobility. Although Bourdieu's work has been extended to many social groups including historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, it is inherently based on socioeconomic status (Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Willis, 1977).

Community Cultural Wealth

Yosso's (2005) theory of community cultural wealth "challenges traditional notions of cultural capital [...] and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledges, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged" (p. 69). In her theory, Yosso describes alternative forms of capital possessed by marginalized peoples that are typically unrecognized by dominant groups and institutions:

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. [...] *Linguistic capital* includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. [...] *Familial capital* refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition. [...] *Social capital* can be understood as networks of people and community resources. [...] *Navigational capital* refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions. Historically, this infers the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind. [...] *Resistant capital* refers to those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (pp.77-80).

Building upon Yosso's work, Liou, Antrop-González, and Cooper (2009) suggest that informational capital be added to the CCW framework. A key finding from their study of Latina/o students' college-going information networks is that when schools fail to provide students with needed high stakes information about postsecondary education, students tap into the cultural wealth of their home communities to access this information in other

ways. According to Liou, Antrop-González, and Cooper: “*informational capital*, in the forms of high stakes information networks is an essential factor to students’ academic resiliency” (p. 552).

In addition to informational capital, this author added *spiritual capital* to her theoretical framework. Yosso (2005) draws upon the scholarship of Delgado Bernal (2001) but does not include spiritual capital in her theory. In Delgado Bernal’s qualitative study of Chicana college students, spirituality emerged as a theme and was described as a source of strength (i.e., wealth) by the participants. Some recent studies that used Yosso’s framework have called for the inclusion of spiritual capital specifically (Espino, 2014; Farmer-Hinton, Lewis, Patton, & Rivers, 2013). These authors found forms of capital in their data that did not neatly fit into other categories and would be best described as spiritual capital. They found that religious communities provided an additional source of social capital that was specific to students’ belief in their own ability to succeed as well as their belief that their successes were not only their own. Educational success for them as members of a religious community was part of a collective journey for their faith communities (Farmer-Hinton, et al., 2013). In their suggestions for future research these authors suggest including spiritual capital as its own form independent of the others in Yosso’s framework. Spiritual capital could be seen as a part of one of the other forms of capital, but by including it as a separate construct this author has been more mindful of it in her research, which as other researchers have suggested, may be warranted.

Hossler and Gallagher’s Model of College Choice

Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987) model of college choice is a three-stage model consisting of predisposition, search, and choice stages. The predisposition phase differs

from educational aspirations because it emphasizes the decision to go to college, rather than just the intention to do so. By selecting participants who were involved in a college access program, the author selected students who had entered the predisposition stage by the start of their twelfth-grade year. These students had decided to pursue college rather than other available options such as entering the workforce immediately after high school or enlisting in the armed services.

The search stage is the active process of seeking information about postsecondary institutions and educational opportunities (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999). The choice stage is reliant upon the student's search stage. "The choice stage assumes that students have made the application decisions consistent with the search stage: they apply to schools they have previously selected and in a preference order consistent with, but not necessarily the same as, the selection order" (Hossler, et al., 1999, p. 150). Although this is a model rather than a theory, it is presented by Hossler and Gallagher (1987) as a conceptual model and this author has selected it for her theoretical framework because as a sociological explanatory model, it fits with the other theories being applied in the research.

Integration and application of the theoretical framework.

The author uses Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) conceptual model of college choice as the scaffolding for her theoretical framework. In order to appropriately address her research questions, the author brings together the theoretical literature on college choice, cultural capital, and CCW. Independently, any of these theories would leave aspects of the research problem uninvestigated. The integrated theoretical framework allows the researcher to address the problem more thoroughly.

To Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) three stage model, the author has added the stages of enrollment and persistence/departure. In her experience as a practitioner in the college-access and admissions fields, the author has noticed that college access programs focus on getting students accepted to colleges and universities, but few programs support students through the enrollment process to ensure that students are present on college campuses come the first day of classes. Students who are offered admission and intend to enroll but do not, become part of a phenomenon that enrollment management professionals call "summer melt." In a study on summer melt, Castleman and Page (2014) found "that low-income, college-intending students experience high rates of summer attrition from the college pipeline" (p. 202). They subsequently call for further investigation into this problem and for interventions to keep more low-income students on the track to college up through the start of the fall term.

An assumption made by the author in developing this study was that low-income students of color who successfully enrolled in college and began attending, may draw on alternative forms of capital possibly including their CCW (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Yosso, 2005) to navigate the transition process, because in the period of time between high school completion and college enrollment, supports received from the access program or the high school would have ended. Castleman, Page, and Schooley (2014) found that even offering college-intending low-income students two to three hours of summer support improved their chances of enrolling in college—preventing summer melt. However, as these authors acknowledge, college access programs do not typically offer summer support to students which can contribute to the summer melt phenomenon among low-income students. In addition to improved enrollment rates, Castleman, Page, and

Schooley found that summer support was positively related to student persistence into sophomore year of college. Given that CAP students, as well as students in the majority of other college access programs do not receive assistance during the summer following high school graduation, students who succeed in enrolling are drawing upon other resources at their disposal.

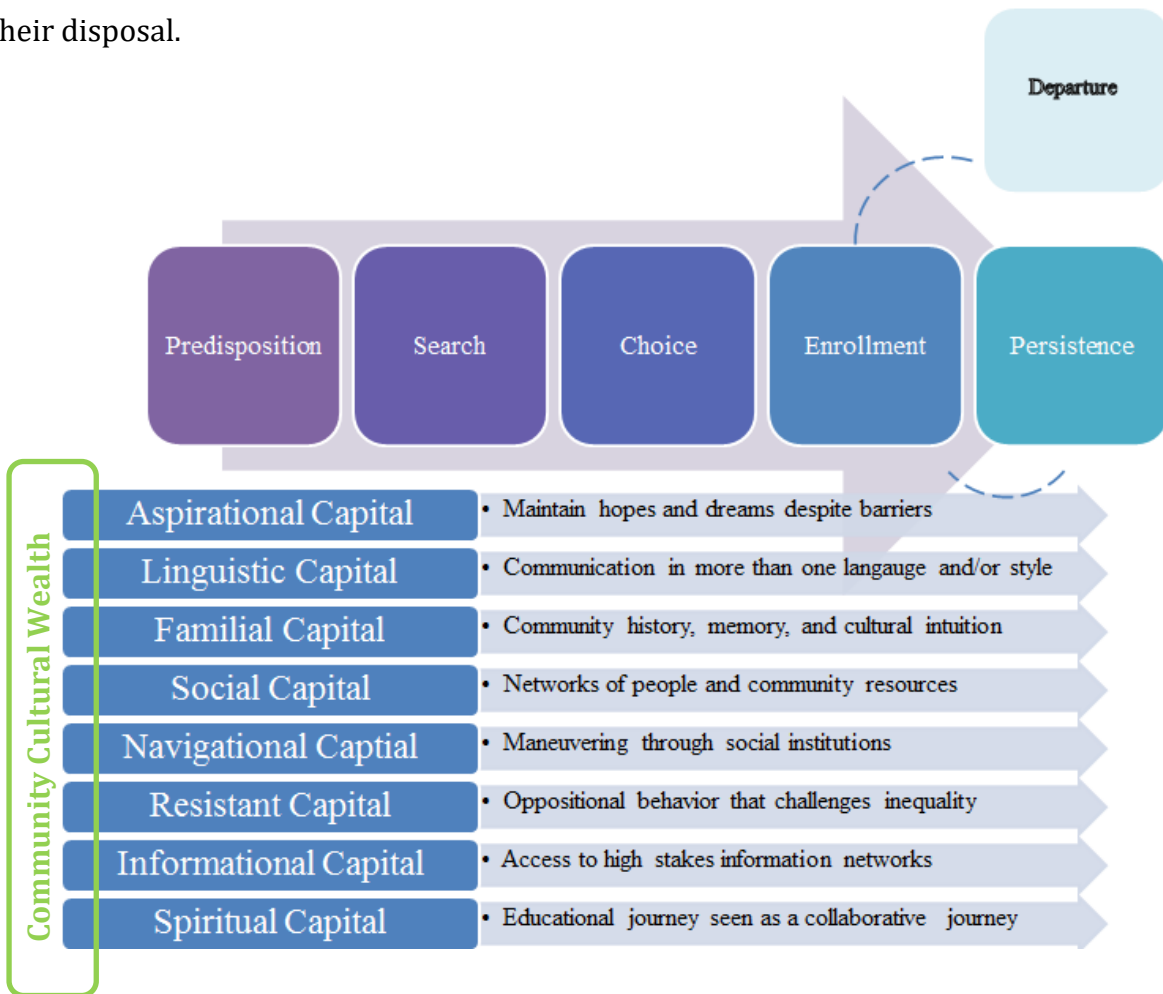


Figure 2. Theoretical framework. Theoretical framework for college choice and enrollment processes using CCW.

In Figure 2, the author has positioned the alternative forms of capital that make up community cultural wealth as potential underlying factors in the college choice, enrollment, and attendance processes.

Limitations of the framework.

A limitation of this theoretical framework is that it is designed to stop with student enrollment in college, rather than continue through college completion and/or dropout. Although it would be of interest to the author to follow participants throughout their college careers, a longitudinal study is beyond her current scope. Students were interviewed during or after their first semester or first year of college, but their subsequent enrollment behaviors were not followed longitudinally.

Another limitation of this framework is that because it is designed for research with a specific population. While CCW can be used as a theoretical framework with varied communities, the author is linking her use of it to college-going behaviors low-income students of color from New Orleans who participated in a twelfth-grade college access mentoring program. The author acknowledges that by contextualizing her research and the associated theoretical framework so specifically, there is potential that its applicability to other populations may be somewhat limited.

Approach to Inquiry

A qualitative research design has been selected because individual experiences and local contexts are central to the research. A narrative approach to inquiry is used in this study because the author is interested in the particular experiences of individuals (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007). The focus of this study is on a specific piece of participants' life stories—their transition from high school to college. The author

collected participants' stories through semi-structured interviews and restoried them as a part of her research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013). The selected theoretical framework was used guide the restorying process and the development of narrative counterstories (Creswell, 2007; Yosso, 2005), and themes. Consistent with a CCW lens which is built upon Critical Race Theory (CRT), a narrative approach was applied to understand the experiences of the participants as well as what their stories mean. As Bell (2002) describes: "narrative inquiry requires going beyond the use of narrative as rhetorical structure, that is, simply telling stories, to an analytic examination of the underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates" (p.208). Counterstories reshape the dominant narrative by exposing underlying assumptions about students from communities of color and enabling the students' voices to frame their lived experiences differently. These narratives also show the range of experiences within an experience. While all participants in this study successfully transitioned from high school to college, their experience of the transition experience is not the same.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter discusses the literature relevant to the transition from high school to college for low-income students of color. Because the author's research is intended for a PK-16 audience, research associated with both the PK-12 and higher education sectors is included. To appropriately frame her research, the author draws on several bodies of literature: deficit perspectives in education, inequitable educational opportunity for low-income students and students of color, college access and choice, community cultural wealth, and funds of knowledge. These bodies of literature are not reviewed in their entirety. Significant works that are germane to this study are included to contextualize the study within the published literature. Theoretical and empirical works are included in this review of the literature, and gaps in the existing literature are addressed.

Deficit Perspectives in Education

In addition to examining the transition to college for low-income students of color from New Orleans, this research calls into question deficit perspectives (Farmer-Hinton, et al., 2013; García & Guerra, 2004; Valencia & Black, 2002) that are often applied to low-income students, students of color, and students occupying the intersection of these identities in educational settings. Considering deficit perspectives and the practices that maintain them is relevant to this study because by using a CCW lens (Yosso, 2005; 2006) to explore the educational experiences of low-income students of color in their transition from high school to college, students were asked to reflect on their cultures and communities in terms of their assets rather than their deficits. The deficit perspective has been described as "the idea that students, particularly of low-SES backgrounds and of color, fail in school because they and their families have internal defects or deficits that thwart

the learning process” (Valencia & Black, 2002, p. 83). One of the reasons why adherence to deficit perspectives is problematic is because it can result in too narrow a definition of talent (or wealth) and lead to the “underutilization of human potential” (Freeman, 2004).

Farmer-Hinton, et al. (2013) re-story Jonathan Kozol’s *Savage Inequalities* which has become required reading in many urban educational administration and teacher preparation programs. Farmer-Hinton and her co-authors recognize that Kozol did not intend to further subjugate the students and families from the East St. Louis community about which he wrote, but he uses language that positions the community as a place lacking in all types of resources—full of deficits. The authors of the 2013 article grew up in East St. Louis and as women of color who have gone on to earn advanced degrees, they use their own experiences to re-story the vision of East St. Louis presented by Kozol.

Using CCW as their framework the authors do not deny that structural inequality exists in low-income communities of color, like East St. Louis. Instead they offer the following: “we are suggesting that despite these structural inequalities and barriers, communities of color offer wealth to its members, which is contrary to the deficit models promulgated in the literature” (Farmer-Hinton, et al., 2013). Through their reflections and writing of narratives, the authors situate their personal stories of success in the context of East St. Louis using CCW; and rather than seeing their experiences as outliers, they are able to challenge the story of what it means to be of their community.

By using a CCW framework this author, like Farmer-Hinton and her collaborators, is not dismissing the structural inequalities that present obstacles to entry into postsecondary education for low-income students of color. Rather, a CCW framework sheds light on the sources of wealth and forms of capital that students may find from within their

communities and use to navigate the college admissions and enrollment processes. Because students' cultural contexts have not historically been a central part of college access programs and interventions, there has been an inherent deficit perspective in such programs. Students are placed at-risk and targeted for intervention services because they are seen as deficient (Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005).

Underdevelopment of Human Capital

Urban communities with large populations of people of color and large low-income populations, such as New Orleans (Ortiz & Plyer 2012), cannot afford to allow valuable human capital to be undeveloped or underdeveloped. Inequity of access to postsecondary education has and continues to limit the development of human capital in low-income communities of color (Freeman, 2006). Because generations of people of color have not had access to particular educational institutions, inequitable access to higher education persists. As Freeman (2004) notes, the underdevelopment of the human capital in communities of color has monetary and non-monetary implications for individuals and for society.

Parents have been found to have a significant effect on their children, with parents who have postsecondary education transmitting college knowledge to their students (Bergerson, 2009; Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Conley, 2010; Freeman, 2004). When parents do not possess direct experience with postsecondary education, they must seek out the high stakes information they and their students need from other sources (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009). Rather than seeing parents as deficient, a CCW orientation acknowledges familial capital and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005), and parents who actively seek out needed information to support their student's postsecondary aspirations

may instead be viewed as taking “resource-bridging” actions (Kim & Schneider, 2005). When a parent acknowledges that he or she does not personally possess the resources needed by their student in order to attend college, but proactively seeks out additional informational resources on behalf of their student, the parent is acting as the resource bridge. This can include contacting college admissions offices, high school counselors, or community members with greater college knowledge to provide access to information for the student that the parent does not have directly.

The discussion of inequality of educational opportunity and deficit perspectives helps to demonstrate why college access and choice for low-income students of color are still of concern to educators and education researchers today. Because early models of college choice used economic and sociological perspectives (Bergerson, 2009) deficit perspectives are also embedded in some of these models (Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2012). Later models and theoretical lenses challenged these assumptions (i.e., Delgado-Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005) and advanced the use of CCW and funds of knowledge as theoretical frameworks for understanding college access and choice for historically marginalized populations. The body of theoretical and empirical literature on college access and choice is the subject of the subsequent section of this review.

College Access and Choice

Research on college access and choice is often coupled. The literature on college choice does not only look at student enrollment decisions, but also the processes through which students are exposed to postsecondary options and prepared for these options throughout their educational experiences (Bergerson, 2009; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000). Discussions of access to postsecondary education are framed

using the availability, or lack thereof, of the resources needed for students to choose among possible educational options.

Various researchers have studied the college access and choice processes and examined the effects of socioeconomic status, parental education and involvement, high school context, and culture on student transitions from high school to college (Perna, 2000; Perna & Titus, 2005; Perna, Milem, Gerald, Baum, Rowan, & Hutchens, 2006; Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, & Perna, 2008). Modeling the college choice process largely began with the work done by Hossler and Gallagher (1987). Cabrera and LaNasa (2000), expanded upon the Hossler and Gallagher model, by illustrating how the three phases in the Hossler and Gallagher model (predisposition, search, and choice) are related to one another and influenced by parental encouragement and involvement. Later, Perna (2006) advanced a model of college choice using an economic model, while also considering the influence of sociological elements and organizational contexts.

Other authors introduced additional student background characteristics to the study of college access and choice. Hurtado, Inkleas, Briggs, & Rhee (1997) are among of the earliest authors to examine how differences in college enrollment by race and ethnicity, whereas around the same time, McDonough (1997) explored the influence of socioeconomic status and school context on college choice. Later, Perna (2000) looked across existing studies on racial and ethnic group differences in college enrollment decisions and recommended that an expanded econometric framework that included parental influences as well as the influences of social and cultural capital.

Villalpando and Solórzano (2005) looked at the role of culture in college access programs through a review of the literature on such programs at the time. Their work

bridges the research on college choice and college access intervention programs while also bringing the concept of cultural wealth into this body of knowledge. Although Villalpando and Solórzano found that few studies of college access programs included the role of students' cultures, their call to action for research "that utilizes theoretical/conceptual lenses that do not presume that students of color are culturally deficient," appears to have influenced several subsequent studies which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The most frequently used model of college choice is Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) model. This sociological model of college choice and has been very influential. Absent from the sociological models is the influence of the student's culture on college access and choice. More recent studies (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Kiyama, 2011; Yosso, 2005) have adopted theoretical frameworks that place the influence of student culture at the center of their educational experiences including their transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

The design of study has been informed by the more recent studies by Liou, Antrop-González, and Cooper, Kiyama, and Yosso. Similarly, this author has placed culture at the center of her study and the exploration of the transition from high school to college for low-income collegians of color. This research responds to the need for models of college access and choice that acknowledge the influence of a student's culture on educational transitions.

Sociological college choice models and related studies.

Hossler and Gallagher (1987) proposed a three-stage model of college choice. Comprised of predisposition, search, and choice phases, this is primarily a sociological model. Student background characteristics such as family income, parental educational attainment, and student race/ethnicity, affect the first stage: predisposition, the decision to

go to college rather than pursuing other options, i.e., work or military service, after high school (Hossler, et al., 1999, p. 150).

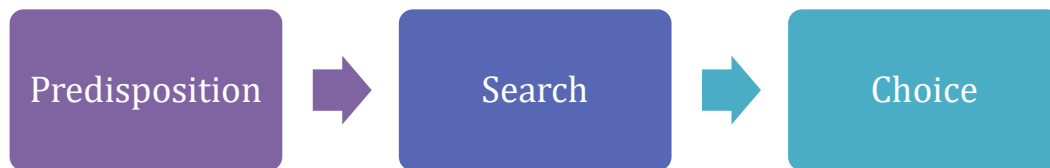


Figure 3: The Hossler and Gallagher Model (Adapted from Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

Illustration of the college choice process.

Student background characteristics not only influence the predisposition phase, but also have cumulative effects that influence the subsequent phases. While the degree to which background characteristics influence each stage may vary based on the individual student and their background, the effects of background characteristics are present and influential to some degree at each stage (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Background characteristics refers to demographic characteristics, whether a student is White or a person of color or if the student is from a low-income or high-income family. Background characteristics as described by Hossler and Gallagher do not include a student's culture and cultural capital as described in a CCW framework.

McDonough's (1997) qualitative work builds upon the work of Hossler and Gallagher (1987) by further developing the role of contextual factors in the educational attainment of marginalized student populations. Specifically, she begins to examine the inequitable educational structures and opportunities that result from "a social-class-based

stratified system of postsecondary opportunity that thwarts meritocratic ideals” (McDonough, 1997, p. 150). Although McDonough acknowledges the influence of a variety of background characteristics (social class, race, and gender) on educational attainment, her research is primarily focused on the influence of social class and school context on student educational attainment. McDonough finds that student socioeconomic status affects access to postsecondary education, with students from lower socioeconomic statuses having more limited educational opportunities, but she does not investigate the influence of other characteristics like race/ethnicity and individual cultural backgrounds.

Differences in college access and choice among racial and ethnic groups have also been examined by researchers using Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987) theoretical model. Hurtado, et al. (1997) conducted a quantitative study using two large national data sets, the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) and the Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Study (BPS), to determine if differences in college access and choice across racial groups remained in the 1990s after researchers and practitioners had begun to attend to disparities in educational opportunities for students of color. Although racial and ethnic differences were investigated, the theoretical framework was still a sociological one based on the Hossler and Gallagher model. Hurtado, et al. found that access to postsecondary education remained inequitable across racial groups with Asian American and White students gaining greater access than African American, Latina/o, and Native American students. They found that many Latina/o and African American students in the sample, 47 percent and 45 percent respectively, did not even apply to college during their senior year of high school. The authors interpreted this finding to mean that Latina/o and African American students may not be entering the predisposition to college stage, in

which students decide to pursue postsecondary education rather than other options, in the same way as their Asian American and White peers. One of the conclusions reached by Hurtado, et al. is that traditional college choice models do not accurately explain the college choice process for students of color: “it is becoming clear that it is necessary to develop more precise models of the predisposition phase to understand the vast differences in student preparation for college among various racial/ethnic groups” (1997, p. 64).

In this study, participants successfully moved from the predisposition phase, to the search and choice phases. A CCW lens may also be useful in understanding the predisposition phase for low-income students of color. Examining the antecedents to the predisposition phase is beyond the scope of this research, but by advancing the use of a CCW framework, it is possible that this issue could be further explored by others in the future. Subsequent sections of this chapter will discuss literature that advances more culturally specific models of college access and choice.

The later work of Cabrera and LaNasa (2000) synthesizes the previous work done by other authors on the college choice process. While Cabrera and LaNasa also use Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987) model as the foundation for understanding college choice, they offer a more complex and nuanced model of the college choice process. In their model, student college choice is influenced by many other elements, some of which also exert influence on each other. The role of parents figures more predominantly in this model than in previous models, although in other models (i.e., Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Hossler, Schmidt, & Vesper, 1999) parental influences were included within student individual background characteristics.

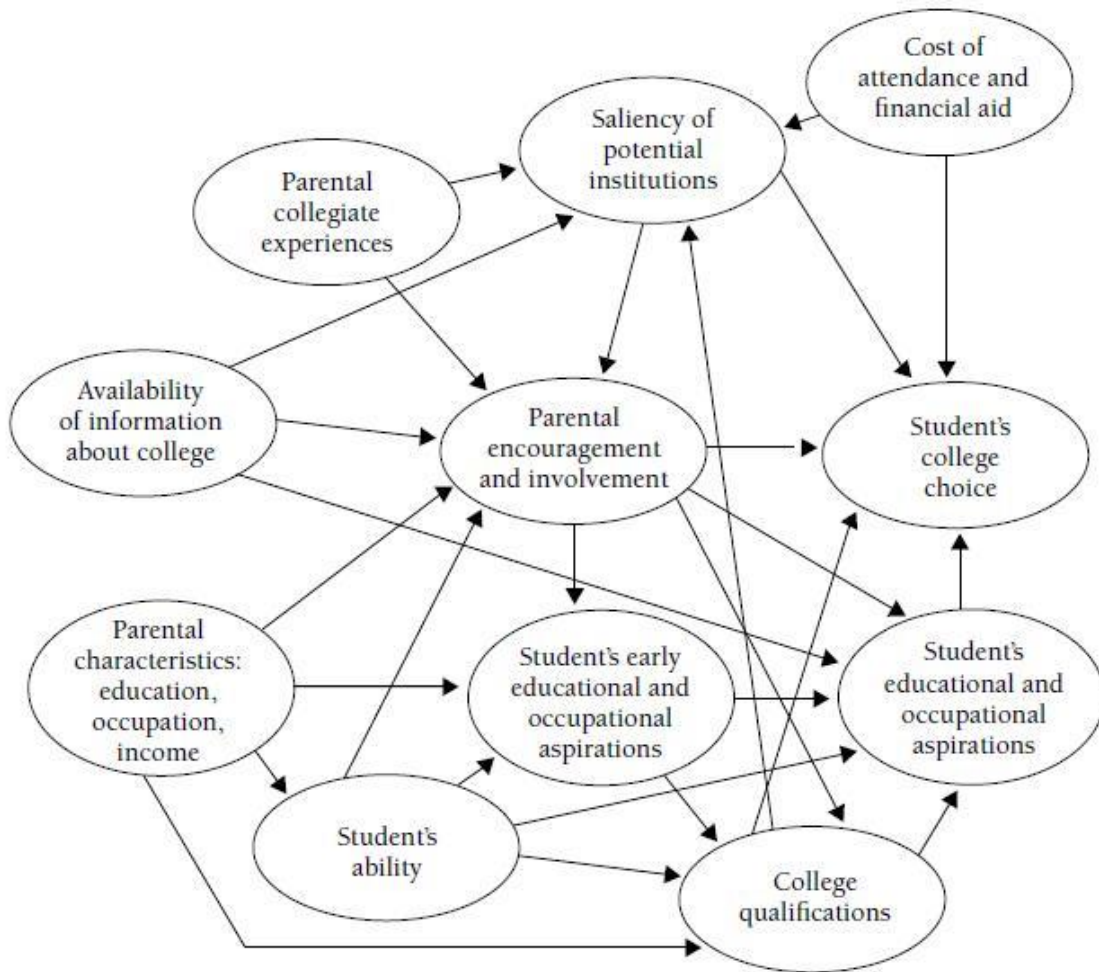


Figure 4: The Cabrera and LaNasa Model (Reproduced from Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000). A later model of college that considers contextual factors.

Rather than illustrating the college choice process as a linear one, Cabrera and LaNasa's (2000) model shows the college choice process to be a complex web of interaction between, student, parental, institutional and contextual elements. An important addition to this model of college choice is the influence of parents. Although parents and students operate within their culture, the nuances of cultural capital as explicated in the theory of CCW, are still not explored in the Cabrera and LaNasa model. Parental encouragement and

involvement is central in the Cabrera and LaNasa model, and encouragement and involvement would be a part of familial capital in CCW terms, but familial capital extends beyond the parents to include other family members and can even include fictive kin. The other forms of capital that are part of CCW are absent in the model, so other than the influence of parents, cultural capital is not included in Cabrera and LaNasa's model.

Perna's (2006) model, as seen in Figure 5, brings together economic theories of human capital investment, while also considering sociological concepts such as habitus, social capital, and cultural capital. Her model also considers context at the individual, community, institutional, and policy levels. Perna's model was developed primarily for use in quantitative studies, as she found that studies of college choice had begun to take a qualitative turn after 1990. However, she also recognizes the contribution that can be made to the study of college choice by qualitative research designs and calls for more research that helps to explain the college choice process for "more narrowly defined groups" who may not be represented in national datasets like NELS because some racial/ethnic subgroups are excluded when there are too few respondents in a subgroup (p. 145). In addition, she suggests that research looking at the intersections of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender is also needed.

The college choice models that have been advanced by Hossler and Gallagher (1987), Cabrera and LaNasa (2000), and Perna (2006) all help to frame how students' college choices could be explained. Overtime, the models have evolved to consider more contextual and individual influences in the process. While the later models start to consider the role of familial influences, cultural capital, and social capital, they do not place culture at the center. Race and ethnicity as well as socioeconomic status are centered in this study

and the body of literature that brings cultural perspectives into the study of college choice has also informed the research design of this study.

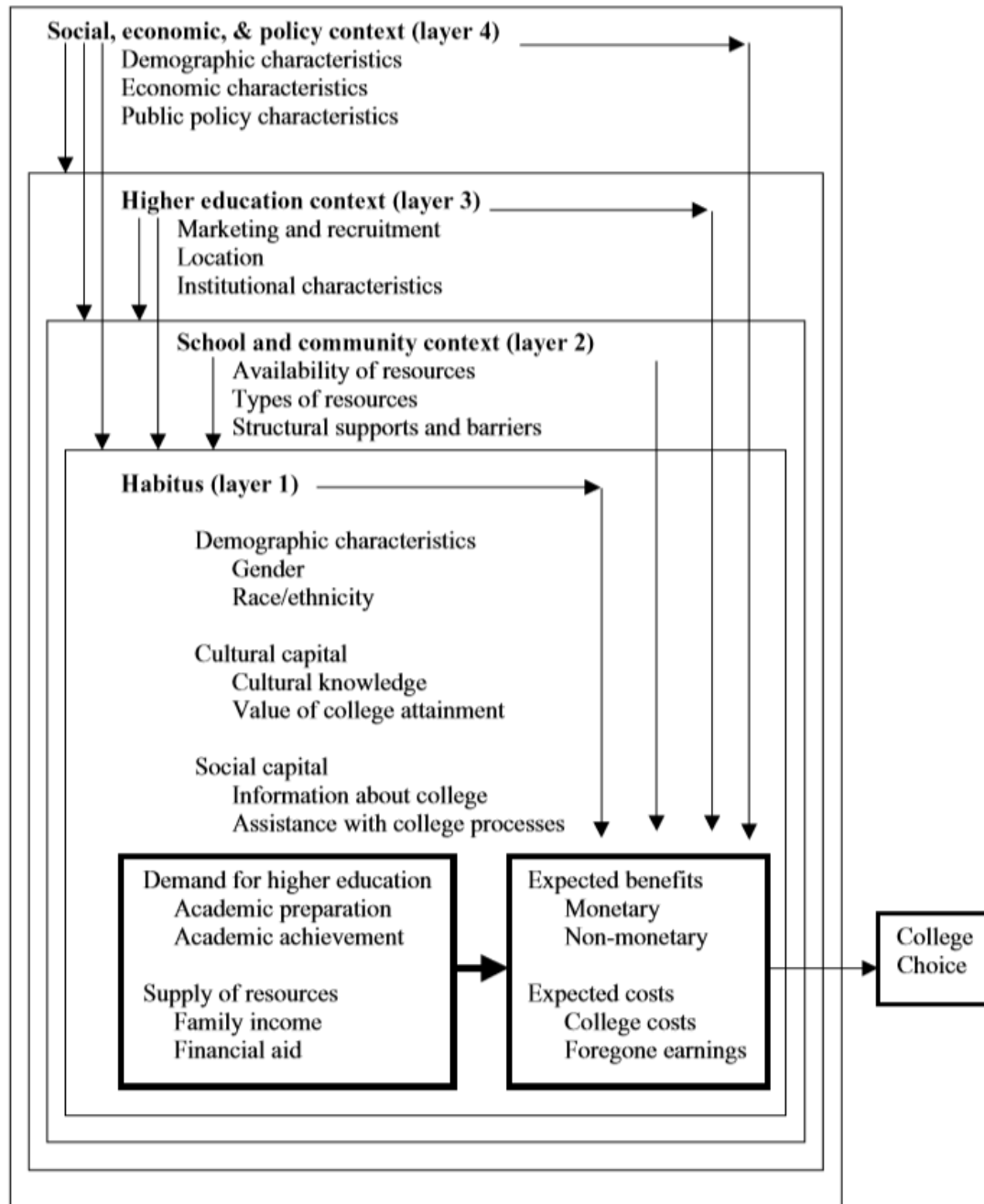


Figure 5: The Perna Model of College Choice. (Reproduced from Perna, 2006). Individual, environmental, and institutional contexts are brought into the college choice process.

Cultural perspectives on access and choice.

As was noted in the previous section, some researchers (i.e., Hurtado, et al., 1997) began to call for the development of models that considered the effects of student race/ethnicity in the college choice process. In the models that have been developed, the concept of cultural capital figures prominently, although its dominant interpretation as a White middle-class construct is often critiqued in these models (Yosso, 2005; Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2012; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009). Cultural capital as associated with Bourdieu and Passeron explicitly connects social reproduction to education, arguing that schools serve to reproduce social inequalities rather than enabling class mobility (Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Spring, 2010).

Bourdieu's work has been extended to many social groups including historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, but it is inherently based on socioeconomic status (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Bourdieuan concepts, such as social capital and habitus, on their own do not address cultural differences or acknowledge the forms of capital that are possessed by non-dominant groups. Only the cultural capital of those in power is recognized, valued, and reproduced (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). However, it is important to introduce the concept of cultural capital and Bourdieu's work because both are often cited in work that challenges what counts as cultural capital and whose culture has capital (Bergerson, 2009; Yosso, 2005; 2006). This author's study also provides a critique of Bourdieuan notions of cultural capital, albeit indirectly, by employing community cultural wealth in the theoretical framework. In research that uses CCW as a theoretical framework alternative forms of capital possessed and used by communities of color are acknowledged and explored.

Community Cultural Wealth

Following the sociological work on college access and educational opportunity (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987), some scholars recognized the absence of a cultural lens in the earlier works and began to consider the role of culture in college access and choice. Although Hurtado, et al. (1997) recognized the need for models that better explained the college choice process for students of color, new models did not emerge until several years later. Cultural wealth has been used as a theoretical orientation for college access and choice research that not only acknowledges students' cultures but values them and sees cultural differences as assets rather than deficits (Bergerson, 2009, pp. 44-45).

According to Villalpando and Solórzano, a cultural wealth orientation allows researchers to:

[...] ask whether there are forms of cultural capital that students of color bring to the college intervention table that cultural capital theory does not recognize or cannot see (e.g., parental value of education, awareness of parental sacrifices, hard work of the parents, etc.). This approach allows us to identify and analyze how individuals and groups use different and often unrecognized forms of capital in response to educational subordination (2005, p. 17).

Villalpando and Solórzano reviewed the literature that existed as of 2005 on the role of culture in college access programs, and although they explain the concept of cultural wealth and advocate for the development of college access programs that adopt a cultural wealth orientation, they found few published empirical studies on the role of culture in such programs. Due to the small number of empirical studies, Villalpando and Solórzano

conclude that emphasizing a student's culture *may* increase the effectiveness of a college-readiness intervention program, but they cannot say that it is essential to effectiveness. They suggest that more research be done using theoretical lenses that will encourage deeper inquiry into the role of culture. This is the approach taken here.

By situating culture and cultural wealth at the center of her study, this author is deliberately choosing a theoretical lens that will enable deeper inquiry into the role of culture in student transitions from high school to college. The College Admissions Project (CAP) as a program acknowledges the cultural context, New Orleans, in which students and guides (mentors) operate, but does not necessarily emphasize students' cultures. However, through this study, the ways in which students use cultural capital to navigate the transition from high school to college are identified, and this information can inform the structure of college-readiness intervention programs so that they emphasize students' cultures in an affirming and supportive way, rather than as a problem (or deficit) to be corrected.

Yosso's (2005) theoretical work has been used in the study of college access, choice, and success in college for students of color by other scholars, and some of these empirical studies will be discussed later in this chapter. Yosso (2005) discusses community cultural wealth from a Latina/o Critical Race (LatCrit) perspective. She draws on the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) and is one of the scholars to extend their ideas about cultural capital to ethnic communities. Yosso's (2005) theory of CCW "challenges traditional notions of cultural capital [...] and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledges, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged" (p. 69). In her theory, Yosso

describes alternative forms of capital (aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant) possessed by marginalized peoples that are largely unrecognized by dominant groups and institutions. By using a narrative approach where in addition to asking questions of interviewees, the researcher is actively inviting their stories, the author has had the opportunity to hear about alternative forms of capital by asking about and listening for what is particular to the experiences of her participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Chase, 2005). The forms of capital within community cultural wealth as defined by Yosso are explained below:

1. "Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers" (p. 77).
2. "Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style" (p. 78).
3. "Familial capital refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition" (p. 79).
4. "Social capital can be understood as networks of people and community resources" (p. 79).
5. "Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions. Historically, this infers the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind" (p. 80).
6. "Resistant capital refers to those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality" (p. 80).

Yosso (2005) draws upon the scholarship of Delgado Bernal (2001) but does not include a major finding of Delgado Bernal's in her theory. Yosso's theory does not include

spiritual capital, but Delgado Bernal's work provides adequate support for its inclusion in research that endeavors to challenge the accepted definition of cultural capital. In Delgado Bernal's qualitative study of Chicana college students, spirituality emerged as a theme and was described as a source of strength (i.e., wealth) by the participants. Spiritual capital could be seen as a part of one of the other forms of capital, but this author is treating it separately. Additionally, some more recent studies that used Yosso's framework have called for the inclusion of spiritual capital specifically (Espino, 2014; Farmer-Hinton, 2013). These authors found forms of capital in their data that did not neatly fit into other categories and would be best described as spiritual capital. In their suggestions for future research these authors suggest including spiritual capital as its own form, independent of the others in Yosso's framework.

There are several empirical studies that use CCW to understand the educational transitions of different populations. These studies were conducted between 2001 and 2017 and most them focused solely on Latina/o students. All of the studies found evidence that Latina/o students draw upon CCW to move from high school to college, or in the case of two studies looking at transitions from undergraduate programs into graduate studies, from college to graduate school. Across these studies, the researchers found evidence supporting students' reliance on linguistic, familial, social, and navigational capital in navigating their educational transitions. Some studies found support for other forms of capital as well, but the four forms mentioned above were consistently supported across the studies.

In her 2001 qualitative study, Delgado Bernal interviewed thirty-two Chicana college students to investigate how these women navigated the transition from high school

to college. Specifically, Delgado Bernal was interested in how the development of a *mestiza* (i.e., mixed racial/ethnic identity) consciousness among these college women might help them to develop navigational capital, although Delgado Bernal does not use the term navigational capital (2001). Delgado Bernal found that her participants who had developed a *metiza* consciousness—a strong identity as a Chicana—could draw upon their indigenous knowledges in the forms of language, culture, community, and spirituality to overcome challenges in college access and success. Delgado Bernal uses the term “cultural resources” rather than alternative forms of capital, but the resources she found the Chicana college students in her study possessed are akin to linguistic, familial, social, navigational (Yosso, 2005) and spiritual capital.

Building upon Yosso’s work, Liou, Antrop-González, and Cooper (2009) suggest that informational capital be added to the community cultural wealth framework. A key finding from the qualitative portion of Liou, Antrop-González, and Cooper’s mixed methods study of Latino/a students’ college-going information networks is that when schools fail to provide Latino/a students with needed high stakes information about postsecondary education, students are able to tap into the cultural wealth of their home communities to access this information in other ways. According to Liou, Antrop-González, and Cooper “informational capital, in the forms of high stakes information networks is an essential factor to students’ academic resiliency” (p. 552). Liou, Antrop-González, and Cooper conclude their article by providing suggestions as to how schools can adopt a community cultural wealth perspective and ensure that all students, and particularly those from marginalized groups, have access to college knowledge. Their suggestions include critically interrogating school assumptions and biases, building partnerships with community

organizations outside of the school to demonstrate valuing of the cultural community, and deliberate monitoring of the relationships between students and adults in the school so that high-stakes educational information is passed on to students.

Other researchers have examined the relationship between CCW and college-going. Martinez (2012) interviewed Mexican American students from the South Texas border region in their twelfth-grade year. She found that students drew upon sources of social, resistant, and aspirational capital to navigate the college choice process. For the students in Martinez's study, social capital included "nonfamilial or school-related community resources" (p. 77). Churches, university alumni associations with a presence in the local community, and Chambers of Commerce were sources of information and interaction for these college-intending students. Similarly, Bejarano and Valverde (2012) studied the college access and persistence experiences of students from farmworker backgrounds using a CCW framework. Their students were participants in a university-based program at New Mexico State University that was created to increase the number of students from farmworker families to attain baccalaureate degrees. For the participants in this study, familial and navigational capital were found to support their educational success. The other forms of capital were also found but were closely connected to familial and navigational capital. Therefore, these authors conclude that for the students in their study, familial and navigational capital were the primary forms of capital on which they relied.

Some researchers have focused on the *community* aspect of CCW. In a 2010 qualitative study by Yamamura, Martinez, and Saenz a community cultural wealth lens was used to examine how college readiness for Latina/o students could be improved from the perspective of multiple stakeholders in the community. Community leaders, K-12

educators, parents with children, and high school students all participated in focus groups to provide the researchers with “insight into inter-group community dynamics with respect to responsibility for college-readiness” (p. 133). All of these participants were considered community stakeholders. Yamamura, et al. found that “stakeholders felt personally, professionally, and collectively responsible” for the college readiness of the young people in their community (p.141). The authors conclude that college readiness initiatives should utilize community members, including parents, to increase postsecondary participation within the community. They also use their findings to build upon Yosso’s (2005) theory of CCW an advance a “borderlands cultural wealth” framework that draws on the assets the stakeholders in this particular community on the border between the United States and Mexico have to offer to help improve educational opportunities in the region (p. 141). While Yamamura et al.’s work is specific to one predominately Latina/o borderland community, their integration of the perspectives of multiple community stakeholders will be considered here.

Community cultural wealth has also been used to understand the educational transition experiences of Mexican American (Espino, 2014) and Latina/o (Zell, 2014) graduate students. Espino looked at Mexican Americans who successfully earned doctoral degrees in a variety of disciplines, whereas Zell’s population was comprised of Latina/os in graduate-level health care programs. In both studies, successful graduate students drew upon the forms of capital within the CCW model. Although the transition into graduate school is a different educational transition, these studies further show the utility of a CCW perspective in understanding successful educational transitions for students from historically underrepresented groups. In Espino’s study resistant, social, aspirational, and

cultural were sources of strength and support for students who pursued doctorates. In Zell's study aspirational, linguistic, familial, navigational, social, and resistant capital were all converted into forms of capital needed for graduate school success.

Most of the research into college access, choice, and/or persistence that uses a CCW framework focuses on the experiences of Latina/o students. However, some researchers have begun to use CCW to understand the experiences of other populations such as: linguistic minorities (Oropeza, Varghese, & Kanno, 2010), African American students enrolled at an urban university (Holland, 2017), and Black female college athletes (Cooper, Porter, & Davis, 2017). Murillo, Quartz, and Del Razo (2017) used CCW to understand the experiences of low-income students of color who were in a high school internship program, but the school site for their study still served mostly (81 percent) Latina/o students.

Of these recent studies, Holland's (2017) is most closely aligned with this author's work because she too was interested in the high school to college transition process for students of color and included non-Latina/o students in her research. Holland interviewed students who were enrolled at a four-year urban university and had graduated from the local area's public schools within the last five years. The majority of the participants in her study identified as African American or Black, 93 percent. She conducted retrospective interviews with students, with some looking back on their immediate college transition process at several years' distance—from junior or senior year, or after college graduation. Holland conducted surveys and interviews with students and compared students' stories using CCW to find themes as well as individual differences in experiences. She found evidence that students drew upon aspirational, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital to successfully navigate the college choice and enrollment processes.

Community cultural wealth has been used by educational researchers to understand the college-going experiences and other educational transition experiences of students of color, predominately Latina/o students. Yosso's (2005) forms of capital and spiritual capital have been found to be sources of strength and support for students in their educational experiences. However, since most studies to date have continued to focus on Latina/o students, not as much is known about how other students of color successfully navigate educational transitions and if they too may draw upon alternative forms of capital, like those articulated in CCW. Community cultural wealth is also a relatively new framework, and its newness may be contributing its narrow application with Latina/o populations. As Yosso's (2005) theory has only been published for a little over a decade, examining studies that use an earlier yet related theoretical framework, called funds of knowledge, can help to further explore what is known about success in educational transitions for low-income students of color and the role of culture in supporting those successes.

Funds of Knowledge

In addition to empirical research that explicitly uses the theory of community cultural wealth (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Yamamura, et al., 2010) or the concepts upon which that theory was predicated like spiritual capital (Delgado Bernal, 2001), there is a body of related literature that comes from a PK-12 educational perspective and uses funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) as a theoretical framework. Because this study will examine the transition from high school to college for low-income students of color, research using funds of knowledge as a theoretical perspective is also relevant. Like CCW, the concept of funds of knowledge sees

the experiences of students of color as assets rather than as deficits (Moll, et al., 1992). Funds of knowledge are defined by Moll, et al. as “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills that are essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (p. 133). A funds of knowledge orientation sees knowledge as coming in many forms and values this knowledge as capital that can be shared and used to develop networks among families within a community. When educators recognize the funds of knowledge that students and families possess, they can use them to develop culturally relevant pedagogies and family engagement practices (Moll, et al., 1992).

Kiyama (2011) has used funds of knowledge as her conceptual framework to study the acquisition of college-knowledge, a topic that is also related to this study. Kiyama describes her approach to inquiry as a multiple case study. This approach was selected because she was interested in how college knowledge was obtained and disseminated within six Mexican-American families where each family unit was seen as a case study; the family was the unit of analysis (p. 32). She also wanted to link the college knowledge dissemination process within these families with the concept of funds of knowledge.

Kiyama (2011) found that the families in her study have forms of social and cultural capital (i.e., funds of knowledge) that are often ignored by schools, teachers, and postsecondary institutions when only a traditional and privileged definition of capital is used. Kiyama’s research pushes educators and education researchers to adopt a more inclusive definition of what counts as familial support for their child(ren)’s education. By connecting family funds of knowledge to college knowledge and familial support for the pursuit of higher education, Kiyama asserts that she has shown the potential of funds of

knowledge as a theoretical framework that can be extended beyond research in PK-12 education into higher education research.

In a subsequent article, Kiyama and Rios-Aguilar (2012) discuss how funds of knowledge can be used as a theoretical framework to both understand college access for Latina/o students and to challenge deficit assumptions in the primarily economic and sociological models of college choice that have been used in educational research. Kiyama and Rios-Aguilar assert that the models of college choice that are frequently used “suggest that something is *wrong* with students (and their families) simply because they are perceived to not have the characteristics, the capital, and the resources needed to participate and to succeed in college” (p. 3). This article is a theoretical rather than empirical work, but Kiyama and Rios-Aguilar point to studies where funds of knowledge has been used as the theoretical framework for understanding educational aspirations and transitions for Latina/o students and suggest future directions for research in higher education, and particularly college access and choice, where this framework has not been widely used, including: the role of families (including extended families) and communities in college access and choice and examining “how families construct the processes of getting into *and* getting out of college”—looking at college access and college success for Latina/o students (p. 14). While CCW is the selected theoretical framework for this study, because funds of knowledge is a related framework, considering it adds to the richness of the findings, particularly where participants discuss the roles of their families in providing support for college access and enrollment.

Bridging Multiple Worlds

One quantitative empirical study that examined pathways to college for Latina/o and African American students used a theoretical framework that seems related to cultural wealth and funds of knowledge but does not fit neatly into either category. Cooper, Cooper, Azmitia, Chavira, and Gullat (2002) used the Bridging Multiple Worlds model to look at the effect of student background characteristics and high school mathematics courses taken on college eligibility and enrollment. This model “focuses on how youth forge identities that coordinate their cultural and family traditions with those of their peers, schools, and communities; how relationships across worlds are both challenges and resources; and how institutions enhance or impede developmental pathways” (p. 74). While the study was somewhat unsuccessful in that the statistical models did not have significant explanatory power, the authors are able to draw some conclusions which are relevant to this author’s research. Cooper, et al. found that students reported receiving academic help and college preparation support (resources) across their worlds; meaning that they received support from their home school communities, although the support looked different across the different contexts. The authors conclude that this finding refutes negative stereotypes about the parents and teachers of Latina/o and African American students (p.84). Although this study predates Yosso’s (2005) work on community cultural wealth, it seems to support the idea that students of color draw on forms of capital that are not recognized within a dominant conceptualization of cultural capital or resources.

Summary

College access for low-income students of color remains a persistent problem despite decades of research and programmatic interventions. Deficit perspectives within

educational institutions and processes continue to maintain structural inequalities for historically marginalized populations (Farmer-Hinton, et al., 2013; Holland, 2017; Valencia & Black, 2002). Limited access to postsecondary education is a symptom of the structural inequality that exists. Access to higher education is one way to develop the human capital of marginalized communities and disrupt the intergenerational system of disadvantage (Freeman, 2004; 2006).

There is a significant amount of empirical education research that uses Bourdieuan concepts to examine college access and choice (see Bergerson, 2009), but far less research has been done using a cultural wealth perspective. The deficit perspective is inherent in the theory of social reproduction because under that framework in order for those of lower socioeconomic status to be successful, they must adopt the valued and rewarded behaviors of the dominant class (Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Yosso, 2005). Villalpando and Solórzano (2005) contend that the traditional view of cultural capital does not fully address the complex identities of students of color. In 2005, they found few published empirical studies that examined the role of culture in college preparatory programs and called for research “[...] that utilizes theoretical/conceptual lenses that do not presume that students of color are culturally deficient” (p. 27). Some authors (Holland, 2017; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Kiyama, 2011; Yamamura, 2010; Yosso, 2006) have answered this call, but most have done so looking solely at the educational experiences of Latina/o students and not at other communities of color.

There is a growing body of education research that examines the experiences of Latina/o students and families from a community cultural wealth perspective (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012; Kiyama, 2011; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Martinez, 2012);

and CCW is starting to be used to frame research that examines the experiences of other communities of color (Carey, 2016; Cooper, Porter, & Davis, 2017; Holland, 2017; Oropeza, Varghese, & Kanno, 2010). As a theoretical framework, CCW has the potential to illuminate the assets of students from low-income communities of color that are inclusive of, but not exclusive to Latina/os. In New Orleans, a community context with rich cultural traditions, this theoretical framework is appropriate and applying it to a new population may also provide support for broader use of community cultural wealth in educational research with communities of color. Building upon the work of scholars who have used CCW and related frameworks in their research on educational transitions (Delgado-Bernal, 2001; Espino, 2014; Holland, 2017; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Kiyama, 2011; Yamamura, 2012; Yosso, 2006) this study uses a community cultural wealth lens to explore the immediate transition from high school to college for low-income students of color from New Orleans.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Approach

A narrative approach to inquiry is used in this study because the author is interested in the particular experiences of a few individuals (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007). Narrative is the most appropriate approach, because although all students in this study have experienced the transition from high school to college, they all bring different life experiences to the transition experience, so each individual experiences the experience differently; or as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain: “their experience of the experience is not the same” (p. 90). The focus of this study is on a particular piece of participants’ life stories, their transition from high school to college. Chase (2005) explains the narrative researcher’s approach:

Narrative researchers view stories as both enabled and constrained by a range of social resources and circumstances. These include the possibilities for self and reality construction that are intelligible within the narrator’s community, local setting, organizational and social memberships, and cultural and historical location. (p. 657)

Stories, or narratives, as both enabled and constrained connect a narrative approach to the community cultural wealth framework where communities of color find sources of capital from their lived experiences within a historically marginalized group. Consistent with a CCW lens which is built upon Critical Race Theory (CRT), a narrative approach is applied to understand the experiences of the participants as well as what their stories mean. In a critical narrative approach, it is what the story illustrates—the insights and

assumptions that the story brings to light in its subtext—that enable the researcher to understand (Bell, 2002).

The author collected participants' stories through semi-structured interviews and restoried them in her analysis. The selected theoretical framework guides the restorying process and the development of counterstories (Creswell, 2007; Yosso, 2005).

Counterstories, as used here, will seek to reshape the dominant narrative by exposing underlying assumptions about students from communities of color and enabling the students' voices to frame their lived experiences differently.

Research Questions

This study of the college transition of low-income students of color is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do low-income students of color describe their immediate transition from high school to college?
2. What forms of capital do low-income students of color draw upon to successfully navigate the transition from high school to college?
 - a. How do students describe their experiences in a college access program (CAP) in relation to the forms of capital used to successfully enroll in postsecondary institutions?

Participant Selection

Purposeful criterion sampling was used to select participants (Creswell, 2007). In order to sufficiently narrow her research question, the author only selected students from urban open-enrollment public charter high schools who are also: 1) alumni of the CAP program, 2) low-income as defined by being eligible for free or reduced school lunch in

twelfth-grade or Pell Grant eligible in college, 3) students of color, and 4) enrolled immediately after high school in a postsecondary institution. All types of postsecondary institutions were included. Students enrolled in public and private four-year and two-year institutions were eligible to participate in this study. Students from two CAP cohorts who enrolled in college in the fall semester immediately following their high school graduation comprised the population for this study; the 2014 - 2015 and 2015 - 2016 cohorts.

CAP students have been selected as the population of potential participants because by the fall of their twelfth-grade year, these students had expressed their interest in attending college and taken action toward enrolling. Students self-select into the program and complete an application form. These students have decided to pursue postsecondary education rather than other available options, demonstrating that they have at least entered Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) predisposition phase.

CAP students receive support in the college admissions process throughout their senior year via their CAP guide (mentor). However, support from CAP ends when the student graduates from high school. CAP students who successfully progress through Hossler and Gallagher's choice model and then subsequently enroll in college after their programmatic support has ended, may be drawing on the cultural wealth of their communities to successfully transition from high school to college. By using CCW as the theoretical framework for this study, the sources of support that students are using to propel themselves through the high school to college transition are explored.

The author identified the population of prospective participants from the cohorts using program records. A National Student Clearinghouse query was used to verify student enrollment in a postsecondary institution. Eight participants took part in the study, and the

author attempted to recruit participants for maximum diversity. Students from the different high schools served by CAP who attended various institutions of higher education in the semester immediately following their high school graduation were included in the study. Differences in student's stories may also reveal experiences specific to a particular high school or college environment.

Participants

Participants graduated from New Orleans' public charter high schools in 2015 or 2016 and enrolled in college for the fall semester immediately following their graduation. A pseudonym is used for each participant; and participants were given the option of selecting their own pseudonym or being assigned one by the researcher. Table 1 displays a summary of participant characteristics. Each student's identification of their race/ethnicity was provided through a write-in response on their consent form, rather than from a standard list of racial/ethnic groups. In this chapter and the subsequent chapter, the author will refer more specifically to Black or African American collegians rather than to collegians of color because all included participants identified as Black and/or African American. She will also use Black and African American correspondingly with how each student identified themselves.

Participants' Context

CAP operates as a cohort program, rather than serving an entire class of twelfth-graders at any one high school. Depending upon the number of available volunteers to serve as mentors, cohorts of fifteen to 30 students from each participating school are enrolled in the program annually. CAP guides (i.e., mentors) are young professionals currently living in New Orleans. Many guides are not native New Orleanians and are

typically White middle-class college and/or graduate school graduates. CAP guides complete an application and are background checked through local and state law enforcement agencies. Guides attend one training session prior to being assigned a CAP mentee. The training session lasts approximately two hours. The assumption underlying the program model is that young professionals (ages 21-42) who have successfully completed college have college knowledge that they can transmit to CAP students. CAP guides are required to meet with their student a minimum of once per month in person and engage with their student at least once per week via phone calls, texts, online chats, or emails. A CAP leadership team of volunteers is responsible for sending surveys and emails to guides to track their progress as they work with their assigned CAP student/mentee.

Pseudonym	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	High School Pseudonym	Graduation Year	College Pseudonym	Institutional Type
Cherish	Female	Black	Technology High School	2016	Metropolitan University	Public PWI
Danielle	Female	Black	Technology High School	2016	City Community College	Community College
Jonathan	Male	African American	Sarah Breedlove Charter School	2015	Northshore University	Public PWI
Kevin	Male	African American	The Global School	2016	City Community College	Community College
Krystal	Female	African American	Technology High School	2016	Northshore University	Public PWI
Maya	Female	African American	Technology High School	2016	Austral University	Public HBCU
Michael	Male	Black/African American	W.E.B. DuBois Charter High School	2015	Blessed Sacrament University	Private HBCU
Sasha	Female	Black	Technology High School	2016	Bayou State University	Public PWI

Table 1: Participants' Characteristics

To participate in CAP, students should be eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch or be Pell Grant eligible as college students (as a proxy for low-income status) or be first-generation students. CAP defines a first-generation student as a student who does not have an immediate family member who is a college graduate (M. Clayton, personal communication). For the purposes of this study, only CAP students who are low-income students of color were selected as participants. First-generation or continuing-generation status was not part of the selection criteria.

CAP provides applications to its partner schools through the school counselors or college counselors. Students must show an interest in enrolling in college following their high school graduation and take action on their intentions to enroll by completing the application. There is no minimum SAT or ACT score required to participate, and students with a GPA of at least 2.0 may participate. CAP's intention is to target low-income and/or first-generation students who are "middle-of-the-road" academically. Those that show an interest in postsecondary education and ability to qualify for admission at some type of college or university, including open enrollment institutions (i.e., community colleges), but may need supports to successfully enroll (C. Counts, personal communication). CAP works with schools and school counselors, particularly college counselors, to identify students who will most benefit from this specific type of intervention. To implement CAP at each school-site, the program incentivizes school/college counselors with a small stipend. This stipend, paid directly to the counselors, helps the counselors to identify students who would benefit from CAP and essentially buys their time to have them assist with implementing CAP at the school because implementing CAP may be outside of their prescribed job duties.

The broader educational context in New Orleans in which CAP operates is important to this research. There have been significant reforms in PK-12 education in New Orleans in since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Presently, 93% of all public school students in New Orleans attend charter schools, the highest rate of charter school attendance anywhere in the country (Babineau, Hand, & Rossmeier, 2017). This was also the case when the participants in this study were enrolled in their high schools as twelfth-graders in 2015 or 2016 (Sims & Rossmeier, 2015). The students who have participated in CAP and were eligible to participate in this study attended public open-enrollment charter high schools. These schools, although charter schools, do not have admissions requirements.

Along with the emergence of charter schools as the norm rather than the exception in public education in New Orleans, has come an emphasis on college readiness within the PK-12 sector. Primary schools, in addition to secondary schools, focus on college readiness usually emphasizing four-year universities as the educational goal for their students (Sims & Rossmeier, 2015). One of the larger charter school networks in New Orleans is comprised of schools affiliated with the Knowledge Is Power Program, or KIPP. KIPP not only emphasizes college readiness in its PK-8 schools and high schools, it also has a privately funded college completion initiative that provides ongoing support to KIPP alumni enrolled in college (KIPP, 2015). While this study did not examine the college readiness practices within New Orleans' charter schools explicitly, because participants attended these schools the uniqueness of the PK-12 environment in New Orleans needs to be mentioned because this uniqueness affects the experience of the high school to college transition experience for the students who participated in this study.

Data Collection

Because the author selected students who successfully navigated the college admissions and enrollment processes, she interviewed CAP alumni who enrolled in college in the fall semester immediately following their high school graduation. The interview protocol is included as Appendix A. Interviews were conducted at times when students had time off from their studies were otherwise available, such as being home on a weekend or a during a break in their class schedule. One semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant. Participants were asked to select the interview location. Two students were interviewed in-person at their homes, four students were interviewed on their college campuses using study rooms or conference rooms, and two students were interviewed via Skype from their homes.

Students' initial CAP applications which included their self-reported GPA, ACT or SAT, free/reduced lunch status, and academic interests were obtained from CAP and used as a data source. On their CAP application, students indicate if CAP may follow their enrollment and progress in college using a National Student Clearinghouse query. Only students who agreed to have their educational progress followed were contacted as prospective participants. Students were sent an email or phoned with the opportunity to participate in this study. CAP guides (mentors) of students who did not have a current email address on their CAP application were contacted to reach the students. All participants were at least eighteen years of age and able to consent to their participation in the study. Standard human subjects protocols for informed consent were followed.

Data Analysis

The researcher used qualitative data analysis software to manage and analyze her data. Atlas.ti was used to store and organize data as well as for coding. Transcripts from each interview were uploaded to Atlas.ti and labeled with each students' pseudonym. Two approaches to coding were used; an emergent these (inductive) approach and a deductive approach. In an emergent themes approach, data are coded to reveal themes present in the data (Holliday, 2007). Because inductive and deductive coding where used in the analysis processes, the author first reviewed each transcript and coded for emergent themes. She then reviewed the emergent themes across the narratives and collapsed codes where possible and looked for where there were related themes across the students' stories. Following that, the researcher coded for CWW themes.

Form of Capital	Key Terms
Aspirational	hopes, dreams, overcoming barriers
Linguistic	language, communication, stories, story-telling, talking, singing
Familial	community, aunts, uncles, role models, helpers, mentors
Social	groups, clubs, organizations, communities
Navigational	getting through, getting in [to college], moving through, moving on, moving up
Resistant	challenge, righting wrongs, fighting, resisting, persisting
Informational	college information, information about admissions, information about testing, information about financial aid
Spiritual	support, doing this [college] for family/neighborhood/faith community, belief in a higher power

Table 2: Key Terms in Conceptualizing Community Cultural Wealth

The researcher employed CCW deductive codes developed from her theoretical framework. Pérez (2014) employed a deductive approach in his phenomenological study of successful Latino male college students enrolled in predominately white institutions. His study also used a CCW framework and codes used were developed based on Yosso's (2005) work. In the study conducted by Kiyama (2011) both inductive and deductive coding techniques were used, therefore there is a precedent for this combined approach to data analysis using CCW or a theory that is similar to CCW (i.e., funds of knowledge). The theoretical framework and associated deductive codes were developed from the literature on community cultural wealth (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Yosso, 2005). Key terms that may be associated with forms of cultural capital when viewed through a cultural wealth lens are provided in Table 2.

Atlas.ti made it possible to look across the narratives by seeing where common codes were applied in both the inductive and deductive coding processes. The software was also helpful in managing the data because codes can be queried across narratives once they are applied. This was especially useful in identifying the themes that are discussed in the next chapter.

Restorying Process

In restorying, the collected narratives are reviewed, and each narrative is first organized in the chronological order in which events described in the narrative actually occurred (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013). Participants, when sharing their stories, may not share them chronologically and may instead move backward and forward through time. By restorying the narratives, the researcher can understand the participant's experiences as they happened through time in the appropriate sequence. Restorying into

chronological order is relevant for this study because the author is interested in participants' experiences over time, and because transition from high school to college happens as a sequential process. The student engages in the college choice and admissions processes, graduates from high school, and then enters college the following fall. Rich detail about the setting or context for the participant's experience is also included in the restorying process. Setting can include the other people involved and social institutions, as well as the participant's relationship with them.

This study used a three-dimensional space approach to restorying. In this approach, although the narrative is initially sequenced, the focus is less on explaining the story and finding a resolution to a problem or conflict than it is in other types of restorying. The emphasis in the three-dimensional space approach is on describing a participant's unique experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

<i>Personal</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Future</i>	<i>Situation/Place</i>
Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions.	Look outward to conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view.	Look backwards to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times.	Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event.	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines.	Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view.

(Reproduced from Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002)

Table 3: Three-Dimensional Space Approach to Narrative Inquiry

While called a three-dimensional space approach, this approach to restorying does not have three clear dimensions. Rather, this approach prompts the researcher to look

across different domains of the story to bring out the uniqueness of the experience of each participant. Looking at personal, social, and situational dimensions while considering the past, present, and future in which the narrative is situated.

This process helped the researcher to construct the counterstories from the emergent themes analysis and focus on the particular experiences of each participant. Each narrative that is presented in Chapter 4 is first presented by describing the uniqueness of the participant's experience, and the sequential narrative of their college choice and enrollment processes follows.

Verification Procedures

Accepted techniques for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research include: member-checking, reflexive journaling, thick description, and keeping an audit trail (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). For member-checking, the researcher shared her themes with participants as well as the restoried version of their individual narrative. Students were sent their narratives and related themes and were asked to provide their feedback. Two students replied and asked for some changes and clarified aspects of their stories.

As a part of the research process, the author kept a diary of her research experiences using a web-based and password protected journaling tool called Penzu. This reflexive journal is helpful in situating how and why she made decisions during the course of the study. Thick description was also part of the narrative process, as this study was conceptualized as one where context is central, so in the restorying process the patterns of cultural and social relationships are included (Holloway, 1997). Finally, the interview guides, notes, audit journal, narratives, and restoried narratives taken together will create

an audit trail of the research process. This allowed the author to review her processes as the research progressed.

Researcher Identity

The author became interested in college access through her professional experiences as an admissions advisor for her alma mater, a public four-year comprehensive college. As a gatekeeper who reviewed admissions applications and signed acceptance and denial lines, deciding whether a student would be offered admission to this particular college, the author found herself noticing patterns of which students were offered admission and which students were not. The college that she worked for is a selective institution, and although not highly selective, less than half of all applications met the standards for admission.

The second of the three years that the author worked in admissions, she noticed that students from families with higher incomes were more likely to meet the admissions criteria. Additionally, one of her assignments as an admissions advisor was to coordinate two special admissions programs for students who showed promise to succeed in college but fell below the admissions standards. One program focused on low-income students of color from urban areas, and the other on low-income students from a rural region. In the both programs, students who had a rigorous curriculum and consistent B-averages (85 percent of 100) or higher could be admitted even if their standardized test scores fell below the minimum threshold. Around this same time, the college for which she worked became a postsecondary partner for a national nonprofit college access organization, and the author became aware of college access as an area of professional practice and research.

The author's interest in college access continued to build, enough so that she left admissions to enroll in graduate studies and further explore the college access puzzle. Who gets in and who gets left out became central interests, both professionally and personally. Shortly after moving to New Orleans in 2010, the author searched for a college access program in which she could volunteer in some capacity which led her to the College Admissions Project (CAP).

After serving as a CAP guide for one year, the author was asked to take the role of one of the lead volunteers, which she did from 2012 – 2014. The more she became involved with access work in New Orleans with low-income students of color through CAP, the more the focus for her research became clear. There were (and still are) disparities in college access and enrollment for low-income students of color from New Orleans, and the author wanted to investigate ways to help more students matriculate.

Because of the researcher's personal involvement with college access work and with CAP, she applied reflexive research ethics to her study. Using reflexive research ethics means that the researcher is responsive to relationships with participants, communities, and professional principals of best practice while attending to the expectations for research quality (Corder, Ciplet, Brown, & Morello-Frosch, 2012). Reflexive research ethics are not designed to be less rigorous, rather they are designed to acknowledge ethical tensions that may arise "when conducting research involving the daily lives and concerns of people, communities, and social movement organizations" (Corder et al., 2012, p. 163). Sharing of information with participants is also encouraged when applying reflexive research ethics and given the narrative approach to inquiry for this study and the restorying process the

author employed, keeping these ethical principles in mind helped ensure the trustworthiness of this research.

After several years in New Orleans working with CAP, the author was exposed to community cultural wealth (CCW) as a theoretical framework. This gave her research direction—to examine what New Orleans students glean from their cultural communities that can help them to succeed in their educational endeavors. Since then, she has made herself a diligent student of CCW and worked to develop a nuanced understanding of this framework. Seeing how CCW has been used with other communities of color, the author wanted to learn if it can be applied in a New Orleans context. As a White woman with a graduate degree and a non-native of New Orleans, the researcher is not a member of the cultural group which she is studying and needed to be aware of her outsider status while conducting this research.

Ford et al. (2008) offer suggestions for conducting “racially, culturally, and linguistically responsive research” (p. 87). These authors’ recommendations are for studying gifted students from diverse backgrounds, but they are applicable to this author’s study. Ford et al. explain that most research on students of color, are particularly on students of color from low-income families, is usually done by researchers who are White and often also male. They suggest that White researchers can engage in culturally responsive research by being aware of how the decisions that they make at every point in the research process are influenced by their own experiences and beliefs. To take stock of how the researcher’s identity influences the research process, Ford et al recommend self-appraisal throughout the research process and provide guiding questions for this type of reflection. These questions were used by the author in her research journal and are

included as Appendix E. The author used journaling in her research process and considered the questions for self-appraisal that Ford et al. have developed will be used by the author as a part of her journaling process.

In addition to developing self-appraisal strategies, Ford et al. (2008) offer the following guidelines for cross-cultural research in which the researcher is White and the participants from historically underrepresented groups.

Racially, culturally, and linguistically responsive research has racially, culturally, and linguistically relevant research topics; racially, culturally, and linguistically informed theories and paradigms; multiple explanations examined; relationship building with participants; respect for participants' primary language; racially, culturally, and linguistically congruent research practices; racially, culturally, and linguistically sensitive research assessments; and a diverse research team (p. 89-90).

Other than having a diverse research team, all these elements of racially, culturally, and linguistically responsive research have been included in this study. Community cultural wealth as the theoretical framework also provides for these affirming research practices to be included.

Researcher's Reflections on the Process

Member-checking and reflexive journaling were used by the researcher to acknowledge her positionality as a White researcher working with Black or African American participants. These tools helped the researcher to consider how her decisions, interview questions and prompts, and interactions with the participants framed the research. Participants were forthright in sharing their experiences, partly because of the

researcher's past affiliation with CAP. While still an outsider, her program knowledge provided a way to build rapport with participants and provided her entry into spaces (such as students' homes and residence halls) that she might not otherwise have had access to without CAP as a commonality between herself and the students who participated in this study. Through the semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to develop a relationship with each participant, and as the planned ending of each interview neared, she found that by re-visiting earlier questions, students wanted to provide additional details or clarify their statements. Participants also provided valuable insights on how to improve CAP, and many indicated that although they had been in various educational outreach or enrichment programs throughout their years in school, seldom had they been asked what they thought about the programs and what did or did not work for them personally.

Chapter 4: Findings

Purpose

This study explores the educational transition from high school to college for low-income students of color who also have participated in a college access mentoring program, the College Admissions Project (CAP). The research questions guiding the study are:

1. How do low-income students of color describe their immediate transition from high school to college?
2. What forms of capital do low-income students of color draw upon to successfully navigate the transition from high school to college?
 - b. How do students describe their experiences in a college access program (CAP) in relation to the forms of capital used to successfully enroll in postsecondary institutions?

Student's responses from semi-structured interviews revealed their personal story of transition from high school to college. Taken together their stories provide insight into how these students successfully navigated their educational transitions.

Narrative Analysis

Each participant's restoried narrative is included in this chapter. First, the aspects of each student's story that most contribute to the findings and are unique to that student are discussed. Looking at the uniqueness of the participants experiences is central to narrative inquiry, because each student's "experience of the experience" of going from high school to college is not the same (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Bringing out the uniqueness is also the aim of three-dimensional restorying (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

Next, the narratives are presented chronologically to illustrate each student's college choice and enrollment process. In the semi-structured interviews, participants did not always move through time and describe their experiences in a linear fashion. Restorying also allows for each narrative to be presented logically to the reader (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Cherish: Becoming an Insightful Activist

Cherish talks about what it means to be a young Black woman in a nuanced way. She understands her positionality not just on her campus, but in the world. In her rationale for choosing a predominantly white institution (PWI), she described how she envisions her future workplace. She expects to work in an environment with people from varied racial/ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and she wanted her college environment to mirror what she expects to find in the business world.

I want something that's going to be real. I'm not going to walk into my job and there's 50 Black people. There's going to be ten Asians, five German people, someone from Pakistan, someone from Madrid, you know what I'm saying? It just wasn't for me. I love you guys, but I've been with you guys all my life, you know. Every school I went to was Black. I don't need that.

She talked critically about historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and how she felt like attending one would not help her reach her future career goals or prepare her to be a Black woman working in a multicultural setting. Yet, she is deeply interested in Black history, culture, and current issues.

Cherish recognizes that Black history, her history, is not fully included in her formal education. She takes initiative to read and learn on her own. She specifically mentioned

investigating slavery and teaching herself about Black Wall Street –the Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma that was devastated by race riots in 1921 (Fain, 2017). Cherish described her interest in Black history and her anger at not being taught history that is relevant to her life in school.

They say the 13th Amendment abolished slavery, it's like, but really it came back in the form of imprisonment, so mass incarceration. They didn't tell me about that. I thought Lincoln ended slavery, he didn't. So it's like ok, I have to learn my history on my own. That's what sucks being Black. You're given a sugar-coated version of your history. You got someone else telling your history or they're omitting things, like the Oklahoma attack on the Black Wall Street that happened. I didn't learn that. This is like ok, these people are deliberately omitting parts of our history. I didn't know there was a Black Wall Street. If I would have heard that when I was younger maybe that would have inspired me to do something, I don't know, but still. Having those pieces missing, is a messed-up thing. It really hurts me, it really hurts me. I've realized this is the world we live in.

Cherish connects her experiences as a young person of color to their historical context. This author had to look-up Black Wallstreet after talking to Cherish, because learning about this important cultural community was not a part of her history courses either.

Cherish's thoughtful insights helped to evolve this research and helped the researcher to consider the role of HBCUs in the college choice process for Black/African American students, even for those that do not choose to enroll at a HBCU. She also reinforced why giving voice to communities of color, and especially young people of color matters (McCoy & Rodericks, 2015; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). For Cherish, none of her experiences are

value-neutral. They all exist within a context where she is Black person moving through a world that has historically devalued or undervalued people like her. For collegians of color, centering their experiences as a person of color could be meaningful for programmatic interventions, as has been suggested previously by Villalpando and Solórzano (2005). Cherish has done this for herself independently, but guiding and supporting Black students in their racial identity development could be helpful in informing their college choices and helping them to succeed once in college (Fries-Britt, 2000; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; McCoy & Rodericks, 2015).

Cherish's college transition process.

Cherish attends Metropolitan University, a large public research-intensive institution located within the city limits of New Orleans. Metropolitan University is a PWI. Cherish relocated to New Orleans from Chicago, Illinois just before the start of her twelfth-grade year to live with her father in the Uptown neighborhood. She moved to New Orleans because her mother had “put her out” of the house. Cherish’s mother and family in Chicago “had some economic issues going on.” Her mother had lost her job, and then because of financial strain, the family car. Her father offered her the opportunity to come live in New Orleans, so Cherish decided to make a somewhat courageous move and complete high school at a new school in a new city. She enrolled in and graduated from Technology High School.

Coming to New Orleans was a “culture shock” for Cherish because she recounts it as one of the first times she has regularly interacted with a lot of White people. She described her neighborhood in Chicago as being more segregated where the only White people seen regularly are police officers. In her new neighborhood, school, and in her interactions with

her CAP guide and CAP project leaders, Cherish says she has “learned to adjust” to having more White people involved in her life and in her educational experiences.

Cherish described going through an adjustment period emotionally and socially after she first came to New Orleans. She missed her friends from Chicago and found herself having a “breakdown” regularly. She felt lonely and hadn’t found a supportive peer group. She was able to manage these emotions by relying on herself: “I realized I can control my future. I control my happiness.” Cherish focused on talking more with her father, researching colleges, and exploring business (her area of academic interest) by reading publications like Forbes, Bloomberg, and Business Week.

The first time that Cherish remembers wanting to go to college was at age six or seven. She remembers learning how to look up information on the internet and doing a search at this early age for an ivy league university. “I remember like searching up Yale. I didn’t know where Yale was, I just knew it was like a really good school because I heard it on TV.”

As a high school senior Cherish chose to be a part of CAP because she wanted additional assistance with the college application and enrollment process. Despite her aspirations at an early age to attend college, Cherish struggled academically in high school, especially in her junior year, before she relocated to New Orleans.

I wasn’t that A student that I am now, or that I used to be. My GPA fell miserably. I wasn’t going to go to college actually. I had planned to go to the Navy. I actually wanted to drop out of school, so I could work a job and buy my mom a car, but my high school counselor talked me out of it. There was a lot going on that year. College was definitely out of the equation. Senior year, once I moved with my dad and he started talking to me

and motivating me, and when the CAP program came up I was like, ok, if I can get more help getting into college, sign me up.

The CAP guide that Cherish worked with provided her with knowledge and support that extended beyond the college search, admissions, and enrollment processes. In addition to the college-going activities of completing applications, re-taking the ACT, applying for financial aid, and completing scholarship applications, Cherish's guide taught her about personal finances and budgeting. Her guide even took her to a local bank to go through the experience of applying for a credit card, which Cherish wasn't qualified to get at the time, but her guide wanted her to understand how managing personal finances would affect her as a college student.

When Cherish and her CAP guide were first matched as a mentor/mentee pairing, Cherish wanted to apply to over 20 colleges and universities. She and her guide worked to narrow the list down somewhat. Although Cherish didn't recall the total number of college applications she submitted, she did know that she was accepted at ten schools. Her choice set (the colleges and universities to which she actually applied) included public and private institutions, PWIs and HBCUs in-state and out-of-state colleges. All of the institutions to which she applied were four-year colleges or universities.

Cherish's choice of where to enroll was influenced by a scholarship opportunity. Students who were a part of the CAP program in the 2015 -2016 academic year were invited to apply for a private full-tuition last dollar scholarship that was provided by an individual donor to CAP. The scholarship was given by the donor with the requirements that it be awarded to a CAP student who would be attending Metropolitan University.

CAP used a competitive application process to award the scholarship. Students submitted an application form, personal essay, and recommendation letters from a teacher or school counselor and their CAP guide. Cherish was selected as the inaugural awardee of this scholarship and accepted the offer, which therein committed her to enrolling at Metropolitan University.

Although her experience being awarded a large private scholarship is different from other students and influenced her college choice, the scholarship was not Cherish's only consideration when deciding where to enroll. She thought in-depth about attending a PWI versus a HBCU. She and her Black peers engaged in conversations and debates using social media about the merits of attending different types of institutions. Cherish decided that there was greater academic rigor and institutional stability at PWIs from her own research and through online conversations with students who attend PWIs and HBCUs. She also thought a PWI with greater racial and ethnic diversity would better prepare her for the workplace and life after college. Because Cherish intends to go into business as her future career, she thought about what her workplace and co-workers would be like and decided that the student population at Metropolitan University would more closely mirror the business work environment.

While Cherish cited academics and student population as reasons she opted not to attend a HBCU, she understood the history of HBCUs and why some Black students still choose to attend them today. She spoke about systematic and institutionalized racism and understood that as a student of color, she would potentially be subjected to overt and covert racism while attending a PWI. She explained:

You have to realize what is a trick when it comes to systematic racism. You need to be able to know what it is before you can avoid it. Some Black people still don't know the ploys that are being enforced by White people just to keep us down. We're doing nothing about it. I'm reading a paper, an essay, called the Cress Color Confrontation Theory. It's basically about White supremacy and systematic racism and how we, as Black people, don't even know and are not acknowledging it. We're not trying to make a change.

Cherish decided to lean into racial differences and unequal power relations and sought to understand these further as a part of her college experience. She was thinking her of positionality as a Black student at a PWI and how to successfully navigate her university.

In the summer months between high school graduation and the start of college, Cherish relied on formal and informal supports in order to successfully matriculate and begin college at Metropolitan University in the fall. The CAP guide's commitment to their student ends with high school graduation, but because Cherish's guide "went above and beyond," Cherish still had access to her guide as a source of information and support after graduation and up through the start of the fall semester. They stayed in touch and Cherish was able to ask her guide questions over the summer. Her guide also took her shopping for a laptop for college. Cherish was also offered an opportunity to be a part of Metropolitan University's summer bridge program. She accepted that offer because she felt that any extra support she was offered would ultimately benefit her.

In addition to the summer bridge program, Cherish also attended the traditional new student orientation offered by her university, however, she didn't find the traditional orientation particularly helpful. "It was just so corny and childish. I was like, I'm not here

for this. Even though I don't pay my tuition, I know we're not paying to play hangman, this isn't it. Could you tell me about other things please?" Cherish lives in an on-campus apartment with more independence than a typical residence hall living situation. She did think that the advising and academic portions of the traditional orientation were not only helpful, but essential for new students. She was able to meet with her academic advisor from the College of Business who already had her schedule made with the exception of a few electives that she was able to select in consultation with her advisor.

Outside of the preparatory activities associated with summer bridge and orientation, Cherish spent most of the summer at her father's home in New Orleans. She worked to save money for the upcoming semester and focused on planning for her new role as a college student. "I do a lot of planning. I came up with ideas and stuff and I work on those and I put action, you know, into what I'm thinking about."

Because Cherish likes to plan ahead, she had already met with her College of Business academic advisor early in the fall term to plan for spring. Once informed that the advising period was open, she signed up right away. Part of her planning with her advisor included increasing the number of credit hours she is taking because she wants to graduate early, if possible.

If she were to give advice about preparing for college to a high school student, Cherish says she would tell them to "keep the faith and never give up." She currently virtually mentors a female student from her former high school in Chicago. She connected with this student through Twitter. Cherish was tweeting about scholarships and began online communications with this student and suggested that they become mentor/mentee using online communication.

Danielle: On an Unexpected Detour

Danielle needed help and support in the college choice process, especially when it came to choosing where to enroll and understanding college costs. She initially enrolled at Northshore University, but had to withdraw during her first semester because of additional costs associated with living on-campus that she was not prepared for. After withdrawing, she immediately enrolled at a community college and is continuing her education there. Her experience with the community college as a high school student in dual enrollment courses served as a safety net. Because Danielle was familiar with the community college she knew to pursue enrollment there after withdrawing from Northshore.

Informational capital (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009) figures prominently in Danielle's story. She knew that there was information about how to go to college that she did not know. Needing to develop her college knowledge (Conley, 2005) was a reason why Danielle wanted to be involved in CAP and matched with a guide. Unfortunately, Danielle did not receive the type of support she was looking for from her CAP guide:

I didn't really like my CAP guide because she helped a little but not as much as I needed. Like, we were supposed to meet maybe twice a month and we were supposed to talk at least once a week. We barely talked. We met twice out of all that time that we had together.

Danielle says that the two times that she and her guide met, were because Danielle asked for the meeting. She felt that her guide should have been reaching out to her more, that it was expected of her guide, and by Danielle having to take responsibility for the relationship she wasn't getting the support she needed. In their two meetings, Danielle says that she and

her guide talked about scholarships but didn't use their time together to work on scholarship applications –something Danielle wanted to do.

Two of Danielle's friends had CAP guides that met with them regularly and she described how she wished she could have had that kind of relationship with her guide, and that if she had more support from her guide, she might have better understood the costs of college and not enrolled at Northshore where she would have unmet need even after her financial aid award. She reflected:

I feel that they had got more of like information than what I did, and maybe if I had got more information about like, the tuition and all of that, I wouldn't have set myself up to go to Northshore spending all that money and wasn't able to stay, like with decorations and stuff for the dorm it was just a waste of money.

While Danielle's guide didn't provide her with the information she needed, it seems like Danielle also didn't understand the financial aid process and didn't ask for help from Northshore earlier in the enrollment process. She mentions getting decorations for her residence hall room but was unable to pay the remaining costs of attendance left after her financial aid was applied. As Danielle said, "I just couldn't afford it. Like I took out loans and everything but they still wanted me to come out of pocket with \$4,000.00, which my family nor I had." She says she didn't understand the costs of living on-campus until she was able to meet with someone in Northshore's financial aid office after she enrolled and was moved in for the semester. Danielle talked about how no one in her family had gone away to college and lived on-campus: "No one in my family really went to college. Well, they went but they didn't have the real college experience of staying on campus and involving themselves in the activities." Given how important living on-campus was to Danielle it is

surprising that she didn't know more about the costs associated with campus living. It's unclear how Danielle thought she would pay this remaining balance. She may have thought her aid would be adjusted to cover all costs. By the time she participated in this study, she was savvier about financial aid and talked about how she would be getting a refund now because the costs of attending community college were so much lower.

Danielle had developed some college knowledge about City Community College, where she enrolled after withdrawing from Northshore University, through the dual enrollment program she was in during high school. She said "it was easy" to enroll at City because they already had a record for her as a student. Her dual enrollment experience ended up being a protective factor against dropping out of higher education entirely after her set-back with Northshore. The intent of most dual enrollment programs is to enable students to earn college credit while still in high school and to better prepare students for college-level coursework (Cassidy, Keating, & Young, 2010). Cassidy, Keating, and Young mention developing college knowledge, such as functions of the registrar's office and locations of campus facilities, as an outcome of dual enrollment programs for students who are dually enrolled on a college campus. In Danielle's case, her exposure to City through dual enrollment helped to her successfully enroll at the college as a second-choice option.

Danielle's college transition process.

Danielle is currently enrolled at City Community College, a public open enrollment two-year college with multiple sites in the Greater New Orleans region. Danielle is enrolled at the main campus of the college located within the city limits. She grew up in New Orleans East which is where she still resides in her familial home, and she plans to transfer to a

local public four-year HBCU. She is majoring in general studies at City but plans to major in social work or psychology after she transfers.

Danielle first remembers wanting to go to college when she was in middle school. Her school took her on field trips to colleges and she planned not only to attend, but to have a residential college experience. The household Danielle grew up in included her mother and her younger sister. Danielle's mother influenced her to want to go to college and her mother wanted Danielle and her sister to "do better than what she did." Her mother had wanted to attend college but had children at a young age and did not have other adults to support her and her child. Danielle attended Technology High School in Uptown New Orleans and was enrolled there for grades 9-12. She identifies her friends and peers as people from her school rather than from her neighborhood. Her friends live in different parts of the city and of her closest friends, she only went to middle school with one of them. "Me and my friends, we went to school together since ninth grade. So we are very close. It's just three of them."

Because of the charter school environment in New Orleans, parents must choose their children's schools, and Danielle was a part of her high school selection process. She initially wanted to attend another high school and had listed Technology High School as her second choice. However, once she enrolled at Technology High School, she had a positive experience and decided to stay there for all four years. She describes the school as a family:

The teachers, we had great communication with them. We were able to email or text them if we had problems with homework. They'd text back quickly. We were close with the principal, everyone. It was just like a big family. Everyone knew everyone. And they, when it came to like academics you don't have no option to fail. If you're failing they

want to take you out of like, your activities so that you have to pass and if you're still failing they're going to make you go to tutoring. So it's like they have a lot of opportunities where you won't fail.

Even though she found her school environment to be very supportive, Danielle decided to apply to be a part of CAP because she observed that the college counselor had to meet with a large number of students, and students had to schedule appointments with her in advance. "I knew I needed the extra one on one besides my college counselor...someone to actually sit down and help me and explain to me what was going on." In addition to college assistance and information, Danielle was seeking the individual guidance that CAP guides are expected to provide to their mentees.

Unfortunately, Danielle's experience with her CAP guide did not meet her expectations. She and her guide met only twice at the start of the school year.

Like, we didn't communicate unless I reached out to her... we met twice in the beginning when it first started. Then after that we really haven't... communicated. Like-my best friend, her CAP guide came to the graduation, always congratulated her with doing things, gave her gifts and everything. I didn't really get that from my CAP guide. I didn't talk to her as much as I wanted to. I didn't really get the help that I needed.

Danielle and her guide talked about scholarships but did not develop a regular meeting schedule or pattern of communication; they failed to develop the kind of mentor/mentee relationship that Danielle wanted. Danielle had to initiate communications with her guide, a responsibility that she thought would be the guide's.

Danielle's enrollment experiences are unusual in that she started studies at the beginning of fall 2016 at a regional four-year PWI about 70 miles from New Orleans,

Northshore University. She then had to withdraw from Northshore several weeks into the fall term because she could not afford the expenses associated with living on campus there. She expected that her financial aid would cover all costs of attendance and was surprised when that was not the case.

Northshore University had been Danielle's first choice for college since tenth grade, so her decision to leave for financial reasons was particularly difficult for her. "When I got to campus, I loved it. But I just had to do what was, what was the right thing. I couldn't stay on campus if I didn't have the money to pay for it." After receiving her financial aid package, Danielle says that she and her family were still expected to pay about \$4,000.00 out of pocket. They were not expecting this cost and could not afford that large of a sum. While Danielle plans to transfer back to a four-year institution, she has shifted her focus from Northshore to a local HBCU where she will be able to attend while living at home "because staying on campus is like a lot lot of money."

Danielle attended orientation at Northshore and had been in communication with her academic advisor via email prior to attending the on-campus orientation. Her major there was pre-pharmacy; a major she selected at the suggestion of her family. Once she made the decision to withdraw from Northshore and enroll at City Community College, she also re-evaluated her selected major and changed to general studies in preparation for a psychology or social work program. After withdrawing from Northshore, Danielle came home to New Orleans and enrolled at City Community College through their second start program. Second start allows students who missed the enrollment deadline to complete full-semester courses in the second eight weeks of the semester.

Although Danielle says she plans to transfer back to a four-year university, now that she is enrolled at a community college she is considering earning an associate degree before transferring. While Danielle is not enthusiastic about being enrolled at a community college, “it was better to come to a school besides no school.” She was also familiar with City Community College because she took dual enrollment courses at City through her high school. Enrollment for second start at City was relatively easy for Danielle because she already had a student record from her dual enrollment courses.

Danielle feels that if she had a more engaged CAP guide, she could have avoided choosing a college that she couldn’t afford. Conversations about paying for college were a part of some of her friends’ experiences with CAP, but not something that Danielle was able to get from the program. She had observed her college counselor’s work load and sought additional assistance with the college admissions process through CAP, but when she did not get the assistance she needed, Danielle turned to her college counselor who was able to help her complete her admissions applications. Danielle applied to three four-year universities. In addition to Northshore University, she included two other regional universities in her choice set. One was a HBCU and was another PWI. Institutional type was not a significant consideration for Danielle. She had developed a strong affinity for Northshore from online research and campus visits and it was already her first-choice school by the time she submitted applications.

Danielle’s main piece of advice to high school students is to “start early.” To ask questions, search for colleges, and begin understanding the costs of college early. Reflecting on her challenges with paying for college, Danielle would offer some additional advice to high school seniors:

Like figure out how much first the tuition would be then look at how much you're going to get back in financial aid and the grants, the loans. Calculate that together and compare that with the tuition costs and if you know there is not enough, you'll know what the next step is. Whether you're going to figure out how to get more money to pay for the tuition or if you're just going to have to start off with somewhere with lower tuition instead of going somewhere not knowing. ... So I think that's something they should most definitely start off doing the comparison and seeing how much they may owe to the college.

Her advice is based on some of the high-stakes information and college knowledge that she somewhat knew she needed but didn't get from her CAP guide. Danielle chose to share her CAP experience because it did not meet her expectations and she wants to be able to help other students avoid the unexpected expenses that she found herself with at her first-choice college.

Jonathan: Re-considering Career and College Choices

Jonathan sees himself as an entrepreneur. He is on what he referred to as a break from college. He was influenced by the college counselor at this school, Sarah Breedlove Charter School in Uptown New Orleans, to choose a major in the sciences, even though he was more interested in graphic design and business as fields of study. Jonathan enrolled as computer engineering major and he was disappointed in the academic experience he had when he attended Northshore University. Jonathan felt like his courses were preparing him to work for someone else and he had always envisioned working for himself. He still thought he would eventually work for himself, even though his major was not business or entrepreneurship. As he explained:

I didn't feel like school was directly preparing me for what I need and want to do in my life. I felt like school was pretty much preparing me to work under someone. It would prepare me to work in the corporate world under someone, but I want my own business, I want to be an entrepreneur with my own business. I didn't feel like school set me up for that.

Had he followed his original inclinations in terms of his major, he might still be enrolled, or maybe not. Formal classes in business, even in entrepreneurship, might have left Jonathan with the same feelings; that college was preparing him for one version of career success, and what he sought was something different. Jonathan did not academically integrate at Northshore, he did not feel a connection to the academic life of the college. Failure to achieve academic integration is associated with departure from college (Tinto, 1987). If a different major had helped Jonathan to connect with Northshore more on an academic basis, he might have stayed in college there.

Jonathan felt like his CAP guide and college counselor didn't listen to him about his interests. Both of these adults in Jonathan's life encouraged him to consider fields of study that are associated with well-paying jobs. He had an awareness of what his interests were, but listened to the advice given to him because the information seemed trustworthy to him coming from a college counselor and his assigned mentor:

I know that like money makes the world go around, but I feel like if you have a passion for something, the amount of money you make won't matter because you want to be doing it because you have a passion for it. I feel like my CAP counselor was more worried about success in school. Like you should do this, you should do that. And I was taking his advice because I was like *'you're pretty successful, you're a lawyer, yeah you*

part of a firm, you living pretty nice, like maybe that is the way to go. But, when I got in school I realized that was not the way to go for me. It probably was for him. Everyone is different. And I feel like if more of the counselors would like ask the student what the student wants to do, instead of working on what would make money, because there's ways to measure success besides money.

Jonathan's CAP guide and college counselor suggested that he follow a path that looked like their own and he entered college with little information about his major and became dissatisfied with his choice of major. He became even more dissatisfied with his major after talking with someone working in the field, an activity recommended to help students with career awareness and understanding how they may fit into that field (Milsom & Coughlin, 2015). Hearing from a computer engineering alumnus who, several years after graduation, was still doing what Jonathan characterized as "entry-level" work, made Jonathan feel like his major was not a good match for his entrepreneurial goals.

They had someone who had graduated in the field that I was trying to achieve in, and they came to the school and he was talking about like how he's entry level, and what he's doing in his life, and how much he's making. I said to him, "how long have you been doing this?" He was like nine and half years. Am I'm like "nine and a half years and you're still entry level!?" You're still base level. Well, he's not base level. He's secured in his job, but he's not like a manager. He's not controlling what he's doing in his life. He still has to do exactly what everyone else is doing.

Jonathan's story illustrates how caring and well-meaning adults can still sometimes steer students in a direction that they don't want to go. Jonathan respected the knowledge and experiences of the adults in his life, so he didn't push back on their suggestions that he

go in a different direction than he wanted to in terms of his college major. Byers, Mattern, Shaw, & Springall (2011) provide recommendations for how to effectively counsel students into STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) majors, some of which includes helping students understand their interests and talents, but their recommendations do not include getting students' perspectives. In Jonathan's case his involvement in a robotics club at school was interpreted as interest in computer engineering as a career. Listening to what students say is what was missing in Jonathan's experience. He told his CAP guide and college counselor that he wanted to study business or graphic design, but because these were seen as less lucrative fields, Jonathan was discouraged from pursuing them.

Jonathan's college transition process.

The fall immediately after graduating from high school in May 2015, Jonathan enrolled at Northshore University where he was a computer engineering major. He attended Sarah Breedlove Charter School located in Uptown and is from New Orleans East. He grew up with his mother, stepfather, and older sister. He describes his stepfather as the household's provider. "He's pretty much a provider. He's always worked two jobs, and like 15 hours a day and barely ever took off days." Jonathan's grandmother has also been an important figure in his life. "My grandmother is the first one who is real spiritual and keeps everyone on a good path in life and makes sure they don't do anything they're not supposed to be doing."

Eighth grade is the first time that Jonathan remembers wanting to go to college. He was a part of an early college awareness program through his school and was able to visit college campuses as a middle school student. Visits to campuses and seeing college

students were exciting for Jonathan and made him want to attend college. Jonathan's charter school includes grades six to twelve, so he was still enrolled at Sarah Breedlove Charter School as a high school senior. He was introduced to CAP at a senior meeting. The program was explained to him as one through which he could get a mentor to assist him with the college application process and he decided to apply to be matched with a mentor.

Jonathan and his CAP guide only met in person twice. Most of their communication was done through email and focused on the financial aid process and paying for college. His college choice set was influenced more by the available resources at this school; the visits from college admissions representatives that this college counselor organized. Jonathan applied to colleges that he "had a passion for" or that visited his school during college fairs. He explains: "...other schools were like schools that would come to our school for like college fairs and like they would tell us about their school and that got me interested."

Jonathan described the process of putting together his choice set as follows:

Some of them were schools that I just really had a passion for that I really wanted to go to. And other schools were like schools that would come to our school for like college fairs and like they would tell us about their school and that got me interested.

Jonathan applied to seven colleges including in-state and out-of-state schools. Two of the colleges were HBCUs. Although Jonathan was interested in business or graphic design as possible majors, his college counselor and CAP guide both encouraged him to choose a technology major because of future earning potential in the field of computer science and because Jonathan had shown an aptitude for robotics as a member of his school's robotics team. This selection of major, combined with a sensitivity to college costs lead Jonathan to select Northshore University where he was offered a scholarship.

He attended summer orientation at Northshore and met an academic advisor whom he liked stayed with as an advisee for the entire year that he attended. However, Jonathan was surprised by how prescriptive the advising and enrollment processes were for him as a new student, as well as by the expectations of his instructors. He explained:

When I was younger, I thought college was that first step to freedom. Once you get to college, you can control your own destiny. That college is there to build you up... They will build you up and like everything you do will be towards your future, because you got to choose your path once you get to college. Once I got there, it was like high school times ten. Like, I still had to take classes that were chosen for me. And while I was in school, I spent like more time studying than I ever thought. Everything was just like pressure. There was never a moment of relaxing. It was all pressure. I always had an assignment due or a teacher was always down my throat. And it was worse because in high school at least teachers explained stuff. In college, they were like you should know what I mean.

Jonathan's expectations of college didn't match his experiences, which is the primary reason that he decided to "take a break" from college after one year. Despite the academic experience not meeting his expectations, Jonathan enjoyed the campus environment and living on-campus. He preferred the campus environment at Northshore and the area around the university to being home in New Orleans, yet he also describes missing friends from home.

The area around there was a lot more inviting. It felt more happy there. Like here it always felt gloomy. Over there, everyone was pretty much in a good mood. You could see that people were striving for success there. I felt like if it would have been

better if I had more people around me that like I knew. I knew people on campus, but all my friends I had grew up with and all my people were all in New Orleans. Jonathan is currently working at an auto parts store while saving money to start his own business, a t-shirt design and printing company. He wants to be an entrepreneur and looking back on his year in college doesn't feel like college was preparing him for the career path he wants to pursue. In addition to business, he had also considered studying graphic design, but followed the advice of his college counselor and CAP guide, an attorney, which he says focused on majors and careers that would have high salaries. Jonathan says that he may return to college in the future, once he has made his own money and can pay for college without taking out loans and can select a major or classes that will help him further his career goals as an entrepreneur.

If he were to give advice to a high school student, Jonathan would tell them to do their own research and read beyond the success stories to develop an understanding of what college costs, and what the immediate outcomes are for their major or career field. In addition to his personal reasons for leaving college, Jonathan described hearing from an alumnus of Northshore who was dubbed successful in the field of computer science. The alumnus was invited back to speak to new students in the computer science program. Jonathan was surprised to learn that after several years working in his field, this alumnus was still reporting to others with no management responsibilities and describes listening to this talk as "the moment I really didn't want to finish college."

Kevin: Using Community College as a Warm-Up

Contrary to early research on how community colleges can serve a cooling out function, whereby students who want to earn a bachelor's degree instead exit higher

education after attending community college and earning a subbaccalaureate credential (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Clark 1960), Kevin is using City Community College as a warm-up to get to his first-choice school, Nelson University. He decided not to enroll at Nelson, although he was accepted there, because of the costs of attendance. As Kevin explains his adjusted educational plans:

I always learned that, you know, it takes work to get to where you need to be. Since I couldn't go to Nelson, I mean I'm going to make it there anyway. So City is pretty much my step to there, and it doesn't really matter if I have to start off at a community college as long as I'm going to make it to Nelson University.

Kevin's experience and his resolve to transfer to his first-choice college and complete a four-year degree from that institution are consistent with the findings of Alexander, Bozick, and Entwisle (2008). Alexander, Bozick, and Entwisle found that for low-resource (their term for low-income) students "two-year college attendance is associated more with warming up than cooling out," (p. 371).

Although City Community College Kevin's second choice institution, he does not feel discouraged by starting his education there. In addition to his personal resolve, his teachers helped him to feel supported in starting at community college with plans to transfer to a four-year university later. As he said:

My teachers like in my high school, when I told them that I had to go to City to start off, they was like encouraging me to continue even when I finish so I'll make sure that I kept my promise to continue through the four years of college. Because I remember my science teacher, she told me that she really thinks I would make it successfully at a four-year college but after I told her...that I had to start at City, she

was like: “That’s okay. Just finish through and just make sure you get your four-year degree.”

For Kevin, his science teacher re-enforced his belief in himself that he would succeed at a four-year university and supported his decision to start at a community college. Kevin has both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to not only navigate his transition from high school to college, but also to later transition from community college to a four-year institution.

Kevin’s college transition process.

Kevin is a business management major at City Community College in New Orleans. City Community College was his second-choice school. He was admitted to and had planned to attend, Nelson University, a private four-year HBCU in New Orleans, but because of college costs decided to start at community college and later transfer to his first-choice institution. Kevin attended The Global School for high school, an open-enrollment charter high school located in the Central Business District of New Orleans. He attends college full-time and works nights and weekends as special events staff at the Superdome. He lives in his familial home located in Uptown with his mother and younger sister. His mother attended college, but Kevin is not sure if she finished a degree. His older sister moved out a few years ago and attended City Community College. Kevin also has an older brother who lives in his own home nearby the family and helps Kevin with his college homework. While Kevin’s family resides in Uptown New Orleans, but he does not particularly identify with a more specific neighborhood or community in New Orleans. His extended family gathers for holidays and sometimes attends Baptist church services.

Kevin’s college aspirations began to develop when he was in middle school and became clearer in high school. In middle school, he recalls having teachers talk about the

importance of doing well in high school to be able to attend college. In high school, he was exposed to successful college graduates who came to speak to the school and was particularly impressed by a business owner who spoke. He also was able to visit college campuses as a high school student. These experiences influenced Kevin to pursue college and choose business as his major.

CAP appealed to Kevin because of the opportunity to get additional assistance outside of school the college applications:

I decided that it would be much easier if I had some help from a mentor to get some stuff done because I had to put some time into it and I was busy with high school work, so I met up with my mentor every weekend and we got some college stuff done.

He and his CAP guide met weekly, at first at school during lunch and then moved their meetings to the weekends. With his guide's help Kevin signed up for an account with College Green Light, a college and scholarship search tool, and they focused their time together on submitting admissions applications, preparing scholarship essays, and applying for scholarships. Kevin says he got limited assistance with the college application process from the counselor at his school and relied on his guide most for help.

Kevin limited his college search to schools in Louisiana. He and his CAP guide searched for colleges online in the New Orleans area that offered business programs. Kevin was also concerned with housing costs and considered whether living on-campus was something that local colleges offered and that he could afford. He applied to six Louisiana colleges including some outside of New Orleans. Of the four-year institutions to which he applied: One was a private HBCU, one was a public HBCU, and three were public PWIs. The sixth college was City Community College where Kevin is now enrolled. He didn't have

strong feelings about attending a HBCU versus a PWI and selected both types of institutions because they offered his intended major and were in-state. His first-choice college is a HBCU, but institutional type was not a factor in Kevin's selection of colleges which to apply. He liked the aesthetics and architecture of the Nelson University campus and the interactions that he had with faculty during a campus visit.

After being admitted at two four-year institutions, one public PWI, one private HBCU, and City Community College, Kevin decided he was most interested in attending Nelson University, the private HBCU. He went as far as taking a placement test over the summer at his first-choice school, but once he received the bill for the fall semester, he decided it was too expensive and chose to enroll at City Community College. Kevin and his CAP guide stayed in contact over the summer even though the program had officially ended at the end of the school year, so his guide was able to support him through his change in plans to start his education at community college.

Kevin's advice to high school students is to "think ahead." He would tell other students to apply for as many scholarships as possible and pay attention to due dates for scholarships and financial aid. Looking back, if he had completed his financial aid application earlier, he thinks he would have known earlier that he needed to start at a less costly institution and could have given himself more options. Although Kevin did not intend to begin his studies at City Community College, now that he is enrolled he plans to complete an associate degree before transferring. Once he decided that he would start at City Community College, Kevin talked with his high school teachers who encouraged him to enroll, but to stay focused on continuing for a four-year degree. "My teachers like in high

school, when I told them that I had to go to City to start off, they encouraged me to continue even when I finish here, so I'll make sure that I keep my promise.”

Krystal: Aspiring to Work with Athletes

Krystal's college choice process was most strongly influenced by her selected major. She is an athletic training major at Northshore University, a field that she became interested in when she was in ninth grade, and after seeing Queen Latifah play an athletic trainer in the movie, *Just Right*. Seeing a woman of color in that job may have helped Krystal to see herself as a future athletic trainer. Blair (2012) discusses how a dearth of visible Black women in science may be hindering young Black women in developing career aspirations in the sciences. While Krystal is in a health-sciences program rather than a hard sciences program, it is still an academic program with rigorous course requirements (Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education, 2018). Krystal understands the rigor of her chosen major and described how as a first-year student she has two advisors, one that works specifically with first-year students and one that will help her meet the requirements for athletic training, because as she describes: “Like, not everyone can get into my major, you have to test to get into it. You have to do certain things to get into it.”

In describing her college search process, Krystal talks about her focus on her intended major. Of her college search process, she says:

I wanted to live on campus. I didn't want to be a commuter, so yeah. And I started looking in my major. I knew that there was four colleges that were really good with my major, and this was one of them. And then there were three more that were not too far but not too close.

After being admitted to several colleges, Krystal's career ambitions continued to drive her enrollment process. She says she had heard that Northshore "had a really good program." Development of specific career aspirations and seeing a representation of a Black woman in that career in popular media helped Krystal navigate the transition from high school to college. She was able to align her college search and enrollment decisions with her intended major. Krystal's intention to become an athletic trainer was the main driver in her college transition process.

Krystal's college transition process.

Krystal was raised by her mother and is closest to her seven-year-old sister, although she also has seven other siblings, most of whom do not reside in her household. It is a blended family, but Krystal says her siblings don't distinguish between full-siblings and half-siblings. Her immediate and extended family reside in New Orleans. When Krystal decided she wanted to go college, she talked about it with "entire family," and is the first person to go away to college and live on-campus. Krystal says it feels "unreal" to be a college student because she feels like she grew-up fast. She is a full-time student taking five courses and recently got an off-campus job working at a beauty supply store.

While Northshore University, previously described in earlier narratives, is less than 70 miles from New Orleans, Krystal feels far away from her family who have been a significant part of her day-to-day life until this point. "I get emotional at times because I'm really used to being around my family all the time. Like, I never got a break. I never was not around them, and it's just sort of weird because I'm by myself now." Her family is Baptist and regularly attended church services. Now that she is away from her family, she attends services from her church virtually through streaming video on the internet twice weekly.

Eighth grade is the first time that Krystal remembers wanting to go to college. She decided that she needed to go to college to “be successful in life.” Throughout middle school, Krystal and her immediate family lived in Georgia where they had moved after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Krystal’s family did not return to New Orleans until right before the start of her ninth-grade year, and she enrolled at Technology High School because it was one of the schools that still had seats available and because her cousin had told Krystal’s mother that it was a good school.

CAP appealed to Krystal because she wanted a mentor and guidance through her senior year of high school. When she heard about the program through her school counselor, she asked to sign up.

I wanted a mentor to ... guide me on the right path during my senior year to make sure I didn’t fall off ... or slack on anything. My mentor really helped me ... she helped me decide what school I wanted to go to, the major ... And ACTs. She helped with ACTs.

Her CAP guide was also enrolled in college as a nursing student at the time that she was Krystal’s mentor. Krystal and her CAP guide met frequently, as many as four times per month. They spent a majority of their time together studying for the ACT and applying to colleges; Krystal applied to a total of ten schools and was admitted at nine of them.

Of the ten colleges, most were in public institutions in Louisiana. Krystal wanted to stay close to home but be far away enough to live on-campus. She was also searching for a school that offered athletic training as a major. She applied to one HBCU but was not interested in enrolling there because they did not offer her intended major. Her decision to enroll at Northshore was also driven by her academic interest, but the college’s reputation

and lower cost as an in-state public college were also factors. Institutional type (HBCU or PWI) was not an influencing factor for Krystal.

It wasn't really a big part of my decision. It was just to go to one of the... best schools with the athletic training program. That was really all that was on my mind... So I felt as though I would do right at a PWI.

Krystal's CAP guide also helped her with the college choice process. They discussed the merits of each school where Krystal was admitted and made a rank-ordered list.

The summer before college started, Krystal worked two jobs. One at a store and one as a camp counselor. She was anxious about the start of college and concerned about performing academically and being away from home. She managed her nervousness by talking with a friend who was also enrolling at Northshore as a first-time freshman.

Krystal attended the college's orientation program which included an overnight stay in the residence halls, social activities, and registration. Krystal felt registration was "stressful" and "rushed," because there were too many students for a small number of available advisors. Now that she is enrolled, Krystal feels better supported and has two advisors – one from her program of study and one that will work with her just through freshman year. She still has some academic concerns, because her major requires an additional program application.

Paying for college is also a concern for Krystal. She currently has financial aid in the forms of grants and loans and is seeking scholarships. She was not able to qualify for an institutional scholarship or Louisiana's state merit scholarship program, the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students or TOPS, because her "ACT score wasn't good." To be

TOPS eligible students must have a 2.5 GPA and an ACT composite score of 20 (Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, 2017).

Krystal's advice for students in high school who are preparing for college is to focus. "Like just really pay attention. You're going to need everything they're teaching you in high school for college. It's going to be a lot tougher in college than you think." For Krystal, a part of college that has been tougher than high school is having to do more independently and not having someone to "hold your hand through."

Maya: Persevering with her Peers

Positive peer influences were important for Maya as she progressed through high school and prepared for college. As an only child, she says she has always liked going to school because it gave her a chance to develop relationships with other young people. She also liked doing well academically. Maya talks fondly about her educational experiences:

I'm social. I also like learning this new stuff, and I'm getting better and the teachers are praising me like: "you did good," and I liked all of that. I was like wow, this is great ... I don't see anything wrong with waking up in the morning and just like going to meet friends, and coming home, and getting A's. It was cool.

Friends at school continued to be important to Maya as she got closer to high school graduation. One of her closest friends, Krystal, influenced her to be a part of CAP. Krystal is also a participant in this study. Maya noted that because Krystal had a high class-rank, her participation in CAP influenced Maya to also participate in the program. She says: "If yeah, if Krystal wants to do it, I know it's got to be good for our education because she is all about education and I'm all about education." In addition to Krystal's positive influence, Maya

developed a group of friends who also took academics seriously and planned to go to college. She talks about how her peer group had shared educational goals:

In tenth grade I made sure all of my friends were perseverers. Because I found that for myself it was hard to be friends with other people who didn't care about high school as much as I did and who didn't have a like mother pushing them. So, I found friends who also had the same.

"Perserverers" is Maya's word for her peers who took high school academics seriously and have successfully gone on to college.

Tierney and Venegas (2006) studied the influences of peer support on applying to college in a formal peer counseling program. The formal program that Maya was in, CAP, does not have a peer support component. Maya relied on the support of the "perseverers," an informal group that formed at the high school. Informal peer support, like what Maya had, has been found to help for low-income students of color access college, especially when students encourage one another to set goals and work on college tasks together such as completing applications and writing personal statements (Naffziger & Rosenbaum, 2010).

Drawing on the support she received from her peers in high school is a strategy Maya uses to help herself stay motivated in college. She aims to be part of whoever the "perserverers" are at Austral University, the public HBCU she attends.

I envision myself ... especially when I get stressed out, I will be like, Maya, at the end of this you will know the people, like my friends, perseverers, you will know the perserverers of this school. You will be in the groups that you want to be in and the activities you want to be involved in.

Maya's past experiences with positive peer support have helped her to not only get to college, but to develop a strategy for success in college. Maya believes she will connect with a supportive peer group in college and that like in high school, her friends will support her academically as well as socially.

Maya's college transition process.

Maya attends Austral University, a public HBCU located about 80 miles north of New Orleans. She is majoring in biology and describes herself as "deep into science." She lives on-campus and is also a Federal Work Study student in her university's admissions office. Federal Work Study is a form of financial aid.

New Orleans East is where Maya grew up and where her family still resides. She identifies strongly with that neighborhood and with the African American community there. She describes her family as "very pro-Black." She says they support the Black Lives Matter movement and look for ways to "help the community."

Maya is an only child and was raised by her mother. Her maternal grandmother and aunt are also significant influences in her life because she is also the only grandchild and only niece. This extended family has influenced Maya's views of herself. She explains their influence this way:

I've only been raised by those three women all of my life. That is all I have ever knew.

They just taught me so much as a woman to carry about myself in certain ways and to make sure I get my education and make sure I keep striving.

Maya says that the three women in her life all have supported her and helped her to make her decisions based on the "moral support and moral stability" they gave her.

While she was growing up, Maya's mother made sure that she was exposed to the arts. Her mother was in college and then, graduate school during Maya's childhood and she took advantage of opportunities to take her daughter to student productions. Her exposure to arts was helped by being in a culturally-rich city:

We don't have a lot of money, but New Orleans is filled with culture. You can get culture on any corner around here. So but, she always made sure she exposed me to what she could. She would take me to plays from NOMA [New Orleans Museum of Art] because they were cheaper; they were like \$25.00 because it was like student arts.

Maya also volunteered at historical sites in New Orleans and participated in youth arts programs in the summer.

Maya attended Technology High School, but it was not her first-choice school. She applied for admission at two public selective charter high schools, but when she was not admitted to those schools, she and her mother chose Technology High School. Initially Maya had wanted to enroll at one of the larger public charter high schools, but her mother wanted her to attend a school that had a strong academic reputation. Maya came around to being a student at Technology High, and credits the school with developing her affinity for mathematics and science.

I feel like that was the best choice for me because they also put me in so many things and they pushed my love for science and math so deeply. Like, they offered all types of tutoring services and internships in math and science. It was just really strong and I just, I fell in love. I just love math and science now.

Maya's peer group evolved while she was a student at Technology High. She still has friends from New Orleans East but attending Technology High introduced her to students from

other parts of New Orleans. In tenth grade she started to build relationships with peers at school.

Maya first remembers wanting to go to college in eighth grade. Maya wanted to attend college to accomplish her own goals but was also inspired by her mother who was enrolled in college while Maya was in middle school. “That’s when she was really starting to expose me so many things because she was also learning as well. I feel like that’s when I knew I wanted to go to college.”

CAP appealed to Maya because although she had talked to her mother about going to college and her mother had recent experience with college, there were still parts of the process that Maya did not understand. Understanding tuition and fees and the financial aid process were aspects of the college admissions process that Maya wanted assistance with. She also wanted support in making her college choice. She was concerned about choosing the “wrong college.” She expressed a strong commitment to being enrolled at her chosen college for all four years of study.

I knew if I went to the wrong college it would crush me. I knew I had to spend four years here and I knew I wanted to do something I loved, so if I went to the wrong college where they don’t have a strong biology program, it would just completely discourage me and I didn’t want to get discouraged when I had this fresh new opportunity, somebody offering me help to find the right it for me to come in. I was just like, yeah – I’m signing up for that immediately.

Maya had a good relationship with her CAP guide who she described as “really really cool.” They did not meet very frequently, but Maya feels that they made the most of their meetings. “When we did meet I felt like it was, it was always 100% effective. Like she

always got me where I wanted to be in a timely manner, like she made sure I was before deadlines.” Her guide is not a native New Orleanian, which Maya saw as a positive in their mentor/mentee relationship.

She wasn’t from here, but she had been here a while. So she didn’t really, you know how, how New Orleans people look at us. She didn’t look at me like that because she wasn’t from here. She didn’t really understand the Ninth Ward and how that’s perceived and all that.

Maya’s guide helped her further develop her college aspirations and did not deter her from looking into any colleges because of cost. Her guide encouraged her to look at more selective colleges that Maya had not previously thought about. Maya says that she told her guide her goals and her guide gave her “a direct map to get where I wanted to go.” They reviewed college websites together, worked on applications and obtaining application fee waivers, and searched for scholarship opportunities.

Eventually Maya narrowed her choice set of college to HBCUs in the South. She applied to two colleges and was admitted to them both. She specifically was interested in “well-funded HBCUs.” She said that she was aware that HBCUs are “not as well funded as PWIs or state schools.” A public HBCU in Alabama made her short-list, but the school’s lack of funding was a reason Maya did not choose to enroll there. She says that she “did the research and found a lot of student complaints.” Maya turned to social media to find out what students were saying about their experiences at the school. Twitter was an especially important source of information for her, and she searched the college’s name on Twitter to see first-hand student commentary on the institution. She described the students’

complaints as being about the university's investment in facilities and only some academic programs, while other academic programs were closing at the school.

Staying in-state and closer to home were also reasons Maya chose to attend Austral University. Affordability was a factor in her final decision, and at Austral she is able to cover the costs of attendance with her financial aid. She receives the Louisiana state merit scholarship (TOPS), a Pell grant, Federal Work Study, and took out a subsidized student loan. She is happy with the student life and student activities offered at Austral and describes the school as having a "close family connection." There are other students who are also from New Orleans and Maya is close enough to home that she can return to New Orleans when she wants to. Had she gone to school in Alabama, being "the only New Orleans girl" would have been a concern for her.

The summer before starting college, Maya worked two jobs. She had worked during her summer breaks before but said that the summer before starting college was the most important of her life and that her mission was to make as much money as possible. She worked as a cashier and as a summer camp counselor. Maya wanted to make money to pay for her additional college expenses, items that are often hidden costs for most students, like dorm room décor, a television, and a laptop. In addition to working, Maya went out with friends on the weekends, including one of her friends who was a part of the perseverers group at her high school. She and her friends talked about starting college throughout that summer, and Maya says that helped her to feel excited about starting college and kept her focused on starting the fall term. She didn't have doubts about her ability to successfully enroll and start college, but she was nervous about being away from her mother who had regularly helped her with homework and encouraged her throughout high school.

Maya was assigned an academic advisor by Austral University and was in contact with her over the summer via email. Her advisor works exclusively with science majors and scheduled Maya's classes for her. Maya describes the university's orientation program as being more social than academic.

Orientation, it um, it wasn't so much of like for the school or like for education purposes. The orientation was more like for freshmens to like get their nervousness out. We just had so much fun. We did all type of activities.

The orientation program was not, however, purely social. Maya says that the new students also met with professors from their academic departments and found the opportunity to speak with professors who taught higher level classes especially helpful. "Most of them were like higher up professors but talked to us about what we need to do to get to them. It was a really informative...experience."

Maya was excited for her first day of classes and she set her sights high. "I was like, this is it! This is the first day of 4.0." Maya's excitement was not diminished by somewhat unusual circumstances around her first day. The area in which Austral University is located experienced flooding right at the start of the semester. Maya had moved into her residence hall as scheduled and classes started, but some of her faculty members were handling housing and transportation issues due to the flood and informally postponed the start of their classes for a few weeks. Maya was not discouraged by this and said that she felt the HBCU as a community was there to support faculty and staff members affected by the flooding.

As a full-time student carrying almost the maximum number of credit hours, Maya says she has had to sacrifice her social life to stay on track academically. She was not

pleased with her fall mid-term grades and said that it is more difficult to earn high grades in college. “It’s so hard to get an A in college. I never knew that. I don’t know what you got to do to get an A in college, but I gotta figure out the secret formula.” And although Maya expressed a strong commitment to her chosen major and to her college, she would consider leaving school and enlisting in the military if by the end of her sophomore year she was not succeeding academically. She wants to study biology and be successful, but she also wants to be able to provide for herself economically and sees military service as another pathway for her to do so.

Maya’s advice for other students is focused on performing academically in high school.

First things first, nerds don’t exist. Nerds do not exist. The only thing a nerd is, is someone who cares about their education, and you want to be that person. You can also be so social. You can go out every weekend, but you can also get all As. And that’s one thing I had to learn. And don’t let other people discourage you. If your friend is like, “oh, I’m not doing that homework, that homework is stupid;” no, do every assignment. Just do it. If it’s simple and you think it’s stupid, show how simple it is by doing it, and completing it, and turning it in, and getting an A.

Mays acknowledges that peers have can a negative influence, although her peer influences at Technology High were positive, and her advice for others is to focus on grades and assignments and prepare academically for college.

Michael: Experiences in Problematic and Promising Programs

Michael had difficulty developing rapport with his CAP guide. Michael found his guide’s college experience to be so different that the one he expected to have that he

focused his college preparatory efforts through another program, Upward Bound. His CAP guide had attended college on a music scholarship and did not have experience with applying for multiple scholarships or considering college costs as a significant part of the college choice process.

Michael was part of the Upward Bound program at a private selective-admissions PWI in New Orleans, Audubon University. Michael says the program activities he participated in through Upward Bound were very helpful to him. He also liked that there were regular tutoring sessions to assist with homework in addition to college preparatory activities.

They were really aggressive with us as far as making sure that we were applying for scholarships... and making sure that we had applied for student aid in colleges including helping us with ACTs and SAT prep. And that's where I really felt like there was help for me.

He also found the program staff at Upward Bound to be easier to relate to than his CAP guide and thought that they better understood his concerns about paying for college and seeking scholarships throughout his college career.

It wasn't like I could just do one thing to do this. I feel like having a full ride for playing the piano is like having a full ride from, for a sport or something. Just like athletes who get a full ride. For me, it'd be different. Like, I have to get scholarships every year, maintain scholarships every year.

In addition to Upward Bound's program activities (tutoring, structured study time, assistance with ACT/SAT preparation) Michael liked being on the Audubon campus. Having students from other high schools was also a positive aspect of the program, and Michael still keeps in contact with students from other high schools who were in his Upward Bound

program. Michael's experiences in two college access programs, one that met his needs and one that did not, emphasize why students in mentoring and access programs should be asked about their experiences and what is or is not working. Gonzalez, Hernandez-Saca, and Artiles (2017) recommend further development of student voice in educational research and in looking at student voice studies from 1990 – 2010, found that including student voice can be especially powerful for historically underrepresented students.

Michael was intentional about choosing to attend a HBCU, Blessed Sacrament University. However, he applied to several different types of institutions. He wanted to be in an environment where he would be "immersed in different types of Black culture or different versions of Black culture and be familiar with people that were still pursuing education and still want to mold themselves." At his high school, Michael said there was only a small group of students who were trying to get to college, and he wanted to be able to be around Black students from other parts of the country who shared his educational goals.

So it was good for me to meet people there and talk with them and see that there are different types of Black people, and actually be able to befriend them and see that we have the same types of experiences, even though we don't act the same or have the same type of background, like we still have that kind of connection. That was good for me too. I wanted to become more involved in my school this upcoming semester and keep the level of involvement on through graduation.

Michael's rationale for choosing a HBCU is different from the other participants who either specifically chose to attend or chose to avoid HBCUs. Michael wanted to experience

diversity within the Black community. He wanted to be with students who identified as Black but were from outside of New Orleans and had different life experiences from him.

Michael's college transition process.

After graduating from W.E.B. DuBois Charter High School in the spring 2015, Michael enrolled at Blessed Sacrament University as a biology and pre-medical student. Michael started at DuBois High his sophomore year, and his mother choose that school for him. He said that throughout his education he had changed schools many times and was not particularly concerned with which high school he attended. He describes himself as a "chameleon" who can adapt to any school.

Blessed Sacrament is a private sectarian HBCU located in metropolitan New Orleans. Michael lived on campus during his first year, but as a sophomore chose to live at home because of the added expense of campus living, which he estimated to be about \$8,000.00 per year. Michael also changed his major in his second year to business and finance.

For Michael, living at home while attending college has included living in Gentilly with his uncle and in a suburb of New Orleans, Metairie, with his mother. He says that throughout his life his family moved around the city of New Orleans a lot but would identify his home neighborhood as Uptown. In high school, Michael resided with his mother. He has an older sister who had already moved out of the family home by the time Michael was in high school. He also has extended family "out towards the country" between New Orleans and Baton Rouge but doesn't have any specific family traditions other than gathering for the Christmas holiday.

Michael says he has "always wanted to go to college," and remembers being interested in higher education as early as elementary school. Continuing his education was his main

motivation earlier, but by sophomore year of high school preparing for a career also became a reason Michael wanted to go to college. He changed his major to business from biology because he has come up with business ideas and wanted to be in a major that would support him in developing those ideas into viable businesses.

CAP appealed to Michael for the mentoring and career guidance the program offered to students. "It would help me get into college and like help steer me in the right direction as far as what I thought I wanted to do with myself, as far as my goals, and careers and whatnot." Michael says he was looking for a mentoring relationship, but the CAP guide he was matched with was not someone he felt he could relate to and build that sort of relationship with.

Honestly, I didn't feel like my mentor really could connect with me because he had a full scholarship, as far as, a full scholarship for playing the piano. After that first hump, I just kind of pushed it to the side. Cause, I was like we just didn't have a good connection after that point. I was like oh you got a full ride, which is great, but I don't have a full ride. He doesn't know, he wouldn't know what it would be like or where to go apply, or what to do to actually stay in college and pay for college because he had a full ride just from playing the piano. So I'm like how are you going to help me to scrape together scholarships and whatnot? He really couldn't answer that question. So I was like, well I guess I don't need to be talking with you.

While his CAP experience did not provide him with the support he was looking for, Michael found support through another program, Upward Bound.

Michael chose colleges to apply to based largely on his academic interest at the time and wanting to stay in the state of Louisiana. "I wanted to be a sports physical therapist. And, I

wanted to stay in the state, if not in the city.” He submitted applications to Blessed Sacramento, and two public PWIs in Louisiana, including the state’s flagship institution. He also applied to one out-of-state public HBCU. Michael only completed the applications to Blessed Sacramento and Louisiana’s flagship institution. His first acceptance letter came from Blessed Sacramento and being that it was his first-choice school, once admitted he made the choice to attend Blessed Sacramento.

Michael cites Blessed Sacramento’s academic reputation in sciences and pre-medical preparing as a major reason for choosing to enroll there. “I ended up going to Blessed Sacramento because they were known or ranked as one of the best at putting African-Americans into med school. So I just felt like everything kind of lined up with Blessed Sacramento.” Michael was also offered an institutional scholarship by Blessed Sacramento and because he chose to stay in-state, was also able to access TOPS, his state merit scholarship funds. Although he chose his college, at least in part, because of his major, he intends to stay at Blessed Sacramento after changing his major after his first year to business and finance.

For Michael’s first semester at Blessed Sacramento his classes were chosen for him as a science major. He was given a schedule by his advisor for the first semester and a course plan to follow to select classes for future terms. Michael attended summer orientation where new students were divided into “color squads” for different social activities that were planned for them. Other than receiving his schedule and an address by the dean, Michael described the orientation activities as social in nature.

Unusually for a new first-time student, Michael enrolled in two summer courses at Blessed Sacramento the summer before his first semester as a full-time student. At the

urging of his uncle, who was willing and able to pay for the classes, Michael took English and Physics I over the summer. Michael wanted to take to English class, so that he could focus on his science classes as a biology and pre-medical major in the fall. He did not want to take physics but says that his uncle insisted. Michael earned a C in the physics course and regrets having taken such a rigorous course before he needed to, especially now that he has changed his major and physics is not a course requirement for him.

Michael has had some academic challenges, but his experience at Blessed Sacrament has met his expectations socially, and he wants to become more involved in campus activities in the future. Working off-campus and living off-campus this year has made getting involved more challenging. Michael enjoyed living on-campus but decided that the expense was too much. However, he has still been able to make time to participate in campus events. Michael has attended campus events “geared towards our culture,” and has been able to meet Black students from outside of New Orleans.

Michael felt pressured by his mother and his uncle to choose a major and career in sciences because he had performed well in science courses in high school, even though he was more interested in business as a field of study. His mother is a practical nurse and his uncle is an oral surgeon, so they wanted Michael to follow a similar career path. As he recalled:

They’re the ones that kept me in science degrees and whatnot. They had grand intentions, but their belief was I just wasn’t, you know, pushing myself hard enough. And I was like, my stress level was up here. I had gray hair on the side of my head. I was like I need to get out of here. And it took me awhile to really muster that up to be able to put my foot down for the second time and stick with it. Take whatever they had to say.

But, I'm happier now. I can't wait for the next semester to start. I'm really excited because I feel like I have a knack for business. I just need them to show me the ropes like and put some education behind what I feel is natural instinct.

Michael's advice to high school students preparing for college is to "be real with themselves" about their academic interests and abilities. He would also recommend the Upward Bound program at Audubon University to other students. He suggested that other college access or college preparatory programs should look to Audubon University's Upward Bound program and "find out what they're doing."

Sasha: Acknowledging her Neighborhood

Sasha has a strong affinity for her neighborhood, the Third Ward. While she takes pride in her neighborhood and her family's involvement in a second line social club, she also acknowledges that there are stereotypes associated with being from her neighborhood as well as real challenges. Sasha is not only the first person in her family to go to college, she is also the first to graduate from high school. Sasha does not like to be thought of as "lucky," but thinks that others are likely to see her that way.

A lot of people would say I'm lucky, like coming from my neighborhood. You don't catch us going to college. You don't catch us fresh out of high school, good resume, got a job, you know in college, on point, pretty much doing our own thing fresh out of high school, you know at the age of 18. So, they'll say it's being lucky. I'm like no it's not luck whatsoever. I've been planning this since I was five. It's not luck, this is just me on my grind. It's me doing what I do. I've always been hard working.

Sasha's ability to overcome real and perceived barriers are indicative of aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005). Sasha has what has become known in the college admissions world in recent

years as grit (Holmes, 2014). Including grit in admissions decisions has gained popularity and been written about in trade publications like Inside Higher Ed and the Chronicle of Higher Education. However, Sedlacek (2005) has advocated for the consideration of noncognitive measures in admissions decisions for some time. Sasha met the academic requirements of the college she chose to attend, but had she not, she displays the personal characteristics (i.e., grittiness) that have been linked to goal attainment and success (Perkins-Gough & Duckworth, 2013).

Sasha's desire to go to college and willingness to work hard to get there is what she attributes her success to, and she also acknowledges that she could have gone in a different direction, had she allowed herself to be negatively influenced, particularly by those in her neighborhood. She cites a local female rapper, 3D Na'Tee, as an example someone she identifies with. 3D Na'Tee is from Sasha's same neighborhood and similar circumstances. However, the rapper got involved in crime and went to jail. Sasha feels like she could have ended up in similar circumstances, but she did not because of her internal motivation to take "a different path."

Sasha's college transition process.

Sasha enrolled as a nursing student at Bayou State University in the fall following her high school graduation. Bayou State University is a public four-year institution about an hour south of New Orleans. Sasha is from Uptown New Orleans, and specifically identifies her neighborhood as the Third Ward. She is not only the first person in her family to attend college, she is also the first to graduate from high school. She, her mother, and her younger brother have lived with her maternal grandmother in that neighborhood since Sasha was sixteen years old. When Sasha and her mother had their own house, it was also in the same

neighborhood. Sasha describes her family as “a very New Orleans family.” An extended family that lives in close proximity to each other and supports each other.

So like my mom and my grandma, I’ve always lived with them. Then, I have my grandfather. He is never far away. That’s probably another six blocks away. And he’s always there for me. That’s always my people, and my uncle. We’re close in a sense of... I can run to any one of them and they have my back.

In addition to being connected to her neighborhood through her family’s residences, Sasha has also been a part of a “second line group.” She describes her and her family’s involvement with the group this way:

Uptown Swingers. That’s something; it’s the last second line to come out so I’m waiting for that. When summer is coming, I’m like the second line is coming, I got to get an outfit, so that’s just like something of our tradition. We have to come out with the colors, you know as far as like me and my mom and my grandmother; we have to make sure we have it together so we can come out with them.

Sasha also includes her friends in her community and described having friends growing up that lived in public housing near her neighborhood but noticed a change in her group of friends when she started high school because she attended Technology High School, and the school’s population included students from all parts of New Orleans.

Sasha says she was initially assigned to a high school across the Mississippi River from where she lives because the school she had wanted to attend was not on the city-wide school application. Due to the distance from her home, Sasha and her mother looked for other school options and were able to enroll her at Technology High School early into her ninth-grade year. Sasha continued at Technology High and graduated from there. Even

though she had not planned to enroll at Technology High, Sasha speaks positively about it. “It was a good school though. Third [best] school in the city, so I couldn’t complain.”

The first time that Sasha remembers wanting to go to college was when she was in elementary school. Her mother, who was a domestic service worker during Sasha’s childhood, has always wanted her to go to college so that she could have more opportunities.

My mother was a housekeeper for this family that lived in the Garden District. And she was always like, you want to do this? You want to work like me? And so was my grandmother. She was like I want you to go to school and I want you to do something with yourself. I want you to have a good life.

Because Sasha knew that she wanted to go to college, when she had the opportunity to participate in CAP, she asked her school counselor to put her into the program and was excited to be matched with a CAP guide.

Sasha and her CAP guide met regularly at the start of the school year, but gradually met less as Sasha started working more hours. They met six times in one month so that Sasha could prepare to retake the ACT to improve her English score. After working with her guide, Sasha improved her score by five points. With her guide, Sasha also researched scholarships. She did not have her guide assist her with the college search and application processes because she completed those early. “I was just that eager. Like before school even started, I had half my applications done.”

Sasha focused her college search on in-state schools and applied to two public PWIs, a private HBCU, and a public HBCU. She was offered admission at all four institutions. Earlier in her college selection process, Sasha thought that she would attend a HBCU. She had been

labeled “ghetto” by some students at her high school and was concerned that she might face similar issues in college at a PWI.

I really wanted to go to an HBCU, just because of my attitude and the way I was ... At first, I was like if I go to a prominently white school they’re going to say I’m ghetto. And I dealt with that in high school. They were like, “you’re ghetto.” And I really didn’t care because if you put my transcript up to yours, you know, it doesn’t matter. You put my resume up to yours, it doesn’t matter. So, that never really got to me, but I mean I dealt with it. I went to school [college] and actually everyone at my school now kind of loves me.

Sasha’s grandmother wanted her to attend the private HBCU in New Orleans, but when Sasha weighed the costs of attendance with the scholarships and aid she was offered, she decided that Bayou State would be the most affordable.

The summer before starting college, Sasha spent most of her time working. She was paid for babysitting her brother and running family errands in her car. While attending Bayou State full-time with eighteen credit hours, Sasha works at a fast food restaurant “almost nine hours a day” to help pay her college expenses. Sasha received a partial scholarship from her university as well as a \$1,000.00 CAP scholarship. She receives federal financial aid, including a Pell Grant, but still needs to supplement her aid to cover the cost of college. Her busy work and class schedule have prevented her from getting involved in campus activities, although she would have liked to, had she not had to find a job. She does, however, live in campus housing.

By mid-semester Sasha was considering transferring to City Community College and returning home to help her mother take care of her little brother. She plans to continue to

study nursing, which is the career she has wanted to pursue since she was a child. Sasha had wanted to get her bachelor's degree in nursing but is willing to change her academic plans and instead earn an associate degree so that she can be at home with her family.

I'm thinking about transferring to City Community College because after this semester, I have everything I need to go to their nursing school. Even though it's a different degree than what I wanted, I mean you gotta crawl before you walk. I'll still make it.

If Sasha transfers, she'll live in her family home while attending nursing school and look for her own place to live once she has a job back in New Orleans.

Sasha's advice for other students would be to "make up your mind now" about going to college. Because she "always knew" she was going to go to college, she feels that the college search, application, and enrollment processes were easier for her. Sasha says she prepared for college throughout high school, not just in her senior year.

Themes

This section will be divided into two subsections. One that explores the emergent themes from inductive coding and a second that explores the themes supported by deductive coding using a CCW framework. Taken together, the themes help to explain how low-income Black or African American collegians from New Orleans have transitioned from high school to college and from where they were able to find support for their educational endeavors.

Emergent Theme: Early Development of College Aspirations and High School Choice

All participants were asked when they first remembered wanting to go to college, and all said that by eighth grade or earlier they had wanted to go to college. For some students, these aspirations started very early. Cherish and Sasha said they'd known since

elementary school. Michael said that he's "always wanted to go to college." Danielle, Jonathan, Krystal, and Maya have all wanted to go to college since they were in middle school with Jonathan, Krystal, and Maya mentioning eighth grade specifically.

Having college aspirations did not seem to influence students' approaches to choosing a high school. In New Orleans, students (and their parents) must choose their schools, and although participants reported having positive academic experiences in high school, most did not engage in a choice process for high school the way they did for college. Maya's mother sought out a school for her daughter that had a good academic reputation, and after scrambling to change schools at the start of ninth grade, Sasha proudly talked about Technology High School as the "third [best] school in the city," but having college aspirations did not seem to push students to engage in a college choice-like process for high school. Danielle and Krystal enrolled at Technology High School because there were still seats available when other schools were not taking additional students and Cherish enrolled there because the school was proximate to where her father lives. Kevin's sister had gone to the school previously in the building that now houses The Global School, which was why he chose to enroll there; and has little to do with The Global School itself. While there is potential for the choice-intensive system of schooling that New Orleans has adopted to prepare students for the college choice process, in the experiences of the students in this study do not indicate that this is happening organically. If students were coached and assisted through the high school choice process in a similar fashion as they are with the college choice process, it might make the high school choice process more meaningful as students start to consider their postsecondary options.

Emergent Theme: Choosing a HBCU or a PWI

When developing this study, interview questions about institutional types, particularly HBCUs versus PWIs, were not planned. However, it came up naturally in the first two interviews, and discussion of students' knowledge and opinions of HBCUs provided insight into their transition from high school to college, so all subsequent participants were asked about HBCUs. All of the participants applied to at least one HBCU and two participants, Maya and Michael, chose to enroll at HBCUs.

Danielle, Jonathan, Kevin, and Krystal were not particularly influenced by whether a college was a HBCU or a PWI. Jonathan was most interested in leaving the city of New Orleans and Krystal was focused on finding a college with a strong athletic training program. Even Kevin whose first-choice institution was a private HBCU in New Orleans did not choose that college because of its institutional type. Similarly, Danielle, who plans to transfer from City Community College to a HBCU has not selected that senior institution based on its historical status.

Sasha considered going to a HBCU and was aware of how she might be received by other students at a PWI. "At first I was like if I go to a prominently white school they're going to say I'm ghetto." She liked the campus of the HBCU she considered, but because it was a private college and more expensive she decided to enroll at Bayou State instead where she has been positively received by her fellow students. "I went to school and actually everyone at my school kind of loves me, the people I do talk to and get along with."

Maya and Michael specifically wanted to attend HBCUs. Maya's mother talked to her "about like Black people being discriminated against in the PWI," and Maya was particularly concerned about bias in grading by professors.

But, if I was ever discriminated against, I wouldn't want to go through the process of proving myself to somebody or a professor who is trying to hold me back. So, in order to avoid all that, I just went to a HBCU where I know my education would be invested in me and I wouldn't have to prove to someone, you know I belong here. Maya seems to have the navigational capital needed to successfully maneuver through a PWI, but as she says, she "didn't go to school to be an activist," and as such felt like she would not have to justify her place at a university and her academic ability by choosing a HBCU.

Michael chose Blessed Sacrament University in part for the reputation of success for its graduates. "I ended up going to Blessed Sacrament because they were known or ranked as one of the best at putting African-Americans into med school." At the time that he was choosing his college, Michael had planned to go to medical school. He also chose Blessed Sacrament because it is a historically Black institution. "I wanted to be immersed in different types of Black culture or different versions of Black culture and be familiar with people that were still pursuing education and still want to mold themselves versus, you know, what I just saw in high school." He was interested in attending college with other Black students who came from outside New Orleans so that he could experience different, "but still authentic" versions of Black culture.

Although she applied to some highly-selective HBCUs, Cherish feels strongly that attending a HBCU does a disservice to Black students.

I don't really support HBCUs. I don't like HBCUs...It's like a Black utopian society. Everyone is Black, your professor, all the kids are Black. I'm like, that's not how it's going to be in the real world. I'm glad I'm getting this exposure to people.

Cherish is pursuing a business degree and expects to work with people from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds in the future and feels that there is greater diversity at the PWI she attends than there would be at a HBCU, better preparing her for her future. She also commented that she thought HBCUs could be less academically rigorous and did not have the same financial resources as PWIs.

Cherish understands the history and purpose of HBCUs but says it would not be the right type of college for her. "I understand that HBCUs were created with the purpose when we couldn't, when we weren't welcome in institutions, but now that we are, I'm going to go too." This is not to say that Cherish is not aware of how she could be discriminated against as a Black student at a PWI, she clearly understands that institutionalized racism exists and that she can be personally affected by it as a college student.

That's what HBCUs argue. They feel you have to work twice as hard to receive half as many opportunities that your White classmates get. I was like, "well, hey that's what I have to do then, just work twice as hard to get half as whatever they're getting" ...Racism is a big thing to me, it's very important, systematic racism I should say. No matter where you go, we're still going to be less, but on the inside you have to know your worth.

Unlike Maya who didn't want to subject herself to the possibility of inequality in the classroom, Cherish expects to experience bias and is prepared to challenge it. Most participants had a positive or neutral opinion on HBCUs. Cherish stands out as an exceptional case for her strong opinions on how HBCUs may hinder Black students.

HBCUs may be a part of the choice process for the participants in this study because of their context in New Orleans, a city with two private HBCUs and one public HBCU. In the

state of Louisiana there are a total of six HBCUs, including those in New Orleans. With lower tuition offered to students who stay in-state and a merit scholarship program (TOPS) that encourages students to stay in Louisiana for college, HBCUs may be a more prominent part of the college choice process for the Black and African American students in this study than they would be for students in other contexts. If staying in-state is a part of the college choice process for financial reasons, then for students of color in Louisiana, HBCUs could be more likely to be included in their college choice set.

Emergent Theme: Cooling Out or Warming Up?

Cooling out refers to the process by which students to enroll in community college with the intent to transfer to a senior institution and earn a baccalaureate degree or higher, do not complete their education as planned and as a result hold an associate's or other subbaccalaureate credential as their terminal degree (Brint & Karabel, 1989). Two participants, Danielle and Kevin, enrolled at City Community College after they could not afford their first-choice four-year institutions. Because both of them intended to enroll at a four-year institution, they could find their aspirations changing due to their community college experience. However, both students communicated determination to continue and earn bachelor's degrees.

Danielle did initially enroll at Northshore University, but withdrew a few weeks into the fall term because she could not afford to stay. She was able to enroll at City because of their second start program which offers eight-week courses, instead of the traditional fifteen to sixteen week courses. Danielle could be protected against cooling off since she has already overcome an obstacle so early in her college career. It would have been easy for

her to give up after having to withdraw from Northshore, but instead she found a way to still be in college for that first fall semester.

One indication that cooling off could be taking place for Danielle is that she first talked about transferring to a four-year institution as soon as possible, but as the conversation continued said she was considering completing an associate degree before transferring.

I'm going to start that off here and if I have the chance or if I feel that it's the right time that I'll go, I'll be at Austral University in New Orleans [four-year public HBCU] in the fall, next fall. But I'm thinking about just getting my associate's first. I'm really thinking. Because at least when I get that I can try and find a job and then go back to school, which I'm thinking about doing.

Danielle's major at City is general studies, but if she is indeed interested in looking for a job with an associate degree, she could potentially be advised to follow a vocational curriculum, which closely mirrors how the cooling out process was first described; the directing of students away from transferrable programs and into career and technical education programs.

Kevin expressed a strong commitment to earning a bachelor's degree and was supported by his high school science teachers in his decision to start at City Community College. Kevin sees City as "his step" to get to his goal. He plans to transfer to the four-year private HBCU that was his first-choice college. He has met with an advisor at the community college and enrolled in courses that will transfer. While Kevin would also have an opportunity to earn an associate degree he is squarely focused on transferring.

Sasha is planning a reverse transfer from Bayou State University to City Community College because she feels she is needed at home by her family, especially her younger brother, whom she has been a caretaker for most of her life. Even in her first semester at Bayou State, she was exploring the requirements for admission to City Community College's nursing school. She wanted to complete a bachelor's degree but understands the career pathway into nursing from a community college.

I have everything I need to go to City's nursing school. Even though it's a different degree than what I wanted, I mean you gotta crawl before you walk. I'll still make it... I'll be getting my associate's instead of my bachelor's which is what I really would want and prefer, but life is like, I've had bigger problems. So I'll take that over another one.

In Sasha's case cooling out could still be a factor but earning an associate degree rather than a bachelor's degree is less likely to affect her ability to pursue her desired career as either credential will enable her to become a registered nurse.

Community colleges seem to be a transitional institution for the participants in this study who have attended or plan to attend one. They seem to see them as a means to an end –a way to get to a four-year institution or to more quickly enter the workforce in their desired field. It is *being* in college, more so than being in a particular *type* of college, that is meaningful to the students in this study who are or plan to become community college students.

Community Cultural Wealth Themes

Not all forms of capital as outlined in the CCW framework being employed by this author were found to be a part of student's experiences in the high school to college

transition. Individual participants may have relied on a particular form of capital, but in looking across the narratives informational capital and social capital were most frequently mentioned by participants. Table 3 shows the frequencies of the deductive codes for forms of capital in a CCW framework as applied to each participant.

Informational capital.

The most often described form of capital by participants was informational capital. However, informational capital for these Black and African American students appears to operate differently than it did for Latina/o students in prior studies (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Martinez, 2012; Yamamura, Martinez, & Saenz, 2010). From the literature, informational capital is understood to include high-stakes information networks, especially those that students can access outside of school. This conceptualization assumes that students of color do not have equal access to informational capital in the school context. However, the students in this study described informational capital that they accessed either directly through school personnel (counselors or teachers) or through formal programs facilitated by the school, including but not limited to CAP. For the students in this study, school or school-related resources gave them access to high-stakes information.

	Aspirational	Familial	Informational	Linguistic	Navigational	Resistant	Social	Spiritual
Cherish	4	1	8	0	6	5	9	3
Danielle	5	1	17	0	1	0	7	0
Jonathan	2	3	8	0	0	0	2	1
Kevin	2	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
Krystal	0	0	5	0	1	1	3	0
Maya	0	4	5	0	1	0	8	0
Michael	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Sasha	6	6	3	3	1	7	3	0
Totals	19	16	56	3	10	13	32	4

Table 4: CCW Code Frequencies by Participant

Kevin relied on his college counselor at his school, teachers, and his CAP guide for informational capital. His counselor was helpful in the college application process, but his guide helped more since they had more time to work one-on-one. After the school year ended, Kevin completed the college enrollment process mostly on his own but did continue to receive support from his CAP guide. "I was doing most of the stuff on my own because the thing ended, the CAP thing, but he still kept in contact. So he helped me in case I needed like minor things to look up and stuff."

Maya, who had support from her mother who went to college while she was growing up, found that her guide could provide her with procedural knowledge, the steps she needed to take to enroll in college. "I feel like she gave me a direct map. She didn't really pick my college for me, and we didn't talk about college choice. I talked about where I wanted to go, but she gave me a direct map to get to where I wanted to go." Maya and her guide met infrequently, but she still felt like her guide gave her access to valuable information.

Two students were able to access informational capital from formal programs outside of CAP. Cherish had a good relationship with her CAP guide and received a substantial scholarship through CAP, but she still sought out more support. Metropolitan University offered her the opportunity to be in their summer bridge program and she accepted that offer. "It is a bridge from your senior year to college which I liked about that. I knew CAP ended once they realized I was straight, I was okay. But, summer bridge, it you know, they check on you frequently." Cherish cited the ability to get continued support throughout the summer and into the academic year as a reason for joining that program.

She also likes the format of the support offered through College Bridge which consists of small group advising and mentoring.

Unlike Cherish, Michael did not have a positive experience with his CAP guide. He found it difficult to relate to his guide because his guide had attended college on a music scholarship for piano. Michael wanted assistance finding scholarships from multiple sources, and did not think that was something this guide could assist him with effectively, nor did his guide seem to have the knowledge to assist Michael with what he needed.

While Michael's CAP experience failed to meet his expectations, he credits another program with getting him into college. He participated in Upward Bound through Audubon University, a selective private PWI in New Orleans.

They were really proactive at helping us to be proactive about applying for scholarships and making sure that um we had applied for student aide in colleges including helping us with ACTs and SAT prep. And that's where I really felt like there was help for me.

Michael found the program activities in Upward Bound to be more helpful in providing him the information he needed to move from high school to college.

Informational capital also included negative informational capital; instances where a lack of information from the school or other sources affected the student's educational transition from high school to college. This was particularly salient for Danielle for whom the complete costs of college, including living on-campus became a burden and resulted in her withdrawing from her four-year institution to move home and enroll at a community college. Danielle was assisted by her college counselor at school, but still was missing critical information.

I know that I needed some help, like one on one help because my college counselor she was always busy. They had like a lot of seniors and she wasn't able to always be available when we needed her. We had to like, always schedule meetings and stuff but I know I needed that one on one because I was really focused on getting to college and doing the right thing. So, I know I needed the extra one on one besides my college counselor.

Danielle wanted to be in CAP because she knew she needed help. She knew she needed assistance with the college process, especially with understanding the costs of college. She wanted someone who could work with her one-on-one, which is how CAP is structured. Unfortunately, Danielle's CAP guide did not honor her commitment to Danielle. Had Danielle had a CAP guide who met with her and communicated with her regularly, she might have had access to information about college costs and avoided choosing a school she could not afford.

Informational capital was a part of each participant's college search, choice, and transition process. For some students, informational capital was positive; they gained access to the information they needed to successfully navigate their transitions. Some students were able to access this high-stakes information through their CAP guide. Other students developed their informational capital from interactions at the school site with teachers and counselors. Students who described more frequent interactions with their CAP guides seemed to be able to develop more college knowledge because of the relationship. For students who did not develop a relationship with their CAP guide, informational capital was developed at school, through other college access/college

preparatory programs, or it was underdeveloped, and the student made college enrollment choices that were not fully informed.

Social capital.

Most students found support during their transition from high school to college from their social networks of friends. Jonathan, found support from friends he had made at school through the robotics club, and who he felt represented how he wanted to see New Orleans and his place in it.

I honestly spent more time with my friends than most of my cousins and my family. They are my only people that I hang out with in New Orleans. They are like what I see as the people of New Orleans. Besides like the violence, besides what goes on in the news all that, they are my view of community and New Orleans.

While Jonathan has since decided to take time off from college, his friends were a source of social support for his initial enrollment.

Maya's core group of high school friends who she dubbed "the perseverers," encouraged each other to do well in high school and to continue to college, particularly over the summer as they were preparing to enroll. "We always talked about college. We were just so excited for it. Like we were really really excited for it. We was like, what are we going to do? I can imagine you walking to class." The excitement that Maya felt about going to college that was shared by her peers helped to keep her focused her goals.

Students have also continued to rely on social support from their networks while in college. Cherish does homework together with her long-distance boyfriend using video calling, and they support and encourage each other. Danielle, despite not having the college experience she expected, is helping her boyfriend who is a recently immigrant from Africa

prepare to enroll at City Community College. Krystal accesses social capital through her community network of her church at home in New Orleans by attending virtual services.

Yosso (2006) describes social capital as “networks of people and community resources.” The participants in this study formed social capital through relationships with peers and home communities. These were sources of strength for them in getting into college. As new students, they were continuing to draw upon these home-networks. Tinto (1987) describes social integration with people at a student’s selected postsecondary institution as necessary for college persistence. For the participants who were in their first college semester at the time of the study, it is hard to assess if the reliance on home-networks as sources of social capital will help or hinder their success in college, however, students do describe these networks as helpful in their immediate transition process. They relied upon peer support and family support in the college choice and enrollment processes. Peers from their high schools supported them in the development of their college aspirations as well as in making tangible progress toward enrolling in college.

Other forms of capital from a CCW perspective that were not supported across as many narratives, will be discussed in the next chapter. Not all students drew on all forms of capital, but there is evidence of each form of capital in at least one of the participant’s stories. These stories and the forms of capital used by the students may also help to further explain how CCW operates for some low-income Black or African American collegians from New Orleans as they describe their experience of the experience of moving from high school to college.

Summary

This chapter has presented the restoried narratives of the participants and noted themes that emerged from the inductive coding process and well as those themes supported by the data through the deductive process. The narratives themselves are important to this research and for understanding the experiences of low-income Black or African American collegians from New Orleans in their transition from high school to college. Narrative inquiry shows the range of experiences because each participant's "experience of the experience is not the same" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). All the students navigated the transition from high school to college, but the experience of that process was different for each student. However, common to all the students was the importance of informational capital, i.e. high-stakes information regarding the college-going process.

The next chapter revisits the theoretical framework and provides additional insight into how these student's experiences can both be understood from a CCW perspective and how their experiences can frame a version of CCW most relevant to Black collegians from New Orleans. Emergent themes will be connected to the existing literature. Implications for theory, practice, policy, and future research will also be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Analysis of Findings

This chapter provides an analysis of findings from the narratives of how low-income collegians of color from New Orleans describe their immediate transition from high school to college. The theoretical framework and themes discovered through inductive and deductive coding will be revisited, and two revised frameworks are offered. The author will also explore aspects of the narratives that serve as critical race counterstories (Yosso, 2005) and make recommendations for theory, policy, and practice. Limitations of the study and potential directions for future research will also be discussed.

CAP Program Experiences and CCW

CAP helped or did not help students to varying degrees. A sub-question used to frame this study was: How do students describe their experiences in a college access program (CAP) in relation to the forms of capital used to successfully enroll in postsecondary institutions? Students described gaining some informational capital through their CAP experience and by working with their CAP guide, if they had a positive experience in CAP.

However, mostly students relied on the school for college-going information. For the participants in this study, the high school and its resources (including programs, as CAP is a school-based program) were the sources of informational capital. Students used CAP for tactical support; for assistance with college admissions tasks such as: applications, scholarship searches, completing the FAFSA, and studying for the ACT. In contrast, participants described their peers as a primary source of social capital, and CAP does not include peer relationships in its program model. Students developed networks of peers

who supported their educational goals, which was also done mostly at the school-site, but outside of CAP.

Theoretical Framework Revisited

The author began this research with an interest in how low-income students of color from New Orleans would describe their experiences in the transition process from high school to college; and if they used forms of capital as described in Yosso's theory of community cultural wealth (CCW) to successfully navigate that transition. It was expected that participants would include students of color from varied backgrounds, however the participants in this study all identified as African American or Black. Because all of the students identified as African American or Black, the revised theoretical frameworks are more specific than the original framework. Two revised frameworks are offered as models of the college choice and enrollment processes for low-income Black or African-American students from New Orleans.

Existing College Choice Models

Existing models of college choice were used to help frame the study. In her theoretical framework that combined CCW with a college choice model, the author drew primarily upon Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) model of college choice. After restorying and analyzing the narratives of participants in this study, the college choice process for low-income Black or African American students from New Orleans does not neatly fit the original theoretical framework. As such, the author is proposing two alternative models that better fit the data. One model offered looks far less like Hossler and Gallagher's model and more like Cabrera and LaNasa's (2000) model which shows the college search and choice process as a web of interconnected elements and influences. Hossler and Gallagher's

linear model does not adequately illustrate the complexity of the college choice process for the participants in this study, but it still has utility as a model that shows their progression through time. The second revised model, still based on Hossler and Gallagher's model, includes the emergent and CCW themes that were supported by the data. In both of the revised models, contextual influences are included. Students had many contextual influences on their processes such as: peers, support at the school site, and support from college access/college preparatory programs. Their college choice and enrollment processes were also influenced by the local educational context; the K-12 system of school choice and the number of HBCUs in the immediate area, and by state policies and programs, like Louisiana's merit scholarship program.

Perna's model is not used as the basis for either of the revised models offered here. The layers in Perna's (2006) model also show contextual influences on the college choice process, and many of the elements in Cabrera and Nasa's model are also found there. In order for Hossler and Gallagher's model to fit the data, contextual influences had to be added, and these are added at the choice phase. Local and state educational contexts are displayed in Perna's model, and these did influence the college choice processes of the students in this study, but not to the same extent that relationships with peers, family members, and school staff did. Perna's model is helpful in understanding the college choice process across larger and varied populations of students and was designed for use in quantitative studies.

The participants in this study experienced the effects of each of the contextual layers Perna illustrates, however, the focus of this study was squarely on the particulars of the individuals' experiences. Although individual characteristics and experiences are contained

in layer 1 of Perna's model, they are teased out in way in Cabrera and LaNasa's model that seems more representative of the student stories that comprise this narrative study. The interactions across contexts and between elements that came out in the narratives of participants in this study, are better displayed as a web. However, to illustrate how informational and social capital operated in the student narratives as they moved through a time-bound process, a revised model adding those forms of capital as participants described them to Hossler and Gallagher's model is also offered here.

College choice process models derived from the narratives.

While participants in this study did not describe a college choice-like process in selecting their high schools, the high schools they attended affected their college choice processes. Their schools were differently resourced when it came to supporting students' transitions from high school to college. All of the high schools attended by participants in this study had the CAP program as a resource, but CAP worked (or did not work) for the participants in varying ways. Some students felt very supported by CAP, others sought out assistance from staff at their school or other programs, and still others were relatively unsupported in their high school to college transition.

Almost all postsecondary institutional types (community colleges, HBCUs, PWIs, public universities, private universities) are represented in Greater New Orleans. As such, students' college choice sets may be influenced by the local institutions and their interactions with these institutions in their pre-college years. The State of Louisiana also encourages students to choose in-state colleges and universities through its state merit scholarship program called TOPS.



Figure 6: Revised Theoretical Framework 1. A revised framework informed by the narrative research study.

Using Cabrera and LaNasa’s (2000) model as the foundation, the author has made additions to their college choice process model to reflect the experiences of the participants in this study, see Figure 6. Added to Cabrera and LaNasa’s model are: high school choice and peer influences, as influences on a student’s college choice. Student’s college choice

appears in the original model and is where the model stops. Beyond student's college choice, this author has added enrollment in first-choice institution and enrollment in other-choice institution.

Enrollment in an other-choice institution emerged for the students who started at a different college than they had wanted to because of college costs, and because some students planned to transfer to another institution in the near future. Enrollment in first-choice and other-choice institution are connected by dotted, rather than solid lines because students seem to move from one institution to another more fluidly; when their first-choice institution doesn't meet their needs, they enroll in another institution or make the decision to stop-out, dropping out of college with the intention to re-enroll at a later time.

High school choice has been added to the model because which high school students chose to attend affected their ability to access high-stakes information (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009) about colleges. The students in this study did not use a college choice-like model to select their high schools, but the school's influence on their choice process was shown in their descriptions of available resources as well as in their discussions of peer support. Participants described their friends as a part of their college search, choice, and enrollment processes. Influential peers tended not to be friends from students' neighborhoods, but instead were friends from school. Again, with the system of charter schools and school choice in New Orleans this may be unique to students in high-choice K-12 environments. For some students, like Maya and Cherish, peers seemed to be particularly influential. Maya had a core group of friends who helped to motivate each other and Cherish relied on peer relationships that she maintained electronically using social media, text messages, and video chats.

In the second revised model, Figure 7, the emergent themes and CCW themes are mapped onto Hossler and Gallagher’s model. Enrollment is not the stopping point, as it is in Hossler and Gallagher’s original model. Instead enrollment branches to what students did or said they planned to do next. Some students intended to stay at the institution of higher education where they first enrolled, others planned to transfer, and one student had already left college after one year of study. In both models, peer influences and the resources available at the high school-site are included, but in the second revised model high school resources and peer influences are shown as a part of the CCW constructs that supported students as they moved through the admissions and enrollment processes and into college.

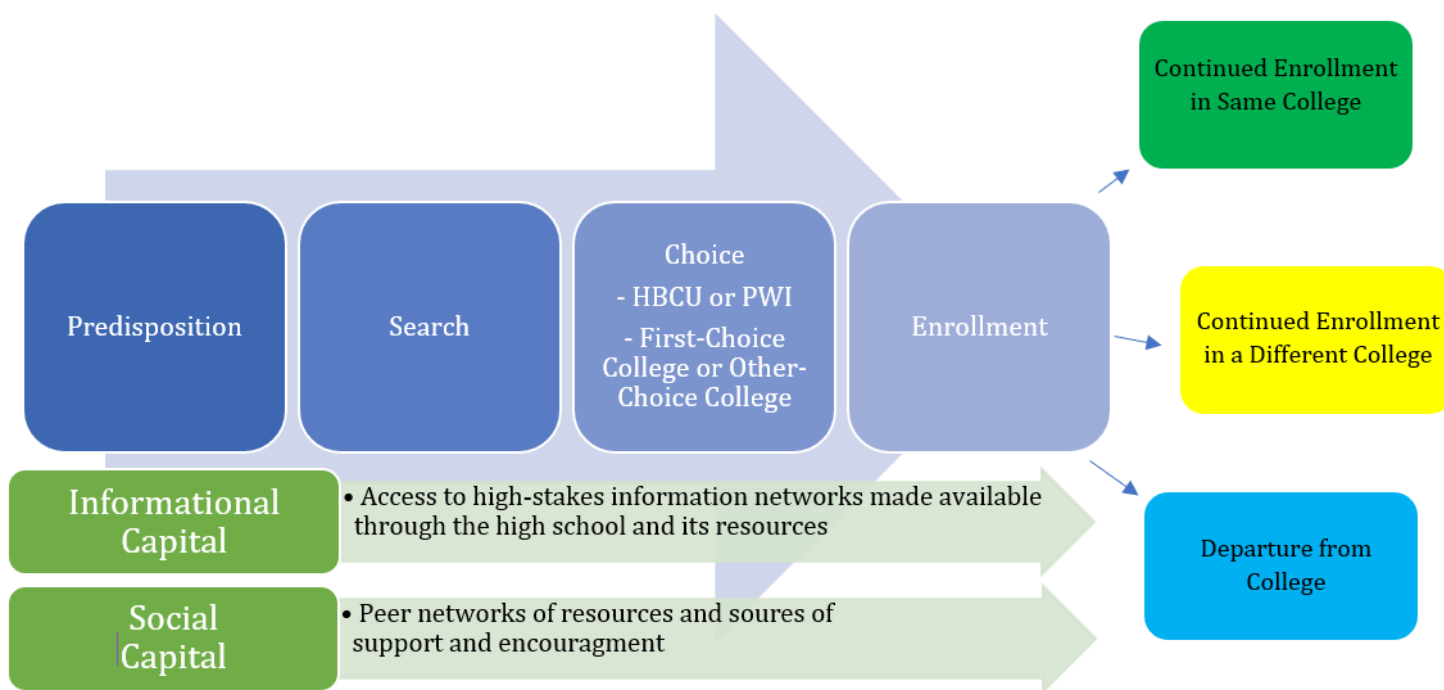


Figure 7: Revised Theoretical Framework 2. A revised framework informed by the narrative research study.

Findings on peer influences are consistent with what Marciano (2017) found in her study of culturally relevant peer interactions engaged in by twelfth-grade students of color around college preparation, application, and enrollment processes. Marciano found that students engaged in “reciprocal relationships in support of their access to higher education,” (p. 183). Students supported each other in the pursuit of higher education opportunities within and outside of school and formal programs, they also used new media such as text messages and social media to share college knowledge and develop systems of support. When looking at the college choice process for students of color, peers may play a more important role. For the Black and African American students in this study, peers were included in their narratives to an extent to which it is warranted to add peer influences to the revised theoretical frameworks.

Participants also described their college choice and enrollment experiences in relationship to their choice set and college preferences; not all students were able to enroll in their first-choice institution. Kevin realized that the private college he wanted to attend would not be financially feasible and chose to begin his education at a community college to make higher education more affordable for him and his family. Danielle’s experience stands out because she did enroll at her first-choice institution, but then had to withdraw because she was not able to afford the costs of living on-campus, so she withdrew there and then enrolled in a community college.

In Revised Framework 1, dotted lines connect college choice and enrollment in first-choice or other-choice institutions because not all participants take the same path. Enrollment in first-choice or other-choice institutions are also connected with a dotted line because some students either have moved from one institution to other or plan to move –to

transfer to another institution during their college careers. In Revised Framework, elements of college choice specific to the student in this study (i.e., institutional type and first-choice or other-choice institution) are included within the choice stage. In this model, all students make a choice, albeit it different for each student, and then differ further on how and if they continue their college enrollment.

Community Cultural Wealth

In the original theoretical framework, the author used a linear model of college choice and posited that students would draw upon forms of capital as conceptualized in the theory of CCW to move through the choice and enrollment processes. This study has revealed that students may draw on sources of capital, but not all students use all forms of capital. Generalizing how CCW operates in a theoretical framework does not fit with the experiences of the students in this study based on their narratives.

All students in this study relied on informational and social capital. Informational capital is imbedded in Revised Framework 1 through the inclusion of high school choice and peer influences, as well as existing elements from Cabrera and LaNasa's model such as availability of information about college and parental characteristics. In Revised Framework 2, informational capital is shown as supporting students as they move through the process of going from high school to college. High school choice emerged as an important element because students reported accessing information about college through school-based resources. While there may not have been intentionality behind their high school choices initially, which high school a student attended mattered in their college choice and enrollment processes.

Even students who gained college knowledge through their CAP guide and participation in CAP were only eligible for the program because they attended one of CAP's partner schools. An element of the educational reforms that have taken place in New Orleans since 2005 is encouraging more students to pursue a college education. College readiness has become a priority for schools (Babineau, Hand, & Rossmier, 2017). and some schools even support their alumni once they are enrolled in college (KIPP, 2015). College preparatory resources that are coordinated by high schools, both people and programs, matter to students. If students do not attend schools with college preparatory resources, or they cannot access those resources, then navigating the college admission process becomes more challenging that it has to be for low-income Black or African American students, like those who participated in this study.

Social capital appears in the revised frameworks through the addition of peer influences and the existing elements of parental encouragement and involvement, with peer influences being more important resources for participants than was anticipated. Students described their peer networks that they had developed in high school as sources of support that helped them get to college. Positive peer influences were developed informally at school or formally at school through organized programs or clubs. Having friends who also wanted to attend college helped to support the students in this study as they made their transition from high school to college.

Themes Revisited

Emergent Theme: Early Development of College Aspirations and High School Choice

Development of early college aspirations has been included in much of the research on college access and choice, partly because it appears in the early works on this subject,

specifically in Hossler and Gallagher's 1987 study and in a subsequent book by Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper (1999). Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper began a nine-year longitudinal study with students when they were in the ninth grade. The participants in the study being discussed here reported developing college aspirations at young ages, and all participants said they knew they wanted to attend college by the time they were in eighth grade. College aspirations may be developing earlier because schools expose students to higher education at younger ages. In this author's experience when visiting local schools, it has become common to see college names and pennants in primary schools in New Orleans. Teachers display their alma mater's name and colors, or classrooms are named after colleges and universities.

Although the early development of aspirations was common across participants, the students in this study varied in their acquisition of college knowledge by the time they were in twelfth-grade and actively engaged in the college search, choice, and enrollment processes. Wanting to go to college and knowing how to go to college were two different things for the students in this study. Some students were able to acquire college knowledge through their schools. Others relied on peer networks or family members. Some were supported by their CAP guide or by other programs, like Upward Bound. Aspirations alone are not enough. Students need informational capital and procedural knowledge to navigate the college search, choice, and enrollment processes. In some cases, students never accessed vital information on college costs, majors, and career pathways.

With college aspirations developing by eighth-grade, the author thought there might be a connection between college aspirations and high school choice for participants in this study. The educational milieu in New Orleans at the time these students were enrolling in

high school required that students and their parents/families choose their high school, as has been mentioned previously. Students and parents in other places may choose a private school over a public school, but in New Orleans all families must choose even among public schools. In their interviews participants were asked about how they chose their high schools, and students did not describe a choice process that was like a college choice process when selecting their high schools, as the author thought they might. This is a possible area for future research and will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Emergent Theme: Choosing a HBCU or a PWI

Discussion of college choice as it relates to choosing a HBCU or a PWI was not an aspect of college choice that the author anticipated being a part of this study. As a White woman, the researcher's positionality could have affected how the study was conceptualized and contributed to the omission of questions about HBCUs in the interview protocol. However, in the first two interviews that were conducted with Maya and Cherish, the students talked about choosing a HBCU or a PWI as a part of their choice process. With a qualitative research design, the author was able to then add a question about college choice as it related to historic institutional type, if it did not come out in the more general discussion with participants about their college application and choice processes.

Maya and Cherish represent two opposing experiences and reasons for choosing or not choosing a HBCU. Maya specifically wanted to attend a HBCU whereas Cherish said she would not be interested in attending a HBCU. Michael also chose to attend a HBCU and was intentional in doing so. Sasha considered a HBCU because she was concerned about how she might be received by students at a PWI. Danielle, Jonathan, Kevin, and Krystal all

applied to at least one HBCU, but were not swayed to enroll or not enroll at a HBCU in relation to the institutional type.

The experiences of the participants in this study who were intentional in considering or not considering HBCUs are similar to what Tobolowsky, Outcalt, and McDonough (2005) found in their study of the role of HBCUs in the college choice process for African American students in California. Tobolowsky, Outcalt, and McDonough found that students who were oriented toward HBCUs in their predisposition phase were more strongly persuaded to enroll at a HBCU or specifically dissuaded from enrolling at HBCUs. That is, students who knew about or were interested in HBCUs when they first decided that they would pursue postsecondary education over other available options, like entering the workforce directly or serving in the military, were more likely to choose or not choose a college because of its status as a HBCU. Exposing students of color to HBCUs and PWIs early, and no later than eighth grade, may help them to have a deeper understanding of institutional types and help them to make a more informed choice about which college environment can best meet their needs.

Composition of the student body at HBCUs can also influence students' decisions about enrolling in these types of institutions. As Tobolowsky, Outcalt, and McDonough explain:

Students were divided on the value of what they perceived as a non-diverse study body at HBCUs, with some looking forward to what they expected to be an all-African American campus and others put off by this expectation (p. 71).

Maya and Michael, who ultimately enrolled in HBCUs were interested in being part of a predominately African American campus population. Cherish was specifically dissuaded by

the idea of being in an all-Black environment, as she saw it as an unrealistic representation of what she would experience in her post-college life. The idea of a HBCU appealed to Sasha, but her intended major was more important in making her choice of where to enroll, and her worries about how she would be received at a PWI lessened once she started college.

In exploring this theme, a new interest has been raised for the author. For the students who had greater intentionality around choosing/not choosing a HBCU, it appears that their racial identity is more salient to them. Participants were not specifically asked questions about their racial identity development. Had the study been designed to focus specifically on Black and African American students, African American racial identity development might have been included in the theoretical framework and used in the development of the interview protocol. Or, as Tobolowsky, Outcalt, and McDonough suggest, it could be that by being in New Orleans where there are several HBCUs, students were exposed to these institutional types earlier in their college choice process. However, not all participants had strong feelings about choosing or not choosing a HBCU. As students in New Orleans, they would have likely had similar exposure to HBCUs, yet they did not all have similarly strong feelings about HBCUs. As much as institutional type mattered to some students, it did not seem to matter to others at all in their college choice process.

Emergent Theme: Cooling Out or Warming Up?

For the two participants, Danielle and Kevin, who were enrolled in a community college at the time of the interviews, cooling out –that is enrolling at a community college with the intent of attaining a four-year degree, but leaving higher education with a sub-baccalaureate credential –did not seem to be happening. Clark (1960) as well as Brint and

Karabel (1989) made the cooling out argument, but more recently students seem to move between institutions more than they did in the past, as well as to move through them in a nonlinear way like when students reverse transfer from a four-year institution to a community college or make lateral transfers across the same institution types (Bahr, 2012; Borden, 2004). Alexander, Bozick, and Entwisle (2008) found that student's aspirations continue to evolve in the post-high school years. For some, degree attainment aspirations cool-out, others warm-up, and still others remain stagnant. They suggest that external influences like work experience, military service, involvement in the justice system, and family dynamics, not just what a student's experiences are when they first enter college, will as experience at their current college or university affect aspirations and degree completion.

Danielle who started at a four-year institution and transferred mid-semester talked about wanting to continue at a four-year college, but then contradicted herself, saying she was thinking about getting an associate degree so that she could work before returning to a university. While she says she still plans to get a bachelor's degree, she would follow a less linear path if she started working with an associate degree and then completed her studies as a part-time student. However, a baccalaureate degree remained her goal. Kevin was adamant that he would transfer and earn a baccalaureate degree, and Sasha who was planning to reverse transfer did not see changing schools to a community college to be an obstacle to her accomplishing her career goals. Of these three students, Kevin followed the most expected path, starting at a community college and intending to transfer to complete a four-year degree. Because Danielle and Sasha both first enrolled in four-year institutions, they do not fit the model where cooling out has been seen in the past.

Attending a college, *any college*, and maintaining their enrollment was what mattered to students in this study who had moved or planned to move between institutional types. Immediate entry into postsecondary education and continuing their college enrollment was seen by students as a part of their transition into college. Their progression is just that, a progression. One-time enrollment in a two-year or four-year institution does not appear to set students up to continue at a single institutional type or to lead them to change their educational goals substantively. Students did not seem to see changing institutions as a barrier to completing their college education, so although their paths may nonlinear, they still see themselves as being on a path toward attaining a degree and working toward their goals.

Community Cultural Wealth Themes

The two forms of capital as described in a CCW framework that were most commonly relied upon by participants in their transition from high school to college were informational capital and social capital. Informational capital and social capital are discussed in Chapter 4. While some evidence was found for the other forms of capital in some of the students' narratives, this was much sparser. Contrary to existing CCW studies with other (primarily Latina/o populations) some of the forms of capital were not strongly present (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Martinez, 2012; Yamamura, Martinez, & Saenz, 2010). None of the participant's narratives had all the forms of capital, and the two narratives that had the strongest evidence aligned with CCW belong to Cherish and Sasha. The earlier themes section in Chapter 4 focused on the themes that were common across the narratives, and because not all forms of capital were cross-

narrative themes, the remaining CCW forms of capital and the participant narratives that contained them are explored further here.

Aspirational Capital: Maintaining Hopes and Dreams Despite Barriers

Sasha, Cherish, and Danielle's interviews had the most frequent mentions of aspects of aspirational capital. While all students had college aspirations, aspirational capital as it is conceptualized in a CCW framework relates not just to aspirations, but to maintaining them despite real or perceived barriers (Yosso, 2005). Participants who talked about overcoming obstacles and maintaining their hopes and dreams for the future had responses that were coded as aspirational capital.

In Sasha's interview one place aspirational capital was shown through her discussion of the loss of her father, who died when she was young. She talked about how difficult it was to lose her father and how that has motivated her to work hard to help her mother and be a good role model for her younger brother. She also talked about her affinity for her neighborhood, the Third Ward, and how being from that neighborhood has been a reason why she works hard in school and in the jobs that she has held.

We [the Third Ward] have a lot of bad things also that happen, some things that I'm not proud of, but at the same time it makes me who I am. I know this is somewhere that I love. I wish I could stay here my entire life, but it also gives me that strive to do better and move somewhere else because I don't want to deal with some of the things. I don't want to leave New Orleans, but just move to a different neighborhood. Sasha has drawn upon her experiences in her neighborhood to push herself to achieve in school and successfully make it to college.

Cherish reported her grades falling her junior year of high school, a time when she also says she was anxious and depressed. She had changed her postsecondary aspirations during this time and planned to enlist in the Navy, even though she had intended on going to college from a young age. Her high school counselor convinced her to continue on a path to college. Cherish then moved to New Orleans where she was more successful academically, overcame her personal and academic challenges and not only got to college but was also secured a significant scholarship.

Danielle showed great facility in overcoming barriers. Leaving one university mid-semester and enrolling at a community college demonstrated her commitment to her educational goals. She said, "I had to leave, and this was the only school that accepted me in the middle of the semester. So it was better to come to a school besides no school." If other students found themselves in a similar situation, where they had to withdraw from their first-choice college unexpectedly, they could become discouraged. Danielle used what she knew about a local community college from her dual enrollment experience in high school to overcome a barrier to her education and continue her studies, albeit at a different college.

The barriers that students in this study faced and overcame became sources of internal motivation for them. Helping students to acknowledge their past struggles and looking to how they overcame them as sources of strength may be useful in assisting other students in their educational transitions. When students have already overcome barriers in their youth, they have learned skills and strategies that they can apply to future obstacles they may face in college and beyond college. Guiding students to recognize that they have accumulated aspirational capital, and that this is now something they can use in service to

themselves and to further their education goals, could help them to continue to overcome barriers. This grit (Holmes, 2014) is a noncognitive measure (Sedlacek, 2005) that could be considered in the college admissions process and is an aspect of student's lived experiences that could inform how programs support them in getting to and through college.

Linguistic Capital: Communicating in More Than One Language and/or Style

Sasha was the only student in this study that talked about communicating in more than one language or style. Because CCW evolved from Latina/o critical race theory (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005); the inclusion of linguistic capital may result from most of the early studies using CCW as a framework having participants who spoke Spanish at home and English in educational settings (Delgado Bernal, 2001). This author expected more participants to reference communicating in more than one style, but the data do not support the use of linguistic capital in the college transition process by the students in this study.

In talking about their racial/ethnic identity and their communities, participants where asked follow-up questions about culture and traditions. None of the participants speak a language other than English at home or in their daily lives. In addition to communicating in more than one language, communicating in more than one style can also refer to code-switching to a vernacular that is specific to a cultural community.

Sasha writes poetry and likes to "get it out on paper." This is a way she processes her feelings and communicates with others. She also identifies with song lyrics written by a female rapper from her neighborhood. Sasha also referenced "the way I talk." She thought that at Bayou State University, she would be judged for the way she talked, and was surprised how accepting other students were of her.

For students who do not speak more than one language, it may be helpful to probe how they communicate in more than one style. They may easily code-switch, but not recognize that they are doing it, or that there is a name for it, or that this is a skill that they can employ to succeed in various settings. The ability to communicate in more than one style could be especially helpful to students enrolled in institutions, such as PWIs, that were not created with communities of color in mind.

Familial Capital: Community History, Memory, and Cultural Intuition

Familial capital was infrequently supported in the narratives but was present in several stories. Like with aspirational capital, students made mention of their families and family support, but not in a way that is consistent with the CCW interpretation of familial capital or the related funds of knowledge theoretical framework. Existing literature focuses on how familial knowledges and ways of doing inform and influence young people as they enter educational institutions and encounter experiences that may contradict what they know from home (Carey, 2016; Moll, et al., 1992; Sáenz, García-Louis, Drake, & Guida, 2018). Students can draw on their familial capital to attain educational success while still maintaining their cultural identity.

More than just family support, familial capital refers to transmitting cultural knowledge and strategies across generations –this is what researchers who use a funds of knowledge approach examine in students’ educational experiences (Moll, et al, 1992). Families were influences in for the students in this study, but the students did not specifically draw on knowledge transmitted across generations to make their transition from high school to college. Several students who had family members who had attended college weren’t sure if their family members completed degrees or attended college but did

not attain a degree. What is missing is the discussion of family members experiences and the development of those experiences into funds of knowledge that are passed to other generations. Like CCW, funds of knowledge has been used as a theoretical approach primarily with Latina/o communities. The participants in this study who all identified as Black or African American do not appear to be developing and accessing familial capital and funds of knowledge in the same way that Latina/o students have, according to prior studies (Carey, 2016; Kiyama, 2011; Kiyama Rios-Aguilar, 2012).

Sasha referenced her family's involvement with a second line social club in her neighborhood and Maya talked about the influences of her grandmother, mother, and aunt. In Maya's case she also described her family as pro-Black and being involved with causes like Black Lives Matter. In Jonathan's case, his cousin Frank was a source of familial capital, from eighth grade on Frank took Jonathan "under his wing" and showed him "about life." These students had family members that taught them ways of knowing and doing, but these were not ways of knowing and doing that were related to success in school or college. Familial influences seemed to support student's in their individual identity development, but the participants in this study did not explicitly draw on familial capital to support their college choice and enrollment processes.

Navigational Capital: Maneuvering Through Social Institutions

Navigational capital refers to moving through social institutions that were designed without communities in color in mind, or where designed to specifically exclude people of color. This takes on increased significance in New Orleans, a city that is 59 percent African American (The Data Center, 2018) with a school district whose students are 93 percent African American (Babineau, Hand, & Rossmeier, 2017) and in which school desegregation

shutdown the city in the 1960s (Muller, 1976). Most of the participants made some mention of navigational capital, but it was only found multiple times in Cherish's story. When Cherish talked about why she chose to attend a PWI and not a HBCU, she was talking about using and developing navigational capital. She understood the purpose of HBCUs and expressly talked about how students of color were excluded from PWIs in the past through institutional policies. "I understand that HBCUs were created with the purpose when we couldn't, when we weren't welcome in institutions, but now that we are, I'm going to go to," she said.

Cherish also understood her positionality as a Black student at a PWI, and that she might face covert or overt racism as a college student.

That's what the HBCUs argues. They feel you have to work twice as hard to receive half as many opportunities that your White classmates get. I was like, well hey that's what I have to do then, just work twice as hard to get half of whatever they're getting.

For Cherish, navigating a PWI, though even it would be challenging, would be better preparation for life after college and working in a business environment that she thought would be unlikely to mirror the environment of a HBCU.

Participants for whom institutional type (HBCU or PWI) was an influence on their college choice, seemed to understand that they would need navigational capital should they choose to attend a PWI. For other students where institutional type was not influential, they may not recognize that they have had or will have the experience of navigating through institutions designed without communities of color in mind or were built to exclude them. Participants in this study attended K-12 schools where the overwhelming

majority of students were African American, and in a city where many neighborhoods are still racially segregated (The Data Center, 2018).

Resistant Capital: Oppositional Behavior that Challenges Inequality

Several participants' narratives included evidence of resistant capital. In Krystal's case she said that being referred to as an at-risk student made her want to work harder and encourage her friends to succeed in school. "It makes me want to work harder, and it makes me want to challenge my friends to like challenge each other so we can work harder, showing them different." Implicit in her comments are that being labeled at-risk as a student means there is something deficient about you, hence her desire to "show them different." Being successful in college and overcoming stereotypes in the process provided motivation, rather than anxiety or doubt that other students might have experienced.

Labeling also figured into Sasha's experience. She had previously been called "ghetto" and like Krystal used her academic achievement to show how that label was not accurate for her.

I really didn't care because if you put my transcript up to yours, you know, it doesn't matter. You put my resume up to yours, it doesn't matter. So, that never really got to me, but I mean I dealt with it.

For Sasha "being real" and talking the way she was comfortable, listening to rap, writing poetry, and succeeding academically all while attending a PWI as a Black student, were acts of resistance.

Cherish had a different relationship with the term at-risk, but in her discussion of that term she still showed resistance to inequality. She had a keen understanding of what

was happening in the current moment and how it was affecting the lives of young people of color.

I'm talking about, not the same level as, uh you. We are still at-risk of still going through systematic slavery. We're still at-risk of oppression. We're still at-risk of being poor. You know what I'm saying? We're still at-risk of going to jail. We're still at-risk of being killed when you get pulled over. We're at-risk.

Cherish also discussed wanting to drive social change and said that education, not just formal schooling, were keys to that. She talked about learning about Black history on her own because she didn't feel she was getting a complete understanding of it from what she was taught in schools. She talked about unequal pay for Black and White professionals with the same jobs, and how she had done research on inequitable pay outside of what she was learning in her classes.

Opposing inequality helped students to develop resistant capital and learn that they can self-advocate, and may have to, in educational and public spaces. The label of "at-risk" made the students in this study want to work harder in school and to succeed academically; to show through their actions that they could overcome risk, while still understanding that as young people of color there is risk for them on college campuses, in their communities, and in the world. Challenging deficit perspectives has been a guiding principal of this research and in the examples from the student narratives of resistance capital, the participants in this study show that facing and opposing inequality and negative labeling has made them culturally wealth in resistant capital. Endeavoring to prove stereotypes about low-income young people of color wrong was a motivating force for these students.

Spiritual Capital: Educational Journey Seen as a Collective Journey

In this study spiritual capital was conceptualized as an individual's educational journey being seen as part of a collective journey. Farmer-Hinton, et al. (2013) found that the participants in their study drew on sources of social capital derived from networks where network members had religious ties to one another. Not only did participants derive social capital from their religious communities, they had a sense that their educational achievements were a part of the whole community's experience. While a few participants in this study mentioned familial religious practices, they did not describe religious communities as a part of their college-going process. Students did not reference peer relationships or relationships with adults developed through a common community of belief, nor did they talk about their successes as supporting the goals and achievements of others in their faith community. This could be because of the definition of spiritual capital used in the study, or it could be because of the particular experiences of these participants. Rather than a general belief in a higher-power, the researcher was interested in organized religious communities and if students found sources of support of their college admission and enrollment process through such communities.

Implications for Theory

In the broader literature, CCW has been used almost exclusively with Latina/o populations (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012; Espino, 2014; Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Martinez, 2012; Yamamura, Martinez, & Saenz, 2010; Zell, 2014). Some more recent works since Yosso's seminal theoretical article in 2005 have used CCW with other populations including: linguistic minorities (Oropeza, Varhese, & Kanno, 2010), Black middle-class father/son pairings (Allen, 2013), middle and higher-income Black students in

a college preparatory program (Jayakumar, Vue, & Allen, 2013), African American students enrolled at an urban university (Holland, 2017), and Black female college athletes (Cooper, Porter, & Davis, 2017). This research continues the application of CCW as a framework to understand the stories of other historically marginalized people. Other researchers have articulated the problems associated with the cultural deficit perspective and advocated that a cultural wealth perspective be adopted (Freeman, 2006; Kiyama, 2011; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez 1992; Rodriguez, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Whiting, 2006; Yosso, 2005; 2006;). However, deficit assumptions seem to persist. If this author's research can influence other scholars to adopt new paradigmatic and theoretical perspectives, then there may be more opportunities for counterstories to be told. These counterstories are essential to changing the perceptions of educators and education leaders about whose culture has capital and which students' experiences are affirmed along the PK-16+ educational pipeline (Yosso, 2005; 2006).

Because all the participants in this study identified as Black or African American, this research adds to body of literature on CCW for non-Latina/o students. Most of the communities of color whose experiences have been studied using CCW were in the southwestern United States, using this theoretical framework with students from New Orleans also extends the context in which CCW has been applied. The students in this study also attended majority African American high schools and reside a majority African American city. Using CCW as a theoretical framework for communities of color situated in a larger context where people of color are the majority of the population in their location may continue to help evolve knowledge about how CCW is developed within communities of color and employed by young people of color in their educational experiences. However,

this study is a small qualitative study, so while findings cannot be applied widely, the more studies that apply CCW to new populations and locations the more applications of CCW can be extended.

Implications for Practice

College mentoring programs are often believed to be beneficial to mentees, and mentors commonly have altruistic motives for participating in the programs, but a common weakness of many mentoring programs is the lack of careful evaluation and understanding of the experiences of the mentees (Holt, Bry & Johnson, 2008). This study constructed narrative counterstories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Chase, 2005; Yosso, 2006) to understand the transition from high school to college for low-income Black/African American students in New Orleans and to more clearly identify the forms of cultural wealth that students have used to successfully enroll in a college or university.

Participants evaluated their experience in a college access program, the College Admissions Project (CAP), and put their formal college-access activities into context. CAP guides (mentors) were not uniformly helpful to students. The level of involvement of the guides varied and students did not always build rapport with their guides. CAP uses immediate enrollment in college after high school as its measure of success and does not ask students about the quality of their experience with their guide. Guides are asked to report how frequently they meet with their student mentee, but not about what those interactions are like. Students are not even asked to report the frequency of their interactions with their CAP guide. If both students and guides were asked about their experiences within the mentor/mentee relationship, more could be learned about how to make these relationships more beneficial to students and thereby making CAP more

effective. Some students in this study successfully enrolled in college without having a meaningful relationship with their CAP guide or a strong connection to the program. Using student enrollment in college as a measure of success does not adequately evaluate CAP as a program.

CAP is based on a one-to-one mentoring model where each student is matched with a guide. The program does not include peer relationships but given the positive influence of peers for the students in this study, CAP mentees might benefit from a group mentoring model with two or more students assigned to the same guide or having two mentoring dyads (student/guide) work together in groups of four. As Marciano (2017) found, peer influences as a part of social capital are especially important to students, but in CAP, there was no opportunity to draw upon positive peer influences. The program is structured with a one-to-one match between mentor and mentee, excluding peers from the process unless students sought out information from peers on their own, as some participants in this study did.

Informational capital was important for successful transitions from high school to college but was not most frequently developed through interactions with CAP. It was more frequently developed through school resources such as college counselors, college fairs, and campus tours organized by the school. If CAP program activities could be more integrated with the college readiness activities happening at the school site, CAP might become better source of informational capital for students. CAP guides are meant to provide individual supports that a college counselor managing an entire class of twelfth-graders can't, but based on the experiences of the students, CAP is operating more as an interloper in the school than as a partner supplementing what is already happening. Liou,

Antrop-González, & Cooper (2009) found that access to high-stakes college information facilitated successful college enrollment, and the students in this study relied on informational capital frequently. Students obtained information through their school, formal programs, their peers, and their families; and CAP and programs like it could do more to help students access all the sources of high-stakes information available to them.

Implications for Policy

Implications for program policies for CAP and similar programs include serving the highest-risk students, rather than screening for students with a predisposition toward college attendance already, including peers in the program, and empowering students to evaluate their program experiences. Locally in New Orleans, because high school choice was important to students' access to college knowledge/informational capital, policies that affect the high school application and student selection process should also be considered. Students and their families in New Orleans apply to high schools through a city-wide system. They rank their school choices and later find out into which high school they can enroll. There are deadlines that families need to meet to be more likely to have a seat for their student in a school they have ranked highly. It does not appear that students and their families are engaging in a college choice-like process when selecting high schools. Yet, the school setting and supports available at the school site were identified by participants as important to their college application, selection, and enrollment experiences. Getting more low-income Black and African American students into high schools that have the resources to help students develop their college knowledge could yield more student success stories.

All the students in this study successfully navigated the college enrollment process, as success is defined within this study. However, some participants were not well informed

about the costs of college or equally knowledgeable about institutional types and how the kind of college they attend may influence this experience. For institutions of higher education, this means that policies still need to be more inclusive or at least more explicit. Colleges and universities could work more closely with high schools to help students understand not only the college admissions and enrollment processes, but also the costs of college and nuances of financial aid offers. PWIs and HBCUs should consider students' perceptions of their institutions in their equity work and in their admissions work. Some students appear to limit their choice set based on institutional type, and while they may continue to do so, PWIs and HBCUs could do more to talk to students about the experiences of people of color on their campuses. This would help students to have a full range of institutions to select from as they decide where to apply and enroll.

At the state level, merit scholarship policies could be reconsidered. Academically capable students in terms of GPA, many not qualify for Louisiana's popular merit scholarship program because of their standardized test scores. Just as Sedlacek (2005) has called for a more holistic review of admissions applications, perhaps there could be award by exception where student's experiences that have helped them to build aspirational, navigational, and resistant capital are considered.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that it stops with student enrollment in college. Some students were able to discuss their early college experiences in their first semester or looking back on their first year of college, but students were not followed to *and through* college. There is increasing pressure on college access programs and higher education institutions to not only help students get to college, but to help them persist through

college (Wolniak, Flores, & Kemple, 2016). This study looked at student experiences in the process of choosing and enrolling in an institution of higher education in the period immediately following high school graduation. The study was designed to be time-bound, and the author acknowledges that this limits the study and its findings to that specific time in students' educational experiences.

Other limitations are present through the process used to select participants. The nature of the College Admissions Project (CAP), which was used to identify participants, does not ensure that the most at-risk students were included. Students self-select to participate in CAP or are referred to the program by school counselors. As such, the students most in need of programmatic interventions to help them get to college are not necessarily served by this particular program. Students who are not attending school regularly or are working to help support their families and do not have time to be involved with a program like CAP, which requires students to make time outside of the school day to participate, would not have been included in this study. Another limitation related to participant selection is that all of the students who were eligible to be included in the study identified as African American or Black. Although the author conceptualized the study as one that would look at the experiences of students of color more broadly, participant interest, availability, and eligibility, narrowed the focus of the study to low-income African American or Black students in New Orleans.

The way CCW was applied as a theoretical framework also creates some limitations for this study. While CCW can be used as a theoretical framework with varied communities, the author is linking her use of it to college-going behaviors of a selected population of students. The author acknowledges that by contextualizing her research so specifically,

there is potential that its applicability to other populations may be limited. Narrative research is particularly specific, and for this study, it is the particulars in which the researcher is most interested. CCW as a theoretical framework seems to have some utility in understanding the transition from high school to college for students in this study, but there was not strong evidence that all participants used all forms of capital in their transition process.

Recommendations for Future Research

For education researchers with New Orleans or other choice-intensive districts as their context, research that examines student experiences in high school or from high school to college should investigate further not only the college choice process, but the high school choice process for students of color attending public charter schools. This requires working across traditional boundaries and using a PK-16+ orientation or thinking from cradle to career. Practitioners and researchers have been talking about the PK-16+ spectrum for many years now, but PK-12 and higher education sectors are not as connected as they could be.

Because social and informational capital were most important for the students in this study and because these forms of capital seem to be tied to the student's high school, further investigation of how high school choice influences college readiness and college enrollment is warranted. The revised theoretical framework developed here which includes high school choice and peer influences may be a starting point for further investigations. CCW was not as influential as the author expected it to be, so it may be useful as a critical theoretical framework, but its influence on the high school to college transition process was not equal across students' narratives.

A critical race framework of some type should be used in future research as through the restorying process it emerged that participants' racial identity development influenced their college admissions process as it relates to choosing a PWI or a HBCU. Scottham, Cooke, Sellers, and Ford (2010) studied the racial identity development of first-year African American college students and included in their recommendations for further research was exploring identity status with pre-college students. Participants in this study were interviewed during or after their first year of college, so while this research did not explore the racial identity development of Black students earlier in adolescence, a study that looks at student college choice while the students are going through the choice process in grade twelve, or even late in grade eleven, could contribute to research in this area.

Conclusion

This chapter has further discussed the findings of this narrative study while connecting them back to the theoretical framework and research literature. The theoretical framework was revisited and revised, as the one proposed in Chapter 2 did not adequately illustrate the experiences of Black/African American students from low-income families in New Orleans during their transition from high school to college. Two revised frameworks that reflect the data are offered to help explain the experiences of low-income Black/African American collegians from New Orleans using CCW as the guiding theory. The model of college choice for students in this study is not linear, but instead takes shape as a web of support that includes peer influences and high school experiences. Imbedded in the transition process from high school to college for participants in this study are social capital and informational capital as conceptualized in the theory of CCW. However, as the transition process happens through time, a sequential model is also provided. Implications

for theory, policy, and practice were discussed as were limitations and recommendations for future research.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. How would you introduce yourself?
2. How do you feel now that you are in college?
 - a. How are classes?
 - b. Are you working?
 - c. Are you involved in any campus activities?
 - d. Are you involved in any community activities?
3. Describe your family. Who lives in your household?
 - a. Are there other important family members who DON'T live in your household?
 - b. Can you tell me about any traditions your family has?
 - c. Does your family identify with a cultural group?
 - i. How would you describe your family's culture?
 - ii. What kind of cultural activities or traditions does your family participate in?
4. Describe your community?
 - a. Where is your community?
 - b. Who is a part of your community?
 - c. What about your friends?
 - i. Are you friends a part of your community?
 - ii. How would you describe your friend group?
5. When do you first remember wanting to go to college? What made you want to go to college?
6. Why did you apply to be a part of the College Admissions Project (CAP)?
 - a. Was there someone who influenced you to want to attend college?
 - b. Was there someone who encouraged you to be a part of CAP?
7. Tell me about your experiences with your CAP guide.
 - a. How often did you meet with your guide?
 - b. What did you do with your guide?
8. Describe your process of applying to college(s).
 - a. Who helped you apply to college?
 - b. What colleges did you apply to and why?
9. What were your feelings when you were accepted?
10. How did you make your decision about where to attend college?
 - a. Who helped you?
11. Was there ever a time when you weren't sure if you'd get to college?

12. What happened in the summer between high school graduation and the start of college?
 - a. What were you doing during this time?
 - b. Did you ever worry during this time about actually starting your first day of college?
 - c. Who were you spending time with during this time?
13. Describe your enrollment experiences.
 - a. Did you attend orientation?
 - b. Who helped you register for classes?
14. What was your first day of college like?
15. Are you still in college now?
 - a. Why are you/are you not in college now?
16. What are you most looking forward to in the coming year? (whether in college or not)
 - a. What are you most anxious or concerned about for the coming year?
17. If you went back to your high school to talk to the freshmen about preparing for college, what would you tell them?

APPENDIX C: IRB Approval

**University Committee for the Protection
of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans**

Campus Correspondence

Principal Investigator: Brian R. Beabout

Co-Investigator: Lindsey Jakiel

Date: August 17, 2016

Protocol Title: Exploring the Community Cultural Wealth of Low-Income Collegians of Color in their Transition from High School to College

IRB#: 06Aug16

The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures described in this protocol application are exempt from federal regulations under 45 CFR 46.101 category 2, due to the fact that any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Exempt protocols do not have an expiration date; however, if there are any changes made to this protocol that may cause it to be no longer exempt from CFR 46, the IRB requires another standard application from the investigator(s) which should provide the same information that is in this application with changes that may have changed the exempt status.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

Best wishes on your project.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Laird, Ph.D., Chair
UNO Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

APPENDIX D: Approval by College Admissions Project



To Whom It May Concern:

The Young Leadership Council (YLC) as the parent organization of the College Admissions Project (CAP) gives permission for Ms. Lindsey B. Jakiel Diulus to access CAP program records of program alumni for her doctoral dissertation study at the University of New Orleans.

CAP participants indicate on their initial application to the program if the YLC may follow a students' "success once enrolled in college." Ms. Jakiel Diulus will only access college enrollment information of students who have indicated that their educational progress can be tracked.

YLC maintains a subscription to the National Student Clearinghouse's *StudentTracker for Outreach*. Ms. Jakiel Diulus is permitted to access YLC's subscription and to run queries on CAP alumni who have agreed to be tracked.

It is our understanding that Ms. Jakiel Diulus will provide an appropriate participant recruitment message and an informed consent form to any CAP alumni who are prospective participants in her study as a part of the University of New Orleans' research guidelines. She may use CAP data from the National Student Clearinghouse in order to identify and contact these prospective participants.

We fully support Ms. Jakiel Diulus' dissertation research project. She has permission to use the name College Admissions Project in her study and to access the program alumni information as described above.

On Behalf of the Young Leadership Council,

Candace Weber
YLC Membership & Programming Coordinator

T. Semmes Walmsley
2015 President of the YLC Board of Directors

T. Semmes Walmsley
President

Calais Hurst Waring
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Michael A. Harowski, Esq.
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Jermaine L. Smith

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C. Garlan White

Jack Wiles, CPA

APPENDIX E: Researcher Reflexive Journal Prompts

1. How do I feel about working with individuals or groups that are different from me? What stereotypes, biases and fears do I hold of other groups? How do these views affect my work, including research questions, hypotheses, literature review, instrument development or selection, data interpretation, and data use?
2. What aspects of my research skills and strategies might hinder building rapport with diverse participants and data collection procedures?
3. How are the expectations that I hold of diverse individuals/groups different from those of White individuals/groups?
4. How much time and effort am I willing to devote or have I devoted to studying and learning about acculturation/assimilation, within group differences versus between group differences, biculturalism, monoculturalism, and transculturalism?
5. How much time and effort am I willing to devote to learning about alternative theories and models associated with diverse groups (e.g., their views about intelligence, giftedness, achievement, and creativity? their childrearing practices? their views about education?)
6. Am I willing to change, to adapt and add to my ways of thinking about those who are different from me?
7. When presented with data, will I change my thinking and behavior?
8. What is “race/culture” and how does it affect teaching and learning, self-concept, and racial identity (and the construct under investigation)?
9. Where can I go and who can I turn to for more information and resources on diverse cultures?
10. What are the cultural beliefs, values, norms and traditions of the diverse participants represented in my sample? What cultural beliefs, values, norms, and traditions of the diverse participants are not represented in my sample?
11. What data collection strategies/procedures are culturally compatible with and to the participants in the study? (e.g., Do participants feel more comfortable with surveys or interviews? Do they prefer telephone calls or face-to-face meetings? Would participants prefer to be interviewed at their home or at a
12. How comfortable am I when working with diverse groups? Am I comfortable going into their homes and community to collect data?

Vita

The author was born in Buffalo, New York. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in Speech Communication and Canadian Studies from the State University of New York College at Plattsburgh in 2005. In 2010, she earned a Master's in Higher Education Administration from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She joined the University of New Orleans education graduate program to pursue a Ph.D. in Educational Administration in 2010.