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**CULTURAL CAPITAL, HABITUS, COLLEGE PERSISTENCE AND GRADUATION
AMONG BLACK IMMIGRANT-ORIGIN UNDERGRADUATES: A BASIC
INTERPRETIVE QUALITATIVE STUDY**

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL CAPITAL, HABITUS, COLLEGE PERSISTENCE AND GRADUATION AMONG BLACK IMMIGRANT-ORIGIN UNDERGRADUATES: A BASIC INTERPRETIVE QUALITATIVE STUDY

Erica M. Richards Chew
Old Dominion University, 2020
Director: Dr. Christopher Glass

Black immigrant-origin students are a significant sub-population of the total Black college student population, and they are persisting and graduating more frequently than Black U.S.-origin students. This study explored cultural capital and habitus and how they shaped the college persistence and graduation of Black immigrant-origin undergraduates and alumni from four-year postsecondary institutions. A basic interpretive qualitative design, guided by cultural capital theory, was used to explore thirteen Black-immigrant-origin students' and graduates' perspectives in-depth; and to describe their subjective meanings, actions, and social contexts from their point of view. Participants grew up with a habitus of achievement that came from the family wanting to attain the American Dream as well as racialized experiences they experienced in the United States. This habitus motivated participants to achieve. That same habitus got them into college also got them through college. They had to persist and graduate because they wanted to be able to give back to their families and communities; they wanted to prove their greatness to others; and because time, money, and resources were dedicated to their completion of college.

There were several steps the participants' took to prepare for entering college and graduating. In their early years, participants attained cultural capital in the form of English as their primary language, and from the support of people in their churches who served as cultural

resources. Some of the participants' parents and older siblings had college educations, which exposed them to the rigors and requirements of college. Many of the participants were enrolled in academically rigorous college preparatory or high-performing high schools. In those schools, most participants were scholastically prepared for the rigors of college, given opportunities to gain college credit via AP and College Now courses, and went on college tours. Participants found high school friends who had similar cultural backgrounds and academic goals and supportive teachers and counselors. Furthermore, some participants were able to gain cultural capital from people or programs in their community and pre-college programs. In college, participants attained cultural capital through nurturing professors and academic support offices, participating in co-curricular activities and culturally-related clubs, and resourceful friends or acquaintances.

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This thesis is dedicated to my village! I LOVE YOU!
I cannot thank you enough for all you have done for me.

To my husband, Rasul, thank you for your love, backrubs, shoulder, listening, and all the extra time you had to spend with LX. Tag, it's your turn.

To my mom, Ursula, thank you for your prayers, your love, and trying to help me find participants. A special thank you for your help with LX.

To my son, Langston, thank you for your patience and hugs. You do not understand now why mommy was so busy, but you will in the future.

To my family, friends, and sorors, thank you for your prayers, giving me a shoulder to cry on and listening to my vents. I appreciate you. Thank you.

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To my participants thank you for your stories. Without you I could not have completed this dissertation. Your stories of persistence made me want to persist. I wanted to persist so that I could share your stories.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago, in a State of the Organization address to students and alumni of the Jackie Robinson Foundation (JRF), the President and CEO, Della Britton Baeza, mentioned that the demographics of the students served had been changing because immigrant-origin high school seniors were increasingly applying for and being offered the JRF scholarship. The Jackie Robinson Foundation offers a national four-year higher education scholarship and leadership development program for students of color. Rachel Robinson, Jackie Robinson's wife, founded this highly competitive program in order to help students of color receive much needed financial support, as well as social and pre-professional support to increase their graduation rates. Ms. Baeza's statement prompted this researcher, a JRF alumna, who is a second-generation immigrant herself, to wonder what was happening and why this was even an issue. This study is an attempt to uncover some of the reasons why there is a disparity in college persistence and graduation rates between Black undergraduate students of immigrant-origin and those of U.S. - origin.

In 1965, the Hart-Cellar Act (also known as the Immigration and Nationality Act) P.L. 88-236, 79 Stat. 911 removed restrictions on immigration based on national origin. Prior to 1965, a quota system favoring European immigrants was in place. However, since 1965, immigration has steadily increased over the years, and the immigrant population has become increasingly diverse (Awokoya, 2012; Kim & Diaz, 2013; Bennett and Lutz, 2009). In 2012, there were over 40.7 million foreign-born individuals residing in the United States, accounting for about 13% of the total United States (U.S.) population (Brown & Patten, 2014). That represented a 30.9% increase in foreign-born immigrants from 2000-12 (Brown & Patten, 2014). It is estimated that

approximately 1.5 million new immigrants arrive each year (Kim & Diaz, 2013). It is further estimated that one-fifth of all college students are either first (born abroad)- or second-generation (has at least one parent who was born abroad) immigrants (Kim & Diaz, 2013).

Success in higher education serves as a means by which immigrants integrate into American society and the broader knowledge economy, with the intention of improving their economic well-being (Kim & Diaz, 2013; Stebleton, 2011). However, there is limited research on the experiences and outcomes of immigrants attending higher education institutions in the US. Oftentimes, the experiences of immigrant college students are often collapsed with international students or native students depending on their immigrant generation and their perceived racial backgrounds (Stebleton, 2011; Stebleton, Huesman, & Kuzbhekova, 2010; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002). However, immigrant-origin college students often have different outcomes in comparison to U.S.-origin students (Chiswick & Debburman, 2004; Erisman & Looney, 2007; Hagy & Staniec, 2002; Kao & Thompson, 2003).

The majority of the immigrants entering the United States presently emigrate from Latin American and Asian countries (Kim & Diaz, 2013) and thus it is understandable that among the limited research that does exist about the college experiences and outcomes of immigrant students the focus tends to be on college students from those countries. However, there are students who emigrate from many other countries as well, who should be included in the literature. In fact, according to 2000 Census data, Afro-Caribbean students in the United States total over 1.5 million, more abundant in number than other, more visible, national groups such as Cubans and Koreans (Logan & Deane, 2003). In 2012, there were more than 3 million Black immigrants in the U.S., making up approximately 8.5% of the foreign-born population (Brown & Patten, 2014). Most of the growth of the Black population in the US has been due to Black

immigrants, whose number has nearly tripled since 1980, constituting approximately 8.7% of the Black population in America. In some cities in America Black immigrants comprise an even larger share of the Black population. For example, immigrant Blacks are 34% of Miami Blacks, 28% of the Black population of New York City, and 15% of Blacks living in Washington, D.C. Among Black immigrants, approximately half are from the Caribbean, 36% from Africa, 5% from South America, 4% from Central America, 2% from Europe and 1% from Asia. The Black African population has grown the fastest. Between 2000 and 2013 the number of Black Africans rose 137% (Anderson, 2015).

Immigrants enroll in higher education at a higher rate than persons of U.S.-origin. Black immigrants who are 25 and older, are more likely than their U.S.-origin Black counterparts to have at least a bachelor's degree (Anderson, 2015). Black immigrant-origin college students, in comparison to native Blacks, are overrepresented in higher education, particularly at selective and highly selective institutions (Massey, Mooney, Torres, & Charles, 2007), and at private, two-year vocational/technical colleges (Hagy and Staniec, 2002). Africans, in particular, are the most educated immigrant group in America, having the highest number of advanced degrees among any ethnic group besides Indian (Edmondson, 2006; Le, 2015). Le (2015) states that 43.8% of African immigrants have earned a bachelor's degree, exceeding 42.5% of Asian and Pacific students (first and second generation) who have earned bachelor degrees. Additionally, African immigrants earned 8.2% of all master's degrees awarded, while only 6.8% of Asian and Pacific Asian students earned a graduate degree.

Children of immigrants are unique from other U.S.-born individuals and their immigrant parents (Chiswick & Debburman, 2004). They are caught between two worlds, that of their parents' home country and that of the new country in which they were born (Aparicio and

Tornos, 2017; Asante, 2012; Zhou and Bankston, 1998). Waters (1994) shared that second-generation Black immigrants tend to adopt one of three identities: Black American, ethnic, or national-origin identity (i.e., West Indian or Jamaican), or immigrant identity. The identity they choose impacts their concept of racism in America and has implications for how they operate in the world. Furthermore, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that second-generation minority immigrants who adopt an immigrant identity tend to do better academically and achieve higher levels of education than those who adopt the other identities. Yet, regardless of the identity they adopt, second-generation Blacks are more likely than first-generation Blacks to attain high levels of education (Baum & Flores, 2011). Bennett and Lutz (2009) found that 75.1% of all children of Black immigrant families were enrolled in college, which is higher than the rate for White Americans and far ahead of the college enrollment rate of U.S.-origin Blacks.

Black immigrant-origin students are also more likely to persist in college than U.S.-origin students (Jenkins, Harburg, Weissberg, & Donnelly, 2004; Tauriac & Liem, 2012). Many researchers have found no significant differences in socioeconomic status (SES) between immigrant-origin and U.S.-origin Blacks (Adams-Mahaley, 2012; Bennett & Lutz, 2009; Massey et al., 2007; Tauriac & Liem, 2012). Some researchers have found noticeable differences between groups in household composition, as Black immigrant-origin students are more likely to come from a two-parent household than U.S.-origin Blacks (Adams-Mahaley, 2012; Massey et al., 2007); but it is yet to be determined whether that difference contributes to the difference in persistence. In Tauriac and Liem's study (2012), high school grade point average (HS GPA) was significantly higher for immigrant-origin Blacks students and was the only correlate of college persistence for that group. This finding was supported by Nazon (2010), who similarly found that HS GPA was the strongest predictor of college completion among immigrant students who

participated in the Search Education Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) educational opportunity programs. While in college, Black immigrant-origin and U.S.-origin Blacks have been found to achieve at the same rate academically; research has found no significant differences in college grade point average (GPA) (Jenkins et al., 2004; Massey et al., 2007), although college GPA predicted persistence for both groups (Jenkins et al., 2004).

Purpose of Study and Guided Questions

The purpose of this basic interpretive study was to explore cultural capital and habitus and how they shape the college persistence and graduation of Black immigrant-origin students attending or graduated from 4-year institutions. The primary research questions that will guide this study are:

RQ1: How do Black students of immigrant-origin demonstrate cultural capital and habitus?

RQ2: What role does cultural capital and habitus play in college persistence and graduation for these students?

Definition of Terms

This study uses the following terms and definitions:

- *Graduation* is the completion of a degree from an accredited higher education institution.
- *Persistence* is consistent enrollment and progress towards graduation.
- *Black* is a racial category that encompasses all individuals who are from the continent of Africa and of the African Diaspora. It includes anyone who identifies as such throughout the world.
- *Black American* or *African American* is an ethnic classification for U.S.-born Black people who have been in America for more than two generations.

- *Immigrant* is someone who is foreign-born and lives or intends to live permanently in the US (Erisman & Looney, 2007; Kim and Diaz, 2013).
- *Immigrant-origin* includes individuals who were born abroad and moved to the US with the intention of living permanently in the U.S, and individuals who are born in the US to at least one parent who was born abroad (Tauriac & Liem, 2012).
- *U.S.-origin* or *natives* refer to US born citizens (includes Puerto Rico, U.S Virgin Islands, and Guam) who have lineage in the U.S for more than one generation.
- *Eligible non-U.S. citizens* are foreign-born individuals who have been granted the right to live permanently in the US It includes legal permanent residents (green card holders), US nationals (those born in American Samoa or Swains Island), refugees, and asylees (Federal Student Aid, n.d.).
- *First-generation immigrant* is someone who was born abroad, immigrated to the US sometime after birth, and either currently lives or intends to live permanently in the US. It includes naturalized citizens, undocumented immigrants, and eligible non-U.S. citizens.
- *Second-generation immigrant* is someone who is US born to a least one parent who is foreign-born (Kim & Diaz, 2013).
- *Third-plus-generation* are those who are US born with two US born parents. They are not considered immigrants (Stebbleton, 2011).
- *International student* is a student who is in the US temporarily for the purposes of education. They hold a student visa to enroll for credit at a higher education institution.
- *Voluntary minority* are those individuals who have purposefully moved to the United States, most likely in search of better opportunities and/ political or religious freedom (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

- *Involuntary minority* are those who have been forced to be included in the American population against their will through enslavement, colonialism, or conquest (for example, African Americans and Native Americans) (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).
- *Cultural capital* refers to culturally based resources that come in the form of acquired knowledge, skills, behaviors, and inherited cultural competencies that provide signals to individuals, sometimes unconsciously, as to how one behaves in a social setting (Winkle-Wagner, 2010).
- *Habitus* is the manifestation of embodied cultural capital. It signifies the predisposition or beliefs of a group that guides an individual's actions, attitudes, and preferences and helps the individual demonstrate his or her membership in a social group.
- *Social reproduction* is the perpetuation of class status over multiple generations. In Bourdieu's larger theory of social reproduction, social reproduction provides an explanation for society's social inequalities. Cultural capital and habitus, among other things, contribute to social reproduction and help maintain social inequality (J. B. Berger, 2000; Bourdieu, 2000).

Significance of the Study

There is limited research related to the experiences of immigrant students, a rapidly increasing population on college campuses (Kim & Diaz, 2013). Additionally, to date, most research conducted in this area is focused on either comparing across racial groups or on the experiences of students of Latino/Hispanic or Asian immigrant backgrounds. However, the rising proportion of the Black population in the United States is due to the influx of immigrants. This study explores the issue of the persistence of Black students, noting, that while both Black immigrant-origin students and Black U.S.-origin students "perform roughly at the same academic

level, earning comparable grades and displaying a similar performance gap relative to whites" (Massey et al., 2007), Black immigrant-origin students persist more frequently. Since a large percentage of the research about Black immigrant-origin students was conducted at highly selective institutions, even though many are also adult learners (Erisman & Looney, 2007), this research will include the experiences of those students who attend a variety of institutions.

Delimitations

The population of interest was Black undergraduates and recent alumni of immigrant-origin, who attended or graduated from four-year higher education institutions in the New York City metropolitan area. International students were not included in the sample because they, at least initially, have no intention of permanent residency in the United States, thus their temporary status makes their experiences in America somewhat different from immigrant-origin students (Hazen & Alberts, 2006; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Soria & Stebleton, 2011).

Summary

There is an increasing influx of immigrants attending US colleges and universities. However, there is little research about their experiences in college. Black immigrant-origin students, in particular, are a significant sub-population of the total Black college student population; and they are persisting and graduating more frequently than Black U.S.-origin students persist and graduate. This study intends to understand whether cultural capital and habitus influences Black immigrant-origin students' persistence and graduation.

The rest of the dissertation consists of four chapters. In Chapter II, a literature review of the previous studies examining the differences in the persistence of Black immigrant-origin and U.S.-origin students are presented, concluding with an introduction to the theoretical framework and a discussion of how the theoretical framework will be applied to this research. Chapter III

describes the methodology of this study, data sources, samples, instrumentation, and proposed data analysis. Chapter IV shares the findings collected from interviews with the participants. Chapter V discusses how the findings contribute to the body of research around the persistence of Black immigrant-origin students and provides suggestions for practice and research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Black Undergraduates in Higher Education

Over the last few decades, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Black students enrolled in higher education in the United States. From 1976 to 2013, the percentage of Black undergraduates increased from 10 percent to 14 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014b). In 2013, 2.9 million Blacks were enrolled as undergraduates, with 70% attending public institutions, 14% at non-profit private institutions, and 16% attending for-profits (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014a). Black students tend to be underrepresented at highly selective institutions (Reardon, Baker, & Klasik, 2012), and highly concentrated at community colleges (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014a). In 2013, 8.4% of Black students were enrolled at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Despite these strides, for many Black students, retention and graduation rates tell a different story. Black students are less likely than White students to graduate within six years at four-year institutions (Smith, 2004). At predominantly White institutions (PWI), Black students continue to encounter many challenges. They often face negative experiences, such as racism and feelings of underrepresentation and isolation (Allen, 1992; Flemings, 1984; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999). A qualitative study conducted by Morales (2014) found that Black students often experience racial micro-aggressions, which vary depending on their gender and class. They were often viewed by their non-Black peers as coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds, hypersexual, purveyors of hip-hop culture, aggressive or intimidating, despite their personal realities. Micro-aggressions were sometimes evoked by faculty and staff as well, which made students feel invisible and gain self-doubt (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Living with

these stereotypes has been shown to profoundly affect their academic performance and retention (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2012; Steele, 1997). Thus, Black students at PWIs have suffered lower academic achievement and higher attrition than White students at these institutions (Allen, 1992; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010).

Although many fewer Black students attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) than those who attend PWIs, they tend to fare better because the HBCU environment is deemed to be more positive and supportive of Black students than that found at PWIs (Allen, 1992; Chen, Ingram, & Davis, 2014; Flemings, 1984). Black students tend to be more satisfied with their college experience (Allen, 1992; Flemings, 1984), have higher levels of engagement (Nelson Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, Williams, and Holmes, 2007), and have more academic and social gains at HBCUs than they do at PWIs (Bohr, Pascarella, Nora, & Terenzini, 1995; Collins, Davis, & Hilton, 2013; DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Flowers, 2002). HBCUs also graduate more students who go on to receive graduate and professional degrees, especially in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields (Joseph, 2013; Redd, 2000; Solorzano, 1995).

Immigrant-origin Blacks in Higher Education

The Black race is not as monolithic as the literature would have many people believe.

Sanchez (2013) argues:

[T]he conflation of race and ethnicity contributes to the monolithic ethnic groupings of all Blacks as African American with assumed broad homogenous cultures and backgrounds despite the fact that some are born in different countries (e.g., Trinidad, Jamaica, or other countries in the Caribbean and Africa) or come from families who migrated to the United States (p. 115).

Black immigrants' sociocultural contexts include diverse cultural, national, religious, and linguistic origins. According to the Pew Research Center (Anderson, 2015), Black immigrants emigrate from the Caribbean (50%), Africa (36%), South America (5%), Central America (4%),

Europe (2%) and East Asia (1%). The top three largest sources of Black immigrants are Jamaica, Haiti, and Nigeria. The majority of Black immigrants come from English speaking countries, so about 74% are proficient English speakers. Other languages spoken include French/Haitian Creole (14%), Spanish (11%), Kru (7%), and French (6%).

In 1965, the Hart-Cellar Act removed restrictions on immigration based on national origin. Since then, immigration has steadily increased over the years (Bennett & Lutz, 2009). In 2012, over 40 million foreign-born individuals resided in the United States, which was about 13% of the population, and that number continues to grow (Brown & Patten, 2014). It is approximated that one-fifth of all college students are either first- or second-generation immigrants (Kim & Diaz, 2013). The experiences of immigrant college students are often collapsed with international students or native students depending upon their generation and their perceived racial backgrounds (Stebbleton et al., 2010; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002).

When the population of Black college students is disaggregated, about 13% of Blacks aged 18-19 are first- or second-generation immigrants (primarily from the Caribbean and Africa) (Massey et al., 2007). Black immigrant college students, in comparison to native Blacks, are overrepresented in higher education (Massey et al., 2007). In a study conducted in 2009, Bennett & Lutz (2009) found that 75.1% of all children in Black immigrant families were enrolled in college. This is higher than the rate for White Americans and far ahead of the college enrollment rate of U.S.-origin Blacks.

In general, research has shown that immigrants are more likely to start in community colleges (Conway, 2010). But according to Massey et al., 2007, Black immigrants are more likely to enroll in selective colleges and universities (9.2%) than White (7.3%) or U.S.-born Black Americans (2.4%). Africans, in particular, are among the most educated immigrant group

in America, having the highest number of advanced degrees among any ethnic group besides Indian (Edmondson, 2006; Le, 2015). Le (2015) states that 43.8% of African immigrants and 42.5% of Asian and Pacific students (first- and second-generation) have attained bachelor's degrees. Additionally, African immigrants earned 8.2% of master's degrees awarded, while only 6.8% of Asian and Pacific Asian students earned a graduate degree. In several studies comparing the persistence of immigrants to U.S.-origin students, researchers have found that Black immigrants persist longer than Black U.S.-origin students (Conway, 2009; Jenkins et al., 2004; Tauriac & Liem, 2012).

Black and Immigrant Student Persistence

The following section reviews the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have been used to examine within-group differences between Black students and factors that support their persistence and graduation.

Tinto's Model of Student Integration

A prevalent persistence model that has been used to examine the persistence of this population is Vincent Tinto's (Tinto, 1975, 1986, 1993) Model of Student Integration. It is the most widely used model of persistence (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Tauriac & Liem, 2012). However, it is not free of criticism, particularly with regard to its applicability to Black students and other students of color (Guiffrida, 2005; Tierney, 1999).

Tinto's model is loosely based on Durkheim's suicide model and van Gennep's anthropological model of cultural rites of passage. It proposes that a student's departure is a result of a lack of or negative integration of the student into the institution. Students are individuals who have various individual characteristics, such as social status, skills, race, ethnicity, and gender, which, individually and in various combinations, influence a student's

level of commitment to the institution and their personal goals related to graduation. The degree to which a student breaks ties from their family and home communities, or, according to Tierney (1999), commits cultural suicide and assimilates into the institution, through both academic integration and social integration, determines whether the student chooses to leave an institution (Kuh et al., 2006).

Social integration represents the extent to which a student finds the institution to be welcoming, and if he or she "fits" within the institution. This occurs in many ways, including, but not limited to, involvement in clubs, positive experiences with support services, and mentors, and faculty-student interactions. Academic integration represents the extent to which a student is satisfied with his or her academic progress and choice of major, through doing such things as earning passing grades, identifying with academic norms and values, and identifying with the role of a student.

Tauriac and Liem's (2012) longitudinal study, compared the academic outcomes and persistence, after two years, of Black U.S.-origin students to Black immigrant-origin students. The researchers conducted a path analysis using Tinto's 1993 model of persistence to analyze survey data from 101 Black students attending various PWIs. Among their sample, there were no significant differences in SES, which is also supported by Massey et al., 2007. The only significant differences between U.S.-origin and immigrant-origin Black students were HS GPA and persistence. Forty-two percent of U.S.-origin Blacks persisted versus 68% of immigrant-origin Blacks. The mean HS GPA was 5.68 (on a 10-point scale) for US origin Blacks and 6.54 for immigrant-origin Blacks. Additionally, there were significant correlations between persistence and SES, HS GPA, and academic integration for U.S.-origin students, while there

was only a significant correlation between college persistence and HS GPA for immigrant-origin students.

Predictor variables investigated were immigrant-generational status, HS GPA, SES, college social support/integration, academic integration, and college persistence. The predictors accounted for 28.6% of the variance in college persistence. Moreover, according to their model, immigrant generational status had no direct effect on persistence. However, immigrant generational status predictors of persistence were HS GPA and SES. Immigrant generational status had a direct effect on HS GPA. Immigrant-origin Black students' HS GPA predicted both their academic integration and college persistence independently. They also found college social support and integration predicted academic integration, particularly for U.S.-origin students, but neither social integration nor academic integration predicted persistence for either group.

In essence, immigrant-origin Blacks are persisting to a greater degree despite SES and social and academic integration. These findings suggest that Tinto's model, which focuses on persistence as a result of the extent a student socially and academically integrates, may not be the most applicable model for U.S.-origin and immigrant-origin Black students. Because there were significant differences between groups in HS GPA, other pre-college factors, like SAT/ACT, need closer scrutiny as potential distinguishing factors between U.S.-origin and immigrant-origin Blacks. In addition, there are other factors, such as cultural capital and racial/ethnic identity development that should be examined to explain the differences in persistence between the two groups.

Tauriac and Liem (2012) admit that one of the limitations of their study was having a relatively small sample size for the model used. They recommend researchers conduct similar studies with larger samples, which would provide greater power when using a path analysis

model. They also surmised that having a substantially larger proportion of immigrant-origin students who persisted might have affected the variability between groups.

In 2008, using data from the 1996-2001 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Murphy(2008) conducted a dissertation, which examined the factors that affected the academic success of immigrant and non-native speakers of English who attended public four-year institutions. Murphy measured success by using retention, persistence, and degree attainment. His total sample consisted of 5,159 students of all races.

To conduct his study, Murphy combined assimilation theory and classic retention theory, including Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration theory, and Bean's (1980) attrition theory. He examined numerous variables, including SAT scores, institutional commitment (as measured by living on campus), and the taking of language-related remedial courses. Another variable examined was a risk factor index composed of multiple variables that have a high correlation with leaving, such as delayed entry, not having a high school diploma, enrolling part-time, being financially independent, having dependents other than a spouse, being a single parent, and working fulltime. An additional variable examined was SES (operationalized as the highest education level completed by parents, family income as a percentage of the federal poverty level for 1995, and whether the family received food stamps at any time after January of 1994).

The most significant findings that came from Murphy's study are that immigrant status affects success within racial and ethnic groups, and that gender had a significant relationship with success, as males were more likely to drop out and less likely to graduate or be enrolled in college in 2001. Math SAT scores were significantly correlated with all success measures for all students in the sample and had an even more significant relationship with success measures for immigrant students. Verbal SAT scores had no positive relationship with the success measures.

HS GPA and taking at least one remedial course were positively related to success measures for immigrants. Living with parents was significantly related to one-year retention and three-year persistence. Working more than 20 hours off-campus was negatively related to several success measures, especially for immigrant students, but working on campus was positively related to success.

There were some major flaws in Murphy's study. The study examined an abundance of variables making it appear unfocused. He identifies eight different student types based on local, immigrant status and language status and numerous measures of success (i.e., there were three measures of persistence). That made the results difficult to interpret, as one variable might be a significant predictor of one-year retention but not a significant predictor of three-year retention. Additionally, as Murphy (2008) recognized at the time of his study, data on immigrant generational status was unavailable, which made it difficult to distinguish all immigrants from native students.

Conway (2009), tested her own Model of Immigrant and Native Student Persistence, which included variables from Tinto (1975, 1986, 1993), Bean & Metzner (1985), and Nora and Cabrera's (1996) persistence models. She conducted a quantitative analysis of a sample of 1,667 students, of all races, attending an urban community college. She found that being Black was negatively correlated with persistence for third-plus generation students. There was a positive correlation with HS GPA and persistence for third-plus generation students and US high-schooled immigrant students (first-generation students), and a positive correlation with basic skills proficiency and persistence for foreign high-schooled immigrants and second-generation immigrant students. Furthermore, being female and enrolling in a transfer program was

positively correlated with persistence for native students. Enrollment in a transfer program was positively correlated with persistence for second-generation immigrant students.

A major drawback of Conway's research was that student visa holders were collapsed into the immigrant student sample. Student visa holders typically have no intention of permanent residency in the United States. Their temporary status makes their experiences in America somewhat different from immigrant-origin students (Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Stebleton, 2011; Stebleton et al., 2010).

Ogbu's Cultural-Ecological Theory of Minority School Performance

Another suggested explanation for the differences in academic performance and persistence between US origin and Immigrant-origin students is discussed in Ogbu & Simons' (1998) Cultural-Ecological Theory of Minority School Performance. Ogbu suggested that differences in success are a result of "the nature of the history, subordination, and exploitation of the minorities" (Ogbu, 1987, p. 317), and the way in which the groups adapt to the treatment they receive. As such, he named three types of minorities: autonomous minorities, voluntary or immigrant minorities, and caste-like or involuntary minorities (Ogbu, 1987; Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

According to Ogbu (1987), autonomous minorities, like the Amish, Jews, and Mormons, are numerically small and have a distinct religious, linguistic, or cultural identity. They experience some discrimination but are not socially, economically, or politically disadvantaged. These minorities have similar educational outcomes to the dominant group. Voluntary or immigrant minorities, like Africans, Chinese, South Americans, and people from the Caribbean, are those who have purposefully moved to the United States, most likely in search of better opportunities and/or political or religious freedom. They too may have distinct religious,

linguistic and cultural identities and experience discrimination and prejudice because of their differences, but because they have willingly made a choice to emigrate, they may not internalize or identify with the White versus non-White dynamics of the US (Williamson, 2012), and see their obstacles as hurdles that can be overcome (Nazon, 2010). As a result, they do not experience any long-lasting academic performance difficulties (Ogbu, 1998).

Involuntary minorities, like Black Americans, Native Americans, and Puerto Ricans, are those who have been forced to become members of the United States against their will through enslavement, colonialism, or conquest. They may also be culturally and linguistically different and experience discrimination and prejudice and experience the most issues with social adjustment and academic performance. Because for generations, they have been marginalized and have made relatively little strides to become part of the dominant culture, they feel defeated (Nazon, 2010). For example, Black Americans have had to endure a great amount of discrimination, including, but not limited to, job ceilings, unequal access to education and unjust schooling policies, practices, and curricula (formal and informal). These barriers to economic success, according to Ogbu (1987), have dampened many Black Americans' desire for academic achievement and created long-standing deficiencies in their academic performance. Students may demonstrate an oppositional peer culture orientation, by which they have a lower academic motivation and devalue the importance of higher education goals within their social network. To them being studious and enjoying school is associated with whiteness or the oppressor, something from which they wish to distinguish themselves (Ogbu, 1987; Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

Ogbu's research focused primarily on secondary school students, but there is research on the postsecondary level that may support his theory. Owens and Lynch (2012) found that some of the progress Black immigrants experience was due to their lesser susceptibility to race-based

stereotype threat. In their study, they found that first-generation and second-generation immigrants were not affected as much by stereotype threat as domestic or native minorities. First generations were the most resistant to both externalization, the pressure to perform well in order to avoid confirming stereotypes, and internalization, personal beliefs in negative stereotypes about their own racial and ethnic group. Second generations were only resistant to externalization, and natives were susceptible to both internalization and externalization stereotype threat. Their research also confirmed that the more enmeshed or assimilated an immigrant was into the domestic minority identity (i.e., being African American), the more they were affected by the negative stereotypes that exist. This finding is in line with several other studies looking at the educational success of Black immigrant populations (Awokoya, 2012; Massey et al., 2007).

In a 2004 (Jenkins et al., 2004) study, researchers used Ogbu's theory to examine the persistence of 146 Black college students attending a community college. Black students whose fathers were born outside of the United States (voluntary minority) persisted to a greater degree than Black students whose fathers were born in the United States (involuntary minority). Furthermore, the difference in persistence approached significance for males but not females. Moreover, although postsecondary (PS) GPA predicted persistence, the authors found no significant difference in PS GPA between voluntary minorities and involuntary minorities, suggesting that something other than academic ability accounts for the differences in persistence. Black immigrants reading and writing tests predicted persistence, but among Blacks of U.S.-origin, there were no significant relationships between performance on reading, math tests, PS GPA, and college persistence.

Williamson (2012) conducted a mixed-method study examining the persistence of Black males in STEM attending a PWI. He found family to be a significant influence on persistence because this variable provided financial, emotional, and educational support. Unlike what could be surmised from Ogbu's theory, African American and voluntary minorities both received messages of encouragement from family to succeed academically. However, African males, in comparison to African American males, were more academically integrated, more likely to connect with faculty outside of class; and more satisfied with their academic experience and grade performance, which lends some credence to Ogbu's theory.

Adams-Mahaley's 2012 dissertation utilized Tinto's theory in addition to Bean's attrition theory and Ogbu's cultural-ecological model, as frameworks to better understand the non-cognitive factors affecting the persistence of Black American and African immigrant males attending a community college in Texas. In her mixed-methods approach she examined 26 male students' academic self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, preference for long-term goals, availability of strong support persons, living in a multicultural society and demographic variables including age, marital status, SES, number of children, enrollment patterns (full-time versus part-time), and parents' highest educational level. This was done by using the Noncognitive-Revised (NCQ-R) questionnaire. Afterward, ten of the students were interviewed.

Adams-Mahaley's (2012) quantitative findings provided evidence that positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, availability of strong-support persons, and living in a multicultural society were significant predictors for term-to-term persistence for African American males. The strongest of the predictors was the availability of strong support persons and living in a multicultural society. There were no correlations between family income, family structure, and student persistence, nor any significant differences in SES between groups. In

contrast, for African immigrant males, persistence was positively associated with positive self-concept, availability of strong support persons, and living in a multicultural society, but none of the constructs were statistically significant predictors of persistence for African immigrant males. African immigrants had a higher positive self-concept and confidence in their ability to reach their goals, as 80% of them felt very confident in their ability to earn good grades, and 100% of them felt prepared for college. On the other hand, African American males appeared less confident even though they had demonstrated a similar motivation to complete school, as 25% were less likely to report a strong sense in their ability to earn grades of B or higher, and 31.3% did not feel prepared for college.

Furthermore, African immigrants reported that their ethnic identity was strong and believed their culture, family, and peers had a strong influence on their motivation to persist. In contrast, the Black American males believed most of their success was due to their individual efforts. Both discussed the importance of peers and social support systems but in different ways. Black American male friends were more relevant to their extracurricular and nonacademic activities. Most of the African immigrants' peers were also in college (Adams-Mahaley, 2012). Peers in college are important because, according to Wells (2008a), students who have most or all of their friends planning to attend college while in high school are more likely to persist into their second year of college.

These findings suggest that the cultural capital that African immigrants possess seems to provide an advantage to them and their self-concept, which correlates with persistence. Also, social support is essential as both groups discussed the importance of relationships with college administration and peers.

Cultural Capital Theory

For this study, the theoretical framework provided by cultural capital was utilized to examine the factors that could influence the persistence and graduation of first and second-generation Black college students. Cultural capital as a framework has been used extensively in k-12 research, and less so in postsecondary research. Most postsecondary research conducted using cultural capital as a framework has focused on the college choice process and enrollment (K. A. Griffin, del Pilar, McIntosh, & Griffin, 2012; Nora, 2004; Perna, 2000; Reay, 1998). Wells (2008a, 2008b) was one of the first to use social and cultural capital in his study of college persistence and retention, testing Berger's (2000) theoretical propositions for persistence based on cultural capital. He found a significantly positive effect on persistence across all racial and ethnic groups, but differences in the effects when disaggregated by race/ethnicity. African Americans have less parental education and higher levels of test prep tool usage than Hispanic and White students.

Cultural capital is a term coined by Pierre Bourdieu, a critical theorist and follower of Karl Marx (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). He believed, unlike Karl Marx, that economic capital was not the sole reason for social inequalities in society, but that there were some intangible systems at play that help perpetuate and reinforce inequalities (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). He sought to explain how individual agency combined with socially structured opportunities and aspirations reproduce the existing social structure and generate and maintain inequality, and cultural capital provided a partial explanation (Walpole, 2003; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Cultural capital is defined as culturally based resources that come in the form of acquired knowledge, skills, behaviors, and inherited cultural competencies that provide signals to individuals, sometimes unconsciously, as to how one behaves in a social setting (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Certain forms of cultural capital are valued over others. If one has cultural capital that is appropriate for the

field in which one is in, one may receive social rewards such as acceptance, inclusion, and social mobility (Swartz, 1997). A field is a space in which practices, values, and beliefs are given a value. There are multiple fields, including family, work, and school (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). In this study, four-year institutions of higher education represent the field in which the worth of individual student capital will be examined.

Bourdieu (1986) proposed that cultural capital exists in three distinct forms, including embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Objectified cultural capital is comprised of material possessions that mark individuals' membership in a particular group, as well as the ability to use and enjoy the goods (Tierney, 1999). Institutionalized cultural capital is the institutional recognition of particular tastes, norms, or values. One example of institutionalized cultural capital is a college diploma. Embodied cultural capital are the norms, traditions, and mannerisms of a group. It is manifested as *habitus*, which is "a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and action" (Bourdieu, 1971, p. 83). Habitus is often acted out subconsciously, constantly reformulated and modified, and rooted in the power relations which define groups and individuals in relation to each other and to the bigger social structure (Horvat, 1997; Swartz, 1997). These preferences, attitudes, and behaviors are both a consequence of one's access to cultural capital and a way by which one demonstrates one's membership in a particular social group (J. B. Berger, 2000).

Cultural capital may be converted to other forms of capital and vice versa (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). For example, an educational degree (institutionalized cultural capital) can be transformed into economic capital in the form of a higher paying job. Similarly, a highly valued painting (objectified cultural capital) can be transformed into economic capital through a sale.

Since its inception, there have been many interpretations of cultural capital because Bourdieu (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014) did not clearly define the term. Cultural capital in education research has been operationalized in numerous ways. Dimaggio (1982) was one of the first to use cultural capital in the context of the US Education system. He defined cultural capital as knowledge and participation in elite, highbrow culture and activities, such as fine arts, classical music, and theater. This definition has become one of the most common ways in which cultural capital is operationalized (e.g., DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Kingston, 2001; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Mohr & DiMaggio, 1995; Noble & Davies, 2009). Despite the popularity, there have been several criticisms of such a narrow definition of cultural capital, because cultural capital is tied to its *field*, which defines it and gives it value (Reay, Crozier, and Clayton, 2016). Some *fields* may not value elite, highbrow culture as highly. In American society, for example, highbrow culture has experienced diminishing importance (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Lamont, 1992). As such, a broader definition of cultural capital defined by Lareau and Weininger (2003) is used for this research. For these researchers, cultural capital:

stresses the importance of examining micro-interactional processes whereby individuals' strategic use of knowledge, skills, and competence come into contact with institutionalized standards of evaluation. Students and parents differ, we assert, in their ability to comply with institutionalized standards of evaluation or, put differently, they have different skill levels for managing institutional encounters. We have stressed that these specialized skills are transmissible across generations, are subject to monopoly, and may yield advantages or "profits. Status signals, including "highbrow" competence, may indeed be one element of the competencies that students and parents draw on in their institutional encounters, but we do not feel that these signals exhaust the issue (p597).

Dumais and Ward's (2010) operationalization of cultural capital distinguishes arts participation from strategic interaction or ways in which individuals activate their cultural capital. Similarly, Merolla and Jackson (2014) distinguish cultural capital activation, which they consider cultural capital habits, resources, and tools from cultural possession (e.g., aspirations, behaviors,

highbrow goods). They define cultural capital activation as the demonstration of and familiarity with the “rules of the game” (e.g., PTA participation and classroom conduct).

Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Higher Education

Cultural capital and habitus are acquired over time and first acquired from one's social origin (family), through socialization at home and parental investment in sources of "high-culture" activities for their children (Horvat, 1997; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). It is also achieved through education. Cultural capital is cumulative so, while it is possible to attain cultural capital only through education, it is challenging. Because of the cumulative nature of cultural capital, those who are able to attain "high" cultural capital from their family have an advantage over those who do not.

Social origin. The role of education is to convert social hierarchies into academic hierarchies in order to maintain and perpetuate the current social order (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Students enter college with a variety of background characteristics, and those who acquire cultural capital early in the educational process are at an advantage. If the cultural capital is valued by the dominant group and derived from social origins, recipients are rewarded and positioned to gain more cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In much of the higher education literature, social origin cultural capital has typically been operationalized as SES or parental income (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999) and parental education (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). Tauriac and Liem (2012), found that there was a direct effect of SES on persistence for immigrant-origin and U.S.-origin Blacks. Additionally, Walpole found that low SES Black students demonstrated lower educational aspirations than their high SES Black peers. However, while low SES Black students have lower aspirations for doctoral and professional degrees, they

reported higher aspirations for bachelor's and master's degrees than the high SES Black students (Walpole, 2008). The highest level of education planned by a Black student was a significant predictor of college GPA among second-generation immigrant college students (Boureiko, 2010).

Some studies have included language spoken at home as a source of cultural capital (for example, Perna & Titus, 2005). There is an assumption that because English is the lingua franca, children in homes where English is the primary language have more access to cultural capital (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Nevertheless, Murphy (2008) posited that a language other than English spoken at home did not have any major effect on academic success for either immigrant or U.S.-origin students. However, in a study examining the bi-cultural socialization experiences of Black immigrant students, Kim (2014) found that some Black immigrant students did face obstacles in college due to a language barrier. According to Kim, proficiency in English was a valuable asset for academic achievement and engagement while in college. Black immigrants who were not proficient in English felt that they suffered from limited access to information and resources.

High school-level educational acquisitions. The acquisition of cultural capital continues in school, and acquisition at the high school level has the most direct effect on college matriculation and success. One's educational level corresponds to one's available cultural wealth (J. B. Berger, 2000). Schools and families influence students' habitus, which determines the choices students think they have.

Individual habitus. Individuals who have high levels of cultural capital are predisposed to believe they are entitled to a certain type of education. Educational entitlements are "beliefs about appropriate educational aspirations for someone who operates out of a specific level of bounded rationality that is in turn determined by a specific type of habitus determined primarily

by one's access to cultural capital" (J. B. Berger, 2000, p. 119). Entitled students develop a cultural framework in which college degree attainment is the norm and expected post-high-school experience. Research consistently shows a positive relationship between educational expectations and educational attainment (Merolla & Jackson, 2014; Wildhagen, 2009).

Organizational habitus and high school quality. McDonough (1997) posits that organizations also demonstrate habitus. Organizational habitus is the "impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behavior through an intermediate organization" (p. 107). Social class influences students' habitus through school experiences. An organization's physical, governing, and normative structure, and the resources and services it provides all generate organizational habitus. The various structures work together with the family to perpetuate the social structure. Organizational habitus can come in the form of the academic rigor or prestige of a high school, which affects the level of education that a student receives. However, Massey et al. (2007) found no significant differences in high school quality (measured as the quality of teaching and advising, school reputation, and facilities) between immigrant-origin and U.S.-origin students attending selective colleges.

Institutional choices. Colleges and universities also possess organizational cultural capital. An institution's selectivity is a form of organizational habitus that helps contribute to social reproduction (J. B. Berger, 2000). Research by Horn (2007) concluded that there is a direct and positive correlation between an institution's selectivity and retention and graduation rates. From a cultural capital perspective, this may occur because institutions with higher levels of selectivity attract students who are more predisposed (habitus) and have the cultural capital to graduate. In addition, highly selective institutions pass on cultural capital to their graduates,

which makes attending and graduating from them more appealing, contributing to the cycle of social reproduction for students from higher socioeconomic groups (J. B. Berger, 2000).

On the other hand, Berger (2000) also mentions that students in other economic strata may possess habitus for other types of institutions. For some Black students, it is quite possible that attending a more ethnically diverse or predominantly Black institution may be part of their habitus, and may be placed at a higher value than attending highly selective institutions (although racial composition and selectivity are not always mutually exclusive, e.g., Spelman and Morehouse Colleges). Perhaps because they perceive there will be more support and a better fit in those environments (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Black students who attend more culturally diverse institutions may be drawn to the habitus of those schools because of "the similarity of shared backgrounds, aspirations, and attitudes among students who constitute the dominant majority on campus probably makes it easier for these students to adapt to campus life" (J. B. Berger, 2000, p. 107).

College-level educational acquisitions. The perceived congruence of students' cultural capital and organizational habitus not only influences institutional choice but students' engagement in the institution if the students' perceptions are correct. Students who are able to adapt to campus life are more likely to get more integrated socially and academically (Kuh et al., 2006). Students are more likely to become more integrated into the academic and social systems of institutions with corresponding levels of organizational habitus (J. B. Berger, 2000).

When studying students in high school, DiMaggio & Mohr (1985) found that students' cultural capital (operationalized as participation in "high-brow" activities) increased the frequency of the students' help-seeking with "high-status" individuals, such as teachers, school counselors, and peers. The relationship between cultural capital and help-seeking behavior likely

carries over to the collegiate level, as well. Academic integration is a way by which students are able to gain cultural capital and express their habitus. Professors, academic advisors, and other university staff are agents of cultural capital (Kim, 2014), and if students interact with them, they are able to get the information necessary to persist and graduate. Having an academic support person was a significant predictor of academic achievement and persistence for Black students (O. T. Griffin, 1992; Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005). When examining the differences between immigrant and non-immigrant Black males, African origin males were more academically integrated and more likely to connect with faculty outside of class. Their relationships with faculty resulted in more satisfaction with the academic experience and grade performance than was the case for African American males (Adams-Mahaley, 2012; Williamson, 2012).

At predominately White institutions (PWI), U.S.-origin Blacks experience feelings of stigmatization and feel less supported than first-generation immigrant Blacks which impacts academic performance and persistence (Deaux et al., 2007; Owens & Lynch, 2012; Owens & Massey, 2011; Williamson, 2012). When minority students lack interaction with faculty members at PWIs, their academic success is adversely impacted (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). Black males attending HBCUs who earned higher first semester GPAs were more likely to graduate than those with lower first semester GPAs (Farmer & Hope, 2015). Several studies have found no statistically significant differences in PS GPA between immigrant generations (Bennett & Lutz, 2009; Massey et al., 2007; Tauriac & Liem, 2012). While there were no significant differences in GPA between immigrant origin and U.S.-origin Blacks, PS GPA was a significant predictor of persistence for both groups (Jenkins et al., 2004).

Social integration, on the other hand, is an opportunity for students to engage in activities with those similar to themselves. Additionally, it also provides an opportunity to increase one's social network, which in turn may increase one's cultural capital. Students may get valuable information and resources from peers, in particular peers with higher levels of cultural capital. Numerous researchers have recognized the importance of social involvement on persistence (Allen, 1992; O. T. Griffin, 1992). However, Tauriac and Liem (2012) found that social integration had an effect on academic integration, but not persistence for both immigrant-origin and U.S.-origin Black students. Positive interactions on the college campus were associated with higher levels of persistence, especially for Black students (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003).

Cultural Capital, Race and Immigration

Bourdieu's (1977) early conceptualizations of cultural capital and habitus suggests that the relationship between cultural capital, habitus, and social reproduction is primarily shaped by class status. In general, however, "habitus can be used to focus on the ways in which the socially advantaged and disadvantaged play out attitudes of cultural superiority and inferiority ingrained in their habitus in daily interactions" (Reay, 2004, p. 436). Race is often seen as a marker of class membership and position (Horvat, 1997; Morales, 2014). In a study examining how Black high school girls' blackness affected their college choice, Horvat (1997) surmised that racialized habitus could be found in the shared norms around beliefs, values, speech, and dress held by the students. There is research however that suggests that racial identity differs, within the Black race, based on ethnicity and immigrant generational status (Awokoya, 2012; Offoh, 2003; Sanchez, 2013; Waters, 1994), which has an impact on college achievement (Cokley & Chapman, 2008). Accordingly, the habitus of individuals and the ways in which it is manifested

may differ based on immigrant generation. Murphy (2008) found that immigrant status does have an effect on retention, persistence, and degree attainment within racial and ethnic groups.

Cultural capital and habitus could be a reason why a more significant percentage of immigrant-origin students attend selective institutions, and persist longer in college than Black U.S.-origin students (Bennett & Lutz, 2009; Massey et al., 2007).

In a qualitative study, habitus was found to be an important influence on Black immigrants' choice to go to a college and the type of college they chose to attend (K. A. Griffin et al., 2012). In this study, the ways in which cultural capital influences not only college choice but also persistence and graduation will be investigated.

Summary

This chapter contains an overview of the state of Black students in higher education, a synthesis of current literature related to the differences in persistence and graduation between Black immigrant-origin and U.S.-origin undergraduates. There was an introduction to cultural capital theory, and how this theoretical framework may be useful in the examination of disparities in higher education in general. Also presented was how the cultural capital theory and its framework could help us better understand the persistence and graduation of Black immigrant-origin students.

Manifestations of cultural capital and habitus are attained or demonstrated in numerous ways throughout a student's educational career. They are first acquired through social origin and then accumulated as a student moves from high school into college. A student is continuously making choices that are guided by the student's cultural capital and habitus. Habitus affects a student's perceptions of the types of schools she or he decides to attend; beliefs about how much

education to pursue; who to socialize and engage with while in school; and, ultimately, decisions as to whether to persist in college and graduate.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the research methods employed to explore cultural capital and habitus, and how they shape college persistence and graduation of Black immigrant-origin undergraduates or alumni at four-year postsecondary institutions in the United States of America; and to find answers to the research questions:

RQ1: How do Black students of immigrant-origin demonstrate cultural capital and habitus?

RQ2: What role does cultural capital and habitus play in college persistence and graduation for these students?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The organization of this chapter is as follows: (a) an overview of the research design; (b) sampling method; (c) data collection and data analysis procedures; (d) role of the researcher, and (d) efforts to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the study's participants.

Purpose of Study and Guided Questions

The purpose of this basic interpretive study is to explore cultural capital and habitus and how they shape the college persistence and graduation of Black immigrant-origin undergraduates or alumni at four-year postsecondary institutions. The primary research questions that will guide study are:

RQ1: How do Black students of immigrant-origin demonstrate cultural capital and habitus?

RQ2: What role does cultural capital and habitus play in college persistence and graduation for these students?

Research Design

This dissertation is a basic interpretive qualitative study that aims to gather an in-depth understanding of the meanings and experiences of humans and their social worlds and processes (Kahlke, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Basic interpretive qualitative studies attempt to determine "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23).

The basic interpretive qualitative tradition comes out of the social constructivist paradigm, which espouses that the research and the researcher cannot be separated and that there are many constructions of reality. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) wrote, "qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher

and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (p. 10). As a researcher, I see myself as an active participant in the research process who seeks to illuminate these participants’ subjective meanings and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). My goal is to explore participants’ perspectives in-depth and describe the participants’ subjective meanings, actions, and social contexts “to understand the world from the subjects’ point-of-view” (Kvale, 1996, p. 1).

Basic interpretive qualitative studies are useful for studies that are attempting to describe participants’ experiences, participants’ meaning-making, and examine process (Merriam, 1998). This type of research is often framed by a conceptual model or theory (Merriam, 2002). In this study I will use semi-structured interviews guided by cultural capital theory, as conceptualized by Lareau and Weininger (2003), to describe and interpret the potential role that cultural capital and habitus plays in the persistence and graduation journey of Black immigrant-origin students and graduates. There will be no attempt to create a theory based on the students’ experiences or hone in on the *essence* of a particular part of their college-going experience. Additionally, as I will be interviewing individuals from multiple four-year institutions, a case study, which operates within bounded systems, would not be a good fit either.

Population, Sample, and Participants

Population

The population for this study is drawn from students and recent alumni of four-year institutions, who self-identify as Black or of African descent and are of immigrant-origin. Immigrant- origin means that they are born outside of the United States (1st generation) or born in the United States with one or both parents who were born outside the United States (2nd generation). They must not be in the country with a visa, qualifying them as an international student.

Sample

I used a purposeful and snowball sampling strategy where individuals with characteristics specific to the study's research questions were identified and included in the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1999, 2002). The goal of purposeful sampling was to understand "information-rich cases in depth and detail. The focus was on understanding and illuminating important cases rather than on generalizing from a sample to a population" (Patton, 1999, p. 1197). The sample included individuals of immigrant-origin who identify as Black or of African descent. Participants completed at least one year were still enrolled or recently graduated from a four-year institution in the United States. To have a sample with a wide range of experiences, I sampled from a variety of types of four-year institutions (selectivity and diversity), countries of origin, gender, and ages. The sample did not include international students and students attending community colleges because they are not the focus of this study.

I sought to recruit 12-16 participants, with a relatively equal distribution of first-generation and second-generation immigrants, to engage in my study. To identify participants who would yield data related to the study's major questions, I utilized social media and colleagues. A list generated from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education website was used to help identify types of schools attended by students. A flyer with an invitation to participate (see Appendix B) was posted on Facebook and sent to colleagues who work in higher education institutions. The flyer was posted on my page with the ability to be shared, as well as several Facebook groups of which I am a member to include BLKSAP (a group of Black student affairs professionals) and the New York Higher Education Professionals group, among many others. Colleagues on Facebook and that I personally know were given permission to share the invitation to participate with potential participants. In the invitation to participate, potential participants were provided a link to a google form that collected basic

demographic data and served as a way to gather contact information and a screening tool for study eligibility. The form (see Appendix A) gathered basic demographic information including first name, contact information, individuals, and parents' country of origin, school attended or graduated from, academic classification, and year of graduation with a bachelor's degree.

Individuals, who fit the study's criteria, were contacted to discuss informed consent, further discuss eligibility, answer any questions, and to schedule a date for an interview. During the initial contact, I outlined a general description of the study, its purpose, and the length of the interview. I scheduled interviews in formats that were convenient for participants, including in-person and via phone. Transcripts of the recruitment material and the informed consent are attached (see Appendix B and C).

Twenty-nine individuals completed the initial screening form, and twenty-three were eligible to participate based on their entries. Those who were eligible to participate were contacted via phone and email to set up a time to be interviewed and review consent.

Participants

Thirteen individuals (see Table 1) gave consent and agreed to be interviewed. Of the thirteen participants, seven were 1st generation immigrants, and six were 2nd generation. The sample included individuals of immigrant-origin who identify as Black or African American. Participants would have completed at least one year and still enrolled or recently graduated from a four-year institution in the United States.

Table 1

Demographics of Study Participants

Name	Gender	Generation	Students' Birthplace	Mothers' Birthplace	Fathers' Birthplace	Academic Classification	Carnegie Classification
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AJ	Female	2 nd	USA	St. Thomas, USVI	Antigua	Junior	inclusive, HBCU
Asil	Female	1st	Guyana	Guyana	Guyana	Graduated/ Alumni	selective
Brandon	Male	2nd	USA	Barbados	Barbados	Senior	more selective
Cyrille	Male	1st	Cameroon	Cameroon	Cameroon	Graduated/ Alumni	selective
Dante	Male	1st	Jamaica	Jamaica	Dominica	Graduated/ Alumni	more selective
Gordon	Male	2nd	USA	Jamaica	Antigua	Graduated/ Alumni	more selective
KB	Female	1st	Barbados	Barbados	Barbados	Graduated/ Alumni	selective
Kristin	Female	1st	St. Thomas, USVI	USA	St. Kitts and Nevis	Graduated/ Alumni	more selective
Louisa	Female	1st	Liberia	Liberia	Liberia	Senior	no selectivity
Marie	Female	2nd	USA	Haiti	Haiti	Senior	no selectivity
Marsha	Female	2nd	USA	USA	Jamaica	Graduated/ Alumni	selective
Stephanie	Female	1st	Dominica	Dominica	Dominica	Graduated/ Alumni	selective
Tommy	Male	2nd	USA	USA	Ghana	Graduated/ Alumni	selective

Data Collection and Protocol

Research data collection began in Fall 2018 and continued into Spring 2019. Thirteen participants were properly screened for eligibility and invited to participate in the study. Nine interviews were conducted by phone, and four were in-person. Three of the in-person interviews were conducted during the day in my work office, and one was done in the work office of the participant. Interview lengths ranged from 40 minutes to 90 minutes. All interviews were

digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. Participants were able to identify a pseudonym of their choosing.

The interview protocol used for this interview is comprised of three types of questions: the main questions, follow-up questions, and probes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This flexible format allowed a natural dialogue to emerge between the participant and the researcher. This interview protocol was a revision of an interview protocol created by Griffin et al., (2012) (for original protocol, see Appendix D). In their study, *"Oh, of Course I'm Going to Go to College": Understanding How Habitus Shapes the College Choice Process of Black Immigrant Students*, they conducted a case study examining Black immigrant's decisions about college decision-making, using Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model and habitus as a framework. Revisions were made to ensure cultural capital theory was captured and to reduce interview time (see Appendix E).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was built upon the basic interpretive qualitative tradition described earlier. Empirical research has established the role of race, immigrant generation, and socioeconomic background on the student's experience, so I remained sensitive to this aspect of my participants' stories as well as other contextual aspects of their lived experiences at each stage of the analysis.

Interview transcripts were coded using NVIVO 12 software, guided by a deductive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Clarke and Braun, 2017). Braun and Clarke considered their 6-phase process to be an iterative and reflexive process, meaning that one can go back and forth between steps and modify ideas as needed. Phase one included familiarizing myself with the data. I conducted and recorded all of the interviews myself. In addition to recording the interviews, I noted initial thoughts about points of interest that arose during the interviews. Upon completion of the interviews, digital recordings were uploaded to Sonix.AI for

initial transcription. One of the recordings had a lot of background noise, making it difficult to hear. Consequently, I used Rev.com transcription service because they are good at transcribing difficult transcriptions. When the transcripts were completed, I went through each line to ensure transcription accuracy. When the transcriptions were complete, they were forwarded to participants to request their review and to ask some clarifying questions. Only a few responded with required changes or clarifications. These activities ensured my familiarity with the data.

Phase two of the thematic analysis involved creating initial codes/nodes. Initial nodes generated were ideas and concepts that emerged during the literature review about cultural capital and habitus (Table 1, Appendix F). Those nodes provided an initial framework to comb through the dataset line-by-line to find codes. If I found new and different concepts or ideas from the initial nodes, I created new codes along the way. I was conscious of including data in nodes that seemed contrary to the general idea but captured the concept in order to get a full picture of what participants were saying about a particular topic. For example, a familial support node would include examples of familial support and a lack of familial support.

During phases three and four, I sorted nodes into themes. I sorted and collated codes into themes, “considering how different codes combine to form an overarching theme” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 111). I continued to focus on the aspect of cultural capital and habitus in the narratives of the participants. In this phase, I went back and forth between the literature on cultural capital and habitus, the in vivo codes, and my reflections on the participants’ narratives. My perspective was guided by the broader definition of cultural capital defined by Lareau and Weininger (2003) which,

stresses the importance of examining micro-interactional processes whereby individuals’ strategic use of knowledge, skills, and competence come into contact with institutionalized standards of evaluation. Students and parents differ, we assert, in their ability to comply with institutionalized standards of evaluation or, put differently, they have different skill levels for managing institutional encounters. We have stressed that

these specialized skills are transmissible across generations, are subject to monopoly, and may yield advantages or “profits. Status signals, including “high-brow” competence, may indeed be one element of the competencies that students and parents draw on in their institutional encounters, but we do not feel that these signals exhaust the issue (p. 597).

Themes were generated by drawing mind maps and placing like nodes together. Some themes were collapsed, while others were deleted. I went through each node and compared them to the individual transcripts to ensure that I was capturing all data for each participant. Nodes that were expressions of cultural capital were grouped together and separated by time (early influences, high school, and college). High school and college nodes were further organized to capture how cultural capital may have contributed to academic and social integration in college. Nodes that expressed habitus were grouped together and then further grouped by types of habitus (individual and organizational). A miscellaneous theme was created to capture nodes that had been created but did not necessarily appear important for the research questions as well as data in nodes that may have been dispersed to other themes during phase four.

During phase five, I went through the nodes in each theme, defining the central idea that was captured in each node and removing data that was either misplaced or better captured in another node. The words of the participants were used in many of the names. Themes were considered final when I felt that the themes were ordered in a way that best reflected the data and would allow me to tell the participants’ stories (Table 2, Appendix F).

During phase six, producing the report, I started with developing participant profiles and sent them to the participants via email for input. Their feedback was incorporated in the profiles and sometimes gave me additional insight into my findings. As I was writing the findings, I made sure to return to the original transcripts to ensure that I was accurately telling the participants’ stories.

Role of the Researcher

I am a Black, second-generation immigrant college graduate with two degrees. I am currently pursuing a doctorate degree. I continue to persist in higher education because while growing up, education was highly valued in my family and always emphasized as necessary. Both of my parents are of Caribbean origin and hold graduate/ professional degrees. They always promoted higher education as the minimum requirement for a successful life in society. They were very active in my education, highly supportive, and advocated for me throughout my time in the K-12 system.

I was born and raised in New York City and currently work in a higher education institution in New York City. My parents placed me in a parochial school for K-7 and a well-renowned college preparatory school from 8-12. Upon graduation, I was awarded the Jackie Robinson Foundation scholarship and pursued my undergraduate degree in a private, predominately White institution in the south, where Black students made up approximately only 10% of the student population. The Scholarship program provided financial and other supports that contributed to my cultural capital and my graduation. While in college, I was moderately active in campus life. I held several different jobs in various departments on campus and held membership in a couple of student organizations, one in which I held a leadership role. I really enjoyed my major and had supportive faculty members.

My cultural pride is very strong, and I feel a connection with all Black people in the diaspora. Growing up, I frequently went to my parents' home countries during the summer months. In college, I went on a trip to Ghana to learn more about African heritage. I pursued a career in higher education to assist in creating a more welcoming experience and increasing the graduation rates of marginalized students, in general, and Black students, specifically.

My background as a Black, second-generation immigrant, positioned me in the role of the “insider” with most of the participants. This role provided several advantages: “easier entrée, a

head start in knowing about the topic and understanding nuanced reactions of participants” (R. Berger, 2015, p. 223). My position allowed me to be accessible and relatable to most participants. Because I shared a similar background to some when discussing certain cultural experiences, participants did not have to go into as much detail for me to understand what they were discussing. At the same time, I remained aware that other countries of the Black diaspora could have different names or interpretations for similar phenomena, and always sought clarification despite my assumptions while remaining attuned to the nuances of the different cultures. Additionally, as I do not have immediate family from the continent of Africa, I am less familiar with African cultures, which served as a barrier in recruitment.

Strategies for Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness or credibility is the hallmark of good qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012). In conducting this research, I utilized Patton’s (1999) criteria for trustworthiness as a guide. Patton (1999) recognizes that “issues of quality and credibility intersect with audience and intended research purposes (p. 1189).” As such, trustworthiness criteria vary depending on researchers’ philosophy, research paradigm, and purposes of the inquiry. Patton highlights that there are three ways in which a researcher can demonstrate trustworthiness including using techniques for data collection and analysis that are “analytically rigorous, mentally replicable, and explicitly systematic” (p.1191); credibility of the researcher; and sufficient detail provided so that others could judge the quality of the study. I used several techniques to address the criteria. I documented my role as a researcher, earlier in this chapter, for researcher reflexivity. Researcher reflexivity was a deliberate effort to set aside my own personal experiences and open myself up to the participants’ stories. Through the triangulation of data sources, I was able to engage participants with similar characteristics but with varied perspectives and experiences (Mays & Pope, 2000). Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase process was used to analyze the data

systematically. I developed an audit trail to increase the dependability and replicability of the findings. As part of the audit trail, I constructed analytic memos to keep track of code and theme development throughout the study. I engaged in negative case analysis by sharing the stories of participants who had different experiences from the majority. For authenticity, I continually returned to the verbatim transcripts and recordings to ensure the accuracy of my interpretations. I engaged in member checking and solicited feedback from participants at two stages- after transcribing interviews and after developing the participants' profiles. At both stages, participants were sent e-mails of their respective transcript and profile and offered the opportunity to respond with questions, comments, or additional insights that enabled me to rethink my thematic analysis. Finally, I wrote a thick, rich description of the methods, participants, and their experiences.

Research Permission and Ethical Considerations

Passive recruitment on Facebook was utilized to attract potential participants (Gelinas et al., 2017) (Gelinas, Pierce, Winkler, Cohen, Fernandez, & Bierer, 2017). In the call for participants, individuals were informed of the purpose of the study and qualifications for participation to ensure compliance with the standards set forth by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). An informed consent form, provided at the time of the interview, contained information that explained the study procedures; the use of the data collected; confidentiality rights; and the voluntary nature of participation (see Appendix C). Once participants qualified and were contacted for an interview, they were again informed of their participation rights and asked to sign a consent form. A pseudonym was used on all identifying information forms, including transcribed documents, and audiotapes to maintain participants' protected anonymity, and to safeguard confidentiality. The data collected was stored in a password-protected file. The hard

copies of the transcripts, including the signed consent form, will be destroyed within two years following the conclusion of the study. Immigration status was not be required due to this very sensitive time in America's history for undocumented individuals. Otherwise, there were no known benefits or risks associated with participation in this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this interpretive study was to explore how cultural capital and habitus shaped the persistence and graduation of Black immigrant-origin undergraduates at four-year postsecondary institutions. Cultural capital describes specialized knowledge, skills, experiences, and habits that influence the way individuals are perceived and the way in which they maneuver in educational environments. Participants' accumulated cultural capital – at various points in their lives – gave them proficiency to navigate and persist in college and a habitus, or worldview, that motivated them to graduate. The primary research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1: How do Black students of immigrant-origin demonstrate cultural capital and habitus?

RQ2: What role does cultural capital and habitus play in college persistence and graduation for these students?

Methodology Summary and Trustworthiness

Research data collection began in Fall 2018 and continued into Spring 2019. Thirteen interviews were conducted – nine by phone and four in-person. Three of the in-person interviews were conducted during the day in the researcher's work office, and one was done in the work office of the participant. The interviews followed a semi-structured interview protocol and were informal and conversational in nature. I used open-ended and follow-up questions to allow participants to talk about their experiences candidly. Interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 90 minutes. All interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. Participants were invited to identify a pseudonym of their choosing.

Interview transcripts were coded using NVIVO 12 software, guided by a deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006)

consider their 6-phase process to be iterative and reflexive, meaning one can go back and forth between steps and modify ideas as needed. The initial phase required familiarizing myself with the data. The second phase comprised generating initial codes by systematically combing through the entire dataset. Some of the codes were created *a priori* based on cultural capital theory, while others were constituted using *in vivo* codes. The third phase involved searching for themes after data were initially coded. I went back and forth between the literature on cultural capital and habitus, the *in vivo* codes, and my own reflections on the participants' narratives. The fourth phase consisted of reviewing themes. During this phase, themes with few codes were collapsed; and, themes with many codes were broken into sub-themes. A comparison of the themes to the data set was conducted to ensure that the themes accurately represented those produced. The fifth phase involved defining and naming themes. Themes were defined to fully depict what they were intended to represent and to clearly distinguish them from each other, as well as from the patterns that occurred between themes. The final phase involved producing the report, which comprised telling the story and connecting the themes. I explored multiple interpretations before discussing the findings of this dissertation.

Throughout the research process, I utilized Patton's (1999) recommendations for trustworthiness. I documented my role as a researcher, earlier in this chapter, for researcher reflexivity. Researcher reflexivity was a deliberate effort to set aside my own personal experiences and open myself up to the participants' stories. Through triangulation of data sources, I was able to engage participants with similar characteristics but with varied perspectives and experiences (Mays & Pope, 2000). Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process was used to analyze the data systematically. I developed an audit trail to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. As part of the audit trail, I constructed analytic

memos to keep track of code and theme development throughout the study. I engaged in negative case analysis by sharing the stories of participants who had different experiences from the majority. For authenticity, I continually returned to the verbatim transcripts and recordings to ensure the accuracy of my interpretations. I engaged in member checking and solicited feedback from participants at two stages- after transcribing interviews and after developing the participants' profiles. At both stages, participants were sent e-mails of their respective transcripts and profiles, then offered the opportunity to respond with questions, comments, or additional insights that were used to rethink my thematic analysis. Finally, I wrote a thick, rich description of the methods, participants, and their experiences.

Participant Profiles

AJ. AJ was born in the US to a mother from St. Thomas and a father from Antigua. Her mother has an associate's degree, and her father never attended college. She grew up in the South Bronx with her parents. She has an older sister who is college educated and works as a college professor. AJ attended a college preparatory public charter high school, where she was involved in orchestra. Currently, she is a student enrolled in a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the south, studying Mass Media. She is in the Army National Guard and an executive member of the Caribbean Student Association. AJ is also a resident assistant.

Asil. Asil was born in Guyana and arrived in the United States at five years old. She grew up in Queens, NY with her mother, brother, three sisters, and extended family. Her mother did not attend college, but most of her siblings did attend college. She attended a public college preparatory high school two hours away from her home. She attended and graduated from a CUNY senior college. At the CUNY senior college, she was part of the school's Honors Program and double majored in Psychology and Africana Studies. She was a highly

involved student, participating in internships, research, overseas voluntary services, cheerleading, residential, and college assistantship programs. She is currently enrolled in a counseling psychology doctoral program.

Brandon. Brandon was born in the US and raised in the Bronx by his mother and grandmother, who are both from Barbados. His mother is not college-educated and has a job with long hours. He was placed in a Catholic school until he was accepted and enrolled in a highly specialized public high school. He was involved in church youth activities and basketball during high school. He recently graduated from a SUNY senior college with a degree in chemical engineering. At that school, he was a committee chair for his schools' local chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and an executive member of the Black Student Union (BSU).

Cyrille. Cyrille was born and raised in Cameroon and lived with his mom, sister, and younger brother. His mother attended a vocational school for nursing. He was a very rebellious child and hated school. After being transferred from various schools, he eventually dropped out of high school. He then enrolled in a vocational school for computer engineering in Nigeria. He worked as a computer engineer in Cameroon for a couple of years but was unhappy. So, he decided to move to the US. While in the US, he overstayed his visa and lost his work permit. Undocumented for six years, he worked in a variety of menial positions. Once he regained legal status, he attained his GED and then enrolled in a SUNY community college where he studied Communication and Media Arts. Afterwards, he enrolled in a CUNY senior college where he studied Multimedia Studies. He was part of the schools' Opportunity Programs and was highly involved in media arts activities, leadership programs, and student government. He later obtained a Master of Fine Arts degree and will be enrolling in a doctoral program.

Dante. Dante was born in Jamaica and came to the US at six months with his mother and father. He has three younger siblings who were born in the US. Both of his parents have college degrees from colleges in the Caribbean and the US. His father is a pastor, and they lived in many different areas in New Jersey. In middle school, he was recommended to enroll in A Better Chance program, which places students of color in top middle schools and high schools. He was placed into a top private school in North Jersey located forty-five minutes away from his home. After four years at the private school, in the middle of high school, his family relocated to South Jersey where he enrolled in a less rigorous public school. Upon graduation, he enrolled in a predominantly White private college in Pennsylvania. He is very ambitious and was involved in numerous academic and social clubs. He double majored in computer science and philosophy with a minor in pre-law.

Gordon. Gordon was born in the Bronx to an Antiguan father and Jamaican mother. He was raised in the Bronx and lived with his sister, mother, and father. His father is a pastor, and Gordon has a very strong faith. Both of his parents have college degrees from universities in the Caribbean and the US. He attended private schools for most of his life. He attended a predominantly White Catholic high school where he was well-liked by teachers and students. He was involved in the school's wrestling team and involved in student government. Upon graduation from high school, he enrolled in a predominantly white, religiously affiliated college in Washington, D.C. where he was a pre-med and public health major. Gordon was extremely involved on his campus, participating in a living-learning community, studying abroad, membership in two fraternities, and various religious and cultural student organizations. He is currently pursuing a master's in epidemiology.

KB. KB was born in Barbados and came to America when she was one year old. She was raised in Harlem by her grandmother and mother. Her mother did not have a college education. KB always has been creative with a love of writing. Despite her interest, her mother – unfamiliar with the NYC school system – placed her in a top science and math high school. Because there was no congruence between KB’s interests and the school attended, KB became truant and placed in an alternative school so that she could get a high school diploma. However, the environment was dangerous, so she dropped out and enrolled in a GED program. While in the GED program, KB met a friend who had ambitions of going to college, and she became interested too. When she completed her GED, she enrolled in a CUNY community college. During her time in the community college, due to familial tensions, she moved out of her family home. Needing to survive, she did not reenroll in school because of the need to work full-time. She had a baby and worked for about 6 years, but subsequently lost her apartment and became homeless. Living in a woman’s homeless shelter and unable to find a job, she enrolled at another CUNY community college, where she completed an associates degree in Early Childhood Education. Afterwards, she enrolled in a CUNY senior college, where she pursued a degree in education with a concentration in creative writing where she was involved in a Poetry Outreach program. Afterwards, she went directly into attaining a master's degree in creative writing.

Kristin. Kristin was born and raised in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands with three siblings, a father from St. Kitts and Nevis, and a mother who was born in the US. Kristin’s mother is a college-educated educator, and her father is not college-educated. Throughout her life, she has played the violin. For high school, she attended a college preparatory Episcopalian school on the island, where she was highly involved in sports, Model UN, and Moot Court. She then attended a predominantly White public school in Washington state, where

she attained a bachelor's in environmental studies and a double minor in Spanish and anthropology. She is currently enrolled in a master's program.

Louisa. Louisa was born in Liberia and migrated to the United States when she was six to live with her eldest aunt and her aunt's three sons in Staten Island, NY. She comes from a well-educated family. She attended Catholic school until high school. For high school, she initially attended a well-recognized high school in Staten Island. After her sophomore year, she was sent to live with her mother, who lived in rural Pennsylvania. At that high school, she was ahead of her peers and as a result, placed in the senior year class. She immediately enrolled in a CUNY senior college after high school, but she lacked interest in school and failed her first year. Louisa then decided to enroll in cosmetology school because that was her interest at the time. While attending cosmetology school, she became pregnant with her first child and left school. After years of financial struggle, while working at a nursing home, she decided to return to college. She still owed the CUNY Senior College so she decided to enroll in a SUNY comprehensive college and study community and health services.

Marie. Marie was born in the US to two Haitian parents. She was raised in Brooklyn, NY, with her brother, sister, parents, and extended family. Her family made frequent trips to Haiti growing up. Her mother attended culinary school, and her father studied engineering in Germany. Marie attended private schools from elementary to high school. On the recommendation of her high school guidance counselor, she reluctantly attended a predominantly White private college in Pennsylvania, where she enrolled in a pre-law program. She found herself significantly unhappy there and took a few classes at a CUNY community college while she figured out her next steps. She then transferred to a SUNY University Center, where she was studied linguistics and was active in the Haitian Student Association. She found a fit at the

SUNY University Center, but her family had some troubles, which led to her leaving the SUNY campus. After about 13 years, she decided that it was time to return to college, and enrolled at a SUNY Comprehensive College, where she is currently studying early childhood education.

Marsha. Marsha was born in the US to a Jamaican father and American mother. Both of her parents struggled with drug addiction, so she was raised in the Bronx by her maternal great uncle, her aunt, and ten adopted siblings. She initially attended an under-resourced high school in the Bronx, where she acted out often and did not do well. As a result, her aunt took her out and enrolled her in a more academically rigorous and resourced high school in Manhattan.

Determined not to suffer a similar fate as her parents, she saw college as a way to a better life. While in high school, she enrolled in the Upward Bound program to aid in her college pursuits. After graduating from high school, she enrolled in a CUNY community college that her brother had previously attended. At the community college, she studied Liberal Arts and was in the school's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) program, which is a CUNY-wide program that provides financial, academic, and personal supports to help students graduate with an associate in three years. She went on to graduate from a CUNY senior college where she double majored in Africana Studies and Sociology. While attending that school, she became heavily involved in student activism.

Stephanie. Stephanie was born in the Commonwealth of Dominica and immigrated to the United States around the age of four. She was raised in NYC and Westchester County. Throughout her childhood, she lived with her grandmother, mother, mother's boyfriend, and younger brother. Her mother has an associate degree. She attended public schools until high school. For high school, she attended an academically challenging, predominately white, all-girls Catholic school in the suburbs of NYC. She was sheltered by her mother and was involved in the

youth ministry in her church. When it was time to apply for colleges, she was limited by her mother on which institutions she could attend and what she could study. Thus, she enrolled in a local CUNY senior college. She initially started out as a pre-nursing student, in accordance with her mother's request, but did not enjoy her classes. This led to an intense discussion with her mother about changing her major to psychology, which she ultimately did. After changing her major, everything seemed to fall into place. Her grades improved, she joined the psychology club and started research with faculty. Presently she is enrolled in a doctoral program studying psychology.

Tommy. Tommy was born and raised in the Bronx by a father who is from Ghana and a mother from the US. He lived with his parents and two older brothers. His mom is a college-educated and a retired educator, and his father is an auto mechanic. From middle school, Tommy knew that he wanted to become a lawyer. He attended a college preparatory high school in Manhattan that was geared towards law. When applying to college, he waited until the last minute to submit applications and decided to attend a CUNY senior college. There he became a co-founder and executive member of the Environmental Club, participated in pre-law activities, and law-related fellowships. He is currently enrolled in Law School.

Major Findings

A thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews produced 60 themes with three central categories: (a) early accumulations, (b) accumulating cultural capital through integration, and (c) habitus. The themes generated touched on educational entitlement, fulfilling the American Dream, navigating racialized America, affording college, and academic and social integration within schools. These themes are discussed throughout the following sections.

Research Question 1: How do Black students of immigrant-origin demonstrate cultural capital and habitus?

Black students of immigrant-origin demonstrate cultural capital and habitus in a myriad of ways. A habitus of achievement appeared to be of the utmost importance. Their habitus, or worldview, propelled them to consider a college education as one of the only options for success in their lives. As they grew up, it took strategic actions on the part of themselves, their parents, and people in their community to help push them towards the goal of getting a college education.

“I have no choice but to achieve.” One of the most prevalent concepts or ideas that many participants talked about was a need to achieve. The need to achieve academically and become successful was not only internally driven, but also shaped by participants’ family, community, and various experiences. “I have no choice but to achieve” appears in the form of educational entitlement, which was often guided by the belief in the American Dream. Additionally, many participants exhibited a racialized habitus formed by the racialized experiences they had here in the US. This racialized habitus, such as “I have to prove myself” and other understandings of the Black tax, or the belief that one has to work harder than others for the same result, also led to a worldview of needing to achieve.

Most of the students had a sense of entitlement towards going to college and attaining a college degree, and most participants were highly encouraged by family and people in their communities. While entitlement often has a negative connotation, educational entitlement in the case of these participants, by contrast, suggests that the participants were declaring their right to attain an education. For many participants, going to college was simply the next step after high school. A.J., a second-generation immigrant with a father who never attended college and mother who attained an associate’s degree, when asked how her friends influenced her choice to

go to college, stated, “It really didn’t have much of an influence and a choice per se. My main goal was just to get to college.” On the other hand, K.B., a first-generation immigrant who had no one in her immediate family who attended college, shared that going was not a consideration for her until she met a friend who had that interest. Talking about her friend, she mentions, “My best friend that I met in that alternative school, she had wanted to go to college, and I think that was the first time that I was exposed to higher education and the possible benefits from it. So that was really what sparked that for me.”

For many who immigrate to the US, there is a belief that if one puts in the effort, one can achieve. For both the 1st generation immigrant and 2nd generation immigrant participants, attaining a college degree and achieving academic success was an obligatory step in attaining that American Dream. Tommy sums up his story of academic stress and determination,

It was always that constant pressure, that constant reinforcement just in conversations, that everything that I'm given, that he's [Tommy's father] provided, it's not just for me or about me. But the big idea of us having privilege and blessings of being born in America. And having all these opportunities. He still sees America as this place of opportunity. And for me to finish and do what he couldn't do. So just that constant pressure, I think it's always in the back of my head. That pushed me, I think, subconsciously to continue college. And I know that pushes a lot of people. A lot of people with immigrant parents do the same. Always saying, ‘I have to do this for my parents, just for my family.’

Stephanie explains the obligation she felt to fulfilling the purpose of her immigration to the US:

It wasn't a conversation that I had with anyone. It was more so of like an understanding that I needed to go to college to get a good job. That was the end goal. We came here to America so you can have a better life. And that means going to college to get a good job so you can have a better life.

Later in the interview, she also shares, “And, I guess it was also part of, like, my immigrant experience. Just understanding that, like, we didn't come here for me to just slack off. Like, I had to be great.”

Cyrille, on the other hand, did not initially come to America with the intention of going to college despite coming from a family who pushed the importance of education. He said,

When I moved here in the United States of America, school wasn't an option because Africans when they come here, they come to hustle, you know? They come to hustle. They come to make that money, build I don't know a house back home, make people proud and then maybe go back when they retire or stay here for college. So school wasn't an option.

But after navigating America undocumented for six years, which resulted in him working numerous menial jobs, he started to ask how he could achieve the American Dream saying,

Coming from Cameroon to America was like a big difference, you know? America is a huge country. Like every opportunity can happen here in a split second, you know. You can wake up in the morning, and then just your life just changes. And I mean, that's, that's the American dream. That's what we travel miles and miles to come and look for. So I started asking myself those questions. And then, the more I ask myself those questions, the more I understood that education was the key to be able to integrate the American system to be able to have a voice at a table.

Cyrille, like many others, believed that to become successful – or to be taken seriously by people of power – achieving an education was necessary.

Furthermore, many of the participants demonstrated a habitus that materialized from the various racialized experiences they had here in the US. A few of the participants shared that there were times that they dealt with identity issues, while others just expressed some feelings of being “othered” in some spaces, including on their college campus. Asil, for example, mentioned she used to attend a church while growing up that, in hindsight, bred some internalized racist conceptions of being Black. It was not until she was in college that she recognized that she had those ideas and started embracing her blackness, and enrolled in Africana studies courses. Marie attended a private middle school where she was the only young Black girl. There, she was subjected to bullying and constant questioning of her identity. In high school, she found some relief attending a more culturally diverse institution and sought the same in her college, but her advisor recommended otherwise. Following her guidance counselor's advice, she opted to attend

a less diverse institution and was miserable. Gordon also attended a predominately White high school and shared that although he found friends and was well-liked, he sometimes did not know where he fit because he felt he had a different racialized experience from his Black and Hispanic peers and was not white. To many of his peers, he was not considered Black enough:

[O]ther black people, African Americans would say, ‘You're not black. You're an Oreo.’... For black people in the Caribbean, it's different. The dialects and African American vernacular English in the US is different, but that's the standard among black people in inner cities and amongst the youth. But I didn't speak like that, and because I didn't access that language easily until I was older, people excluded me on that. Because I was speaking "proper English," I could easily navigate the White spaces more. Caribbeans also dress, like from my parent's generation, dress different, so I feel that there's also this added influence of whatever they grew up with. Those norms were pushed, or I was raised with growing up.... [F]rom preschool to high school, always wearing uniforms. And then at church, always dressing up, all those things affected that identity that I had to discern.

Brandon shared that throughout high school and college, he heard racial remarks that implied that because he was smart, he was a different kind of Black person, or that his acceptance into a certain college was to fill a quota as opposed to because of his intelligence. Like Brandon, these types of racialized experiences pushed participants to want to achieve even more because they did not want others to think they – and Black people, in general – were incapable of achieving academically.

Accumulating cultural capital. Cultural capital is cumulative. Early accumulations help shape the high school and college experience, and the cultural capital that is gained on those levels. Many of the accumulations have an influence on participants’ persistence and graduation.

Early accumulations. Early accumulations of cultural capital served as the foundation on which high school and later college experiences were built. These early accumulations, such as socioeconomic background, language spoken at home, types of schools attended, and education of parents and siblings, provided context for the formation of habitus.

Most of the participants came from working-class or middle-class backgrounds and neighborhoods. Their parents were hard-working and often worked long hours. Many of the participants expressed not feeling as supported by their parents as they would have liked because their parents worked so much. Many of the parents were not hands-on with day-to-day aspects of school. Nonetheless, participants described how their parents expressed the expectation of high academic achievement. Some enrolled their children in Catholic and other private schools for elementary and middle school.

With the exception of two participants, Cyrille and Marie, all participants grew up with English as the main language spoken in their home. Four students participated in high-status activities like playing an instrument or in their high school orchestra or band growing up. A couple, Dante and Kristin, continued playing instruments even into college.

Some of the participants' parents were college-educated. For those who were not, this absence of parental college education led to misunderstandings about how the education system works. For example Asil and Stephanie, both 1st generation immigrants, expressed that their mothers saw the attainment of a college degree, on its own as the direct key to getting a job, neglecting to take into account the additional tasks necessary to gain cultural capital, strengthen a resume, and become recognized as a qualified candidate in the market.

Siblings attending college, whether they graduated or not, influenced college-going decisions. A.J.'s older sister was a college professor, and A.J. talked fondly of her sister taking her to classes when she was younger. According to A.J., her sister

was a big, big, very, very big role for me because I remember when I would have to go to class with her and she was going to community college not far, and I would be sitting...I would be sitting in class with her actually, just sitting there and you know professors would be, you know, they'll see a little kid, but they didn't know what was going on. And for me it was just like, this is, you know that was something really interesting to see like,

you know, she really was willing to go to school to the point she would take a five, maybe six years old to class with her and just have them sit around and watch the class.

Her sister also influenced A.J. to attend an HBCU. Marsha attended the same CUNY community college she attended because her brother had previously attended. Two of Kristin's siblings attempted college but dropped out, so she felt an obligation to complete her degree because she did not want to disappoint her parents. Kristin was driven by a desire to please her parents because her other siblings had never completed college but also because her parents had invested a lot of money into her getting an education. She mentions,

At this point, it was just like, it's up to you, Kristin. No one ever said that to me, but I knew that. I knew that for my mom, education was important. And also, they put a lot of money into my education, and all I ever want to do is make them proud.

Two of the participants were the children of pastors, and several others were highly involved in church growing up. For several participants, the church was the first or only place where childhood friendships were formed. For a few, church members were a source of encouragement and offered the necessary cultural knowledge and skills that helped them become more ready and competitive for college. Stephanie was highly sheltered, and the church youth group was one of her few outlets. She spoke fondly of a Deacon in her church who helped groom her, "in the sense of like, speaking up for myself and, like having a presence in the room. He was telling me like the importance of a firm handshake and stuff like that." Brandon talked about his youth pastor who was a key member of his support system and offered, "to sit down with you and he would try to come up with a plan or some way to make what you want to do become a reality," even into college. Dante, a pastor's son, shared that he was a part of his church's Rotary Society, where he was able to get some presentation experience.

In addition to some of the early accumulations already discussed, Dante also shared a unique experience that allowed him to gain cultural capital. In middle school, his teachers

noticed that Dante had a different level of drive than his peers. Consequently, his principal recommended him to a program called A Better Chance. The whole premise of the program, according to Dante was,

we're taking you out of okay schools and hopefully putting you in an environment where you can make a lot of connections and be in challenging situations, and academically-rigorous curriculums. And because of the name of the school that you're going to, hopefully, that can also help. But then the teachers can also put you in that mindset, or help mold you to be better...How about to mold you to compete better, to get into college and succeed in college.

Getting accepted into this program was one of the first signals that Dante knew he was going to college. The program placed him in a prestigious middle/high school in New Jersey.

High school accumulations. High school accumulations were decisions or acts that were done strategically to prepare students for college-going. Most of the participants felt prepared for college because most had been enrolled in academically rigorous college preparatory or high-performing high schools. These college preparatory high schools prepared them for college in several ways: organizational habitus, academic rigor, college-level credit, and exposure to college. Many of the participants mentioned a habitus of college-going, where students in the high schools were all intending to go to college. Among Tommy and his peers at school, there even appeared to be a sort of elitism towards going to particular types of schools, saying,

Nobody wanted to... It was a joke about going to BMCC like that was a big running gag at the time. And we like hey you're going to get into BMCC, and it was seen as like a fail to get into that school, let alone not even get into a school at all. So, that kind of perpetuated the whole pressure to kind of wanna do well, at least wanna get in somewhere.

The schools prepared them for the academic rigor of college. Stephanie, who attended an affluent, predominately White high school in the suburbs of NY said there was a noticeable difference from her academic experience and some of her peers when she got to college, saying,

I noticed that my peers, I don't think they were ready for college, from what I saw. They were from economically disadvantaged public schools. So they didn't have enough

resources within their school. I don't think that their writing levels were at all decent, but it was at a high school level. So just basically taking that in being in my general education courses like freshman year. I did better than my peers.

All but three participants enrolled and attained either Advanced Placement or College Now college-level credit. Those credits gave them valuable academic and cultural knowledge that was beneficial for their college applications. According to Gordon, he took advanced courses because “the assumption was that it would make . . . my high school record look like I’m taking more rigorous classes, I can be able to withstand, or persevere . . . there wouldn’t be a doubt about my capabilities.” Most participants actively sought those opportunities or were referred by teachers who thought they had interests and skills in a particular subject. Marsha’s school made it mandatory to enroll in College Now courses, which in hindsight, made her thankful because she would not have taken those courses if given a choice because she did not understand the importance of them in high school.

Some of the participants mentioned how exposure to certain types of groups affected their experience in college. For participants’ who attended high schools that were comprised of predominately White students from relatively wealthy socioeconomic backgrounds, having exposure to people with those backgrounds made some participants more comfortable with navigating those types of spaces, which translated to their feeling of fit when they attended predominately White colleges. They did not experience a level of culture shock as other peers who were not accustomed to being in predominately White and wealthy spaces. The same was true for participants who similarly attended more racially diverse high schools and later attended more racially diverse colleges or Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Those participants were able to find cultural fit more easily in the more racially diverse schools.

Some participants were able to find support in teachers and counselors. These teachers pushed the participants to their highest potential. Although K.B. was attending an alternative

high school, she had a teacher who recognized her passion for reading and always recommended books about African and African American culture to her. Dante mentioned how his teachers recognized his desire to learn and nurtured it by recommending AP classes. They also offered much needed cultural knowledge about the application process for college. His guidance counselor helped him to track his applications, deadlines, and his AP English teacher-reviewed his application essays multiple times.

Furthermore, participants found teachers and counselors who were Black or of similar cultural decent. These academic support persons sometimes offered spaces where participants could feel understood, particularly if they were attending a school that was predominately White and/or had very few teachers of color. Marie talked about a teacher who seemed to serve as a mentor to most of the students who identified as “Black or Brown.” She said that the teacher “would talk to us whenever we had any feelings about anything we were unsure of, and we didn’t really know where we could go to get that clarity.” A.J.’s teacher and mentor also attended an HBCU and influenced her decision to attend an HBCU and recommended her for a scholarship.

A majority of the participants had friends, many of immigrant-origin themselves, who also aspired to go to college. They, self-proclaimed nerds, had conversations about what schools they wanted to attend and what they wanted to study. They had a friendly competitiveness that pushed them to do well in their coursework. For example, Marsha mentioned one of her friends, despite being undocumented, had great grades. Commenting about her friend Marsha said, “she had to put her best foot forward. And that would make me put my best foot forward.” K.B.’s first exposure and reasons for wanting to attend college were due to her best friend because none of K.B.’s family members were college-educated. “My best friend had enrolled in college, and it

just sounded like something that I wanted to do,” she shared. Louisa was one of the few who did not have friends who aspired to college. Not having friends who aspired to college had deleterious consequences for her because even though she enrolled in college immediately out of college, she did not fully apply herself and failed all of her courses during her first year.

At these college preparatory schools, some participants were also able to gain cultural knowledge to determine which colleges to attend and how to gain acceptance in them by exposing them to college via college trips or inviting representatives to their schools. Dante shared that while on a college tour during his freshman year, he was coached to ask particular questions that would be helpful in learning more about college and was able to learn, “this is even what you need to do to get to places like this or to get scholarships to these places.” Some of the schools also offered SAT preparatory courses on-site and had dedicated college advisors.

Other participants were able to gain similar knowledge about requirements for acceptance into college, and exposure to college life outside of their high schools, either through community programs or institutionalized pre-college programs. Marsha enrolled in an Upward Bound TRIO program, where she was given a coach that helped her navigate the college application process and offered free SAT preparatory courses. Kristin enrolled in a program where she was offered an internship where she accepted, which allowed her to acquire some work skills and knowledge while taking an online college-level course. Marie was in another program that was geared towards people interested in entering the field of law. She took three college credit-bearing, pre-law courses. Dante participated in a program called the Beautillion. According to Dante, the Beautillion was a three or four-month mentoring program sponsored by Kappa Alpha Psi, an international, historically Black fraternal organization. During this mentoring program, they

frequently met on a college campus and learned valuable topics including financial literacy and life skills, such as how to tie a tie, and how to prepare and apply for college.

Enrolling children in a high-performing school was not as effective for one participant. K.B.'s mother, unfamiliar with the American school system, advocated for K.B. to get into a high school that was deemed a good school on the recommendation from some friends, but K.B. described it as a wrong fit for her. The school had a focus on science and math, while K.B.'s interests were in English and language arts. As a result of the lack of institutional fit, K.B. developed habits of truancy and was ultimately placed into an alternative high school.

College accumulations. College accumulations of cultural capital were ways in which participants positioned themselves to gain cultural skills and knowledge that contributed to their persistence and graduation. The perceived congruence of students' cultural capital and the organizational habitus of an institution influenced how students integrated socially and academically. Integration contributed to students feeling confident that they were able to persist and graduate. As such, this section will focus on activities and relationships that participants engaged in that helped them to integrate socially and academically.

A majority of participants had nurturing relationships with faculty members and other academic support persons or offices at their respective colleges. Through these relationships, participants were able to find academic support and gain knowledge about what was required to navigate college and ultimately graduate. Cyrille became energized when I asked him who had served as his support system while in college. He spoke ebulliently about many of the administrators in the TRIO programs, both at his community college and senior college, who helped usher him through his programs. He spoke of one of his counselors at the senior college who reached out to him frequently to review his progress, which helped him graduate within two

years, stating, “He would even go so far as ‘rush[ing] me down on campus for me to come in his office.” Marsha talked about how her ASAP mentor “cultivated” her into the person she is presently, by constantly staying on her and offering sage advice. “He worked with me,” she asserted. “He worked with me and the professors. He sat us down, we talked. Every week he would be like, Marsha, are you keeping up in your classes? You know, he was like a real mentor to me.”

Collegiate academic support staff also offered the necessary tools and knowledge for life after undergraduate studies. For example, Louisa shared that her professor,

suggested I do the CASAC [Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor]... And even for the master program, a lot of support of different schools like they would print it out, give it to you. You know, tell you how to go about the whole process.

Regarding advisor recommendations, Asil sought out the assistance of a scholarships and fellowships office, a place that would ultimately become like a second home to her on campus.

There she was able to get guidance on what was necessary for a career in psychology. Referring to a mentor from that office, Asil shared,

She let me know that I had to go for higher education. She put me on track for doing things that would make me a good candidate for higher education by telling me about research things that I need to be involved in, by telling me to apply for scholarships, to fellowships, to national things.

K.B. was invited by a professor to join a writing group and encouraged to submit her work for publications and awards, giving her confidence in her writing ability and skills that could be highlighted on a resume.

There were a few cases in which participants interacted with unhelpful academic support staff. For example, Gordon communicated that he felt that he was left to figure out his academic plan on his own through conversations with his classmates, and his academic advisor neglected to support him when he realized he was behind on his pre-med requirements. He

ultimately changed his major to public health which allowed him graduate in a acceptable time frame. He was able to obtain guidance from the director and professors of the public health program. Additionally, he was aided by several other student affairs professionals because he was highly active on campus. He also found valuable peer and academic support through a men's empowerment group, specifically for men of color.

Participants also talked about friends and acquaintances who helped them navigate college and acted as sources of support. Most met their friends and acquaintances in class, clubs, in their residence halls, through participation in student government, and at work. Cyrille said he forged many professional relationships because he believes, "the more successful people you know, the more successful you are, or you become." Some of their friends were also people of color and of immigrant-origin who shared the same beliefs about college and graduation. Stephanie shared a story that illustrated how a friend's advice led to a significant turn of events and her gaining cultural capital. During her sophomore year, she met a friend during a service project. She shared with the friend that she was a psychology major, and the friend informed her of the existence of a psychology club, where she was introduced to the Psy Chi honor society. That led to Stephanie's determination to apply herself more assiduously to her studies to gain induction to the honor society. She then reached out to the director of the honor society requesting the opportunity of doing some research with him because she wanted to "do different things that I need to do to build myself up. Like, create a strong resume." The research allowed her to attend conferences, do presentations, and she was ultimately published. All of those sources of cultural capital came out of a talk with friends. Contrastingly, Tommy shared that he did not make any meaningful college friends at his school, but had continued his friendships with his high school friends who were also in college.

In college, many of the participants became involved in co-curricular clubs and activities, such as research activities with faculty, internships, fellowships, study abroad, and radio/film studios. Among some of the clubs they joined, were the pre-law society, Psy Chi Honor Society, the National Society for Black Engineers, and Marine Science Scholars. Two participants earned the prestigious Gilman Scholarship to study abroad. These co-curricular activities were strategic ways for participants to gain information in order to be successful in their respective majors and their future careers.

In addition to co-curricular clubs, many participants joined culturally-related student organizations or support groups. These groups offered safe spaces where the participants were able to exchange ideas about how to successfully navigate college as a Black/African/Caribbean student, feel understood, and get involved in activism to ensure their campuses were welcoming to Black students and other students of color. Brandon shared that his school's Black Student Union was founded in response to an incident at the University of Missouri, where a fraternity was shouting racist chants. The group was created to put pressure on the administration of the college attended by Brandon encourage them to recognize and address the "tension that people feel, because they're Black on a predominately White campus" and to ensure that "the environment is positive for everyone." Even at an HBCU, A.J. found value in joining the Caribbean Student Association, saying that she joined because she was able to "find students who actually understood what I was going through." Unfortunately, at Kristin's college, she did not find the Black Student Union to be welcoming, and the Caribbean Student Union did not have any students from the Caribbean.

Research Question 2: What role does cultural capital and habitus play in college persistence and graduation for these students?

A sense of educational entitlement led many of the participants to want to go to college. The same sense of entitlement ultimately led the participants to graduate. For many of the participants, not completing their degree was not an option. Like many others, Asil shared,

I always knew I was graduating and graduating within four years. So that wasn't the question for me. For me, the question was preparing. . . How can I build my resume or my CV so that I can be a good candidate for what's happening after. . . I think I pushed myself to graduate and also being around people that cared a lot about that, that kept me in check because they didn't allow me to slack off because I just wasn't going to do that.

Participants developed a habitus that they had to graduate to be able to contribute to building their communities, to prove they belonged in academic and professional spaces, and for practical reasons such as money and time spent.

“I need to succeed for my community.” Completing a bachelor's degree was not only seen as a personal accomplishment for the participants. The concept of collective work and responsibility was an idea that seemed quite prevalent among the participants. The accomplishment of graduating was a necessary step so that the participants could be in positions where they could help their families and communities. Like many other participants, Gordon shared, "I want to succeed, because I have these goals, I have for myself, and these goals also impact my community." Marsha expressed that the reason she continued in school was that she did not want to endure the same fate of her parents, who were drug addicts, but also because,

we gotta win. That's what I think about. Like, a win for me is a win for my people. That's how I think. We can't blow it. I feel like we took enough Ls. Especially in this time? We living in scary times. I feel like we have to be an example for, you know, the generation that comes before us. And I always think about, you know, my nieces and nephews and what legacy I want to set for them.

Whether it was to become a filmmaker, educator, psychologist, lawyer, doctor, or engineer, the ultimate goal for many of the participants was to give back to their families and greater community in some way. Cyrille mentioned several times in our discussion that

he pursued an education so that he could have a “seat at the table.” He was afforded opportunities to speak on behalf of people in his community because people valued what he had to say. He attributed many of the invitations to his education. Tommy talked about how during a law fellowship where he was able to advocate for court-involved youth. There he gained an understanding that him pursuing law was part of a bigger picture. He would be able to advocate for the voiceless. Also, because of the current political and social climate around race in America, Tommy also found advocates for himself, who wanted to see him become successful. He expressed wanting to succeed for the people who were rooting for him, saying,

I guess there's not a lot of Black men at all [in the legal field]. So yeah, being a person of color but specifically being a Black man, I think, put a lot of people in my corner automatically. Especially with the political climate and everything. That kind of helped to really push... and people wanna see me succeed. So it wasn't just doing it for myself, but for these people that are supporting me, for that reason.

“I have to prove my greatness” and “I have to work harder.” Participants’ personal experiences and awareness of incidents in their communities dealing with racism and racial biases led them to respond in several ways, including embracing their racial identity, engaging in Black activism, and working harder to achieve academically. All of these responses to racism and racial bias also contributed to why participants thought it was necessary to persist and graduate. Participants wanted to graduate because they wanted to prove their greatness to people who thought otherwise of Black people. Cyrille expressed,

America and the society that we’re living in, Black kids have no chance if he doesn’t get that education that he needs. You could be the best basketball player, could be the best performer, rap artist, whatever you want to be. But they’re going to just look at you like a clown, like someone that’s there to amuse the public gallery. The difference of how they treat those people and those that have their education, you could see plainly . . . the only way you can give yourself some worth is by educating yourself . . . You know, I don't have these problems in Africa . . . But in this society, I have to affirm myself as, OK. This is me. Hello? I'm here.

K.B. had to cancel enrollment in college at one point in her school career to take care of herself and her child. Finding herself in a homeless shelter, she enrolled back into college, eventually completing her associates, bachelors, and masters degrees. She expressed that because her undergraduate school was diverse, she did not feel a need to prove anything. However, when she was in graduate school, she was one of the only people of color and felt that as a Black woman, she needed to prove herself.

Similarly, several participants attributed various iterations of the Black tax, which is the belief that, as a Black person, they had to work harder than others to achieve the same goals. When asked what role she thought her ethnic or cultural background played in her college experience and academic achievement, A.J. said plainly, “I need to achieve. I need to go ahead and try to do better than my peers. Because my parents raised me more so to make sure I'm always on top, or I'm always striving. . . to be the best.”

Brandon expressed some internal conflicts with feeling like he had to prove himself. However, he recognized that he was also representing other Black people saying,

In my class, my chemical engineering class, there's not too many black people... So on some level, I feel like...you don't want them to feel like you're not capable, but at the same time, I've always had this thing where I'm not competing with anyone else...My goal is to make myself better, not be better than someone else, I guess. But it's kind of like you feel torn because you want to make sure that, these people that don't look like me don't feel like people that look like me shouldn't be here, you know.

“Resources have been invested, so I have to finish.” Despite having a predisposition for persisting in college, participants had to make some real choices in regards to cost and affording college. The current national conversations about college affordability, college debt, and the value of a college degree were at the forefront of many of the participants’ minds. For most of the participants, the choice of where they would attend college and ultimately why they persisted and graduated “really came down to the money.” Many asserted that their rationales for

choosing a certain school was based on the school's price tag and the amount of financial aid they received. They did not want to take on or subject their family to significant amounts of debt. Asil chose her undergrad because as part of the Honors program, she was eligible for a scholarship saying, "it came down to the money...it was a big influence on my choice because I didn't want to have to take out loans and I didn't want my mother to have to take out loans for me." Gordon said similarly, "I got into seven colleges, and I ended up choosing my final college based on who gave the most money. I didn't want finances to be a burden to my family. Yeah, I didn't want finances to be a burden to my parents."

Likewise, the impetus to graduate was often a financial decision too. A.J. joined the Army National Guard while in college because she was concerned with her ability to afford and finish school. When asked what made him continue in school, Brandon shared,

...like I feel like there is some responsibility to them, like for me to finish out. And also because like the resources have been invested. Like, if I was going to quit, I should have quit freshman year. I don't really have. I never had any intention of quitting. I never felt like I should, but, at this point, like having taken out all the loans and stuff like, I have to finish out.

Similarly, Kristin shared that she continued because she knew education was important to her mother, and they had "put a lot of money into my education."

An Example of a Linear Path: The Case of Dante

Dante's story is an illustration of the role that cultural capital and habitus can play in the life of a Black immigrant-origin individual who took the more traditional path to and through college. His story is a great example because he has the most instances or opportunities through which cultural capital was acquired. Dante was brought to America from Jamaica when he was 6 months old. Both of his parents are college-educated and attained their degrees in both American and Caribbean schools. Until he was ten, both of his parents were enrolled in school, so Dante had some exposure to the rigors of higher education at an early age. Dante's father was a pastor,

and they moved frequently. His parents were quite busy with work, and he was often responsible for helping with church duties and taking care of his siblings. Nonetheless, the pressure to achieve academically and become successful was present from an early age. In addition to seeing his parents in school, he often felt an “expectation for success” from parents and extended family – that he should take advantage of the opportunities that were available in the US and fulfill the American Dream. From a young age, there was another expectation that when he turned 18, he would be able to fully take care of himself and help his three younger siblings who might need money to attend college in the future. As such, Dante thought, “the most obvious way to become financially stable was to find a job or to go to college and get a degree in something.”

Dante was a studious child and excelled academically. His teachers and counselors recognized his drive, helped usher him through, and encouraged higher education as an option. In middle school, he frequently found himself bored because he completed his work before the rest of the class. As a result, Dante’s principal recommended he apply to the A Better Chance program. The program placed children in competitive school environments so that they would gain the necessary financial and cultural capital that would allow them to be competitive when applying for colleges. He was given a scholarship to attend an academically rigorous college preparatory middle/ high school in South Jersey. That school was predominately White and had many economically privileged students. The minoritized students at the school were competitive and helpful towards each other so that they were “not going to be kicked out of the school or seen as below our peers.” He believed that he had to work three times harder than his peers to do well, and he felt as though “you have to succeed . . . you don’t embarrass your parents. Let’s go like an hour away from where I live so, every day doing that, and if you’re not doing well then why are you wasting all of your time.”

During Dante's freshman year of high school, he went on a college tour with his school. Chaperones coached students on the types of questions they should be asking college representatives. On the trip, he learned about the tools and knowledge he needed to apply to college and scholarships and be successful.

Halfway through high school, his family had to move due to his father's job. He transferred to a college preparatory public school that evidently was not as rigorous as the private school he left. The public school was more diverse than the private school, but Dante expressed feelings of "awkwardness" because being from the Caribbean, "you're Black, but you're not Black." Again, he found himself ahead of his classmates. Consequently, he worked with his teachers to get placement in AP History, English, and Physics courses. Armed with a college application toolkit, from his college visits, he worked with his guidance counselors and teachers to make himself ready for college. During his senior year, teachers edited his college essays, and his guidance counselor helped ensure that he submitted materials in a timely manner. He also gained a mentor through a community program called the Kappa Beautillion that had the goal of getting Black men in college. Dante gained skills and valuable information that helped in his transition to and through college. The mentors tried to serve as a resource for people who "either didn't have a dad or a parent that were aware of these things."

When choosing colleges, a major factor of consideration was cost, as he did not want to burden himself or his family with debt. He chose to attend a private school in Pennsylvania, where he double majored in computer science and philosophy, with a minor in pre-law. While attending, he considered transferring because he found that "the population of White people was kind of... overwhelming," and he was confronted with some financial difficulties. Despite the school demographics, he was highly involved in campus clubs and activities. He asked his

parents to take out a Parent Plus Loan to continue. Among some of the clubs and activities, he participated in were numerous co-curricular clubs, like Pre-law society, Math club, American Sign Language club, and French club. In those clubs, he was able to get information so that he could be successful in respective classes. In the pre-law society, he was able to meet alumni and more senior classmates and get tips on which professors and classes to choose, ensuring progress to degree, and the Law school application process. He also was a member of two culturally related groups-the Black Student Union and a Black male support group that was sponsored by a Black fraternity. While he knew many people from the activities he was involved in, he never established any deep relationships with other students. He did establish relationships with resourceful professors, some of whom were professors of color. The professors of color offered tips on how to navigate a predominately White school,

and they were very tough because they knew that I needed it or that it would help them motivate me. But also helped me understand what my place was, or how other people or other students or other professors will be interpreting my performance and also my place there.

Habitus was highly influential in Dante's persistence and graduation. Although he now regrets the amount of money that he put into college, according to him, "I had no reason not to finish school." He had to graduate to give value to the effort he put in to lead him to that point. He felt as though he had to be successful, as his cousins would question why he could not be successful given the opportunities he received. Furthermore, he had been contemplating ways in which he could give back to his country and family saying,

and I guess I kind of have a thing where, like maybe I can do something for like my country, if I do well enough, you know over here...The more time I spend here, the harder it is to see how I could, you know, like what kind of impact can I actually have? And, um to what degree?

An Example of a Non-Linear Path: The Case of Cyrille

Cyrille's story is a contrasting illustration of the role cultural capital and habitus plays in the persistence and graduation of Black-immigrant origin individuals. Cyrille took a less traditional pathway to and through higher education. His story touches on similar issues that other nontraditional participants experienced, such as being a GED recipient, attending multiple institutions, employment issues, and facing unsupportive school administrators.

Cyrille was born in the francophone section of Cameroon. His mother raised Cyrille, his older sister, and younger brother by herself. In his home, Cyrille grew up primarily speaking French and Bamilèkè, his mother's tribal language. He also learned English as Cameroon is a dual-language country.

Cyrille was raised as a devout Catholic and described his family as a "regular African family about education, education, education." His mother had vocational training in nursing. She worked often to take care of the family, was strict, and tried to instill a habitus of academic achievement within her children. She wanted her children to focus solely on school and church. Cyrille's sister was a role model and support system for him. She attained a bachelor's degree in Language and was the first in his family to have such an achievement. To his mother's chagrin, however, Cyrille did not show similar interests in school. His educational environment and friends did not share the same habitus of academic achievement as his mom. He described his schools as crowded, with limited infrastructure, and no counselors. In elementary school, he was often bullied by classmates because he grew up without a father, which contributed to his dislike for school.

When Cyrille got to high school, he became rebellious and cantankerous in his quest "to find that validation or identity as a person." His behavior resulted in dismissal from several schools, including a Catholic boarding school and several public schools. During his first year in

high school, he was “traumatized” when a math teacher told him he would not amount to anything, which contributed to his negative feelings about math even into college. He had good relationships with his language and humanities teachers – all subjects that he enjoyed. The few close friends he had while in high school shared the same mindset as he. Cyrille was most interested in playing sports and music. For a short while, he sang in a band at a friend’s school and he played soccer competitively for his school. His mother did not agree with him doing either activity, and he had to stop despite being talented.

Eventually, Cyrille dropped out a year before he was supposed to graduate from high school. Determined for her son to get an education, his mother “took me out of Cameroon just because she wanted to set me far away from soccer friends and music friends.” He moved to Nigeria and enrolled in a vocational program where he begrudgingly studied computer engineering to please his mother. After he returned to Cameroon and worked for six years at a computer firm. He became dissatisfied with his life in Africa and sought opportunities to go to the United States.

When Cyrille initially moved to the United States, he emigrated intending to make money, because:

Africans, when they come here, they come to hustle, you know. They come to hustle; they come to make that money, build, I don’t know, a house back home, make people proud, and then maybe go back when they retire or stay here for college.

Cyrille overstayed his visa and lost his work permit. While undocumented, he worked all types of jobs including working as a cab driver, a nightclub bathroom attendant, and security of a 99-cent store. He also started experiencing racism and xenophobia – experiences that he had not encountered in Cameroon. He started to question his purpose in life and realized “all the

successful people I look up to had some type of college education.” He discovered that his calling was film, journalism, and television, and he wanted to learn everything about that industry. While working as a gas station attendant, he found a flyer about a local community college and vowed that once he was able to get his green card – he would educate himself.

As soon as he was able to get his legal documentation, Cyrille enrolled in a GED program, and then the SUNY Community College, where he attained an Associates in Communication and Media Arts. Immediately upon receiving his associate degree, he enrolled in a CUNY Senior College, where he studied Multimedia Studies.

Cyrille was accepted into the community college’s Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), and the senior college’s Percy E. Sutton Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) program, respectively. Both programs are opportunity programs that offer plenty of cultural capital resources – providing access, financial, and academic supports to students who otherwise would not be able to gain admission but show promise. Cyrille was amazed that due to his financial aid, “they paid me to go to school.” In addition to the much-needed financial resources, the staff members of the programs were a significant support system, serving as his cheerleaders, extended family, and mentors. Cyrille spoke fondly of the numerous mentors he gained from being in these programs. He described how his math tutor pushed him and supported him in getting an A in a math course, and how his SEEK counselor would go out of his way to find Cyrille on campus to provide counsel.

Cyrille described his college journey in the United States as professional. He was able to find people who shared the same goals, values, and aspirations. While attending the community college, Cyrille worked full-time and did not have much time to be involved on campus, although he was a radio host there. When he moved on to the senior college, he quit his job so

that he could take full advantage of the college experience, saying, “I will not sacrifice my future just for this job.” At the senior college, he became a highly involved student leader. One of his mentors encouraged him to take some leadership and public speaking courses. These courses gave him courage and competency, which steered him into becoming a Student Government President, participating in Black Male Initiative programming, and volunteering abroad in Honduras. Furthermore, he was engaged in several co-curricular activities such as being a videographer, and director of the school’s television studio, which allowed him to build technical skills for his chosen profession.

While Cyrille was in college he also became a father. Fatherhood also gave him a renewed sense of purpose. He took his son with him on campus often. He exposed him to academia to instill a habitus for achievement.

Cyrille’s habitus for academic achievement eventually came around as a result of his experiences in the United States. He pursued education as a “challenge to myself and affirmation to others.” He recognized that as an African, as a Cameroonian, as a Black person, he did not want to allow space for people to see those groups in a negative light, saying, “you don’t want to give an excuse to anyone to treat you any type of way because you’re African or because you’re Black. When I’m in a room, I always want to be the best.” Racist and xenophobic experiences provided him fuel to be a better person and become a good representation of African peoples.

Differences in Linear versus Non-linear Paths

Students that took a nonlinear path had very similar ways in which they attained cultural capital and habitus, as compared to participants who took a more linear path, like Dante. The differences in how cultural capital and habitus was demonstrated is nuanced. The most salient characteristic that seemed to distinguish individuals who took a nonlinear path to and through

college, was there appeared to be incongruence or misalignments between participants' personal and familial habitus and the habitus of the people or organization of which they were a part of. Some of the participants who took a nonlinear path had friends who were not interested in pursuing education. In the cases of Cyrille and KB for example, there was lack of congruence between organizational habitus and familial habitus when they were in high school. Cyrille described his high school as lacking in resources such as counselors, libraries, and computers, all cultural capital tools that aid in the pursuance of an education. He also shared that he did not have the best relationship with many of his teachers. It is debatable whether his aggressive temperament was the result of or the cause of those "broken" relationships, likely a little bit of both. Nonetheless, he also had friends who similarly lacked interest in school as he did. All of those elements- relationships with teachers, relationships with friends, and the physical environment came together to create a deterrent towards school and pushed him off the more direct path towards college.

KB was the only participant who appeared to not inherit a habitus of achievement from her family. During her high school years, she lacked an interest in education, and attended alternative schools that also did not have an organizational habitus of achievement. It was not until she met a friend in college who had ambitions of going to college that KB's aspirations for a college education came about. Contrastingly, Louisa came from a well-educated family with a strong habitus for achievement. Initially she pursued college directly after high school but did not do well because of her friendship circle. Her lack of interest in school was bolstered by having friends who similarly were not interested in college pursuits.

As a result of the lack of congruence, the participants' habitus for achievement appeared to be dormant until the participants entered an environment with increased congruence with their

habitus. When Marsha acted out often in her first high school, which was under-resourced. When she was moved to a more academically rigorous and resourced school there were teachers and counselors who could offer her academic supports which contributed to her desire to want to do well in school. In her school's Upward Bound program, Marsha was given tools and skills, like SAT prep and assistance in choosing colleges that pushed her forward in education. That is potentially why cultural capital programs tend to have good outcomes.

There is a synergy that is created when there is congruence between individual and familial habitus, school's organizational habitus, and the habitus of people (family and friends) in one's circle. For participants who took a nonlinear path there appeared to be misalignment between one or more elements.

Summary of Findings

The key points presented in the chapter resulted from two research questions. The first research question was: *How do Black students of immigrant-origin demonstrate cultural capital and habitus?* Participants grew up with a habitus of achievement that came from the family wanting to attain the American Dream as well as racialized experiences they endured in the US. This habitus motivated participants to achieve academically and establish a sense of educational entitlement. Most participants were from working-class or middle-class backgrounds. In their early years, participants attained cultural capital in the form of English as their primary language, and from the support of people in their churches who served as cultural resources.

Furthermore, some of the participants' parents and older siblings had college educations, which exposed them to the rigors and requirements of college. In the high school years, many of the participants enrolled in academically rigorous college preparatory or high-performing high schools. In those schools, most participants were scholastically prepared for the rigors of college,

given opportunities to gain college credit via AP and College Now courses, and college tours. Participants found high school friends who had similar cultural backgrounds and academic goals and supportive teachers and counselors. Furthermore, some participants were able to gain cultural capital from the community and pre-college programs. In college, participants gained cultural capital through nurturing professors and academic support offices, participating in co-curricular activities and culturally-related clubs, and resourceful friends or acquaintances.

The second research question was: *What role does cultural capital and habitus play in college persistence and graduation for these students?* Participants persisted because they had a strong predisposition for achievement and felt that not graduating was not an option, and they would be considered failures if they did not graduate. They persisted and graduated because they wanted to be able to give back to their families and communities, wanted to prove their greatness to others, and needed to persist for practical and financial reasons.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, I will discuss my interpretation of the findings based on its relation to the literature and theoretical framework. Implications for ways in which educators can further help Black immigrant students persist will be shared. Additionally, I will provide recommendations on future research that can carry the research on Black immigrant college students forward.

Summary of Findings

This study explored cultural capital and habitus and how they shaped the college persistence and graduation of Black immigrant-origin undergraduates and alumni at four-year postsecondary institutions. A basic interpretive qualitative design, guided by cultural capital theory, allowed me to explore participants' perspectives in-depth and describe the participants' subjective meanings, actions, and social contexts from their point of view. I conducted semi-structured interviews with thirteen Black-immigrant origin students and graduates. The primary research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1: How do Black students of immigrant-origin demonstrate cultural capital and habitus?

RQ2: What role does cultural capital and habitus play in college persistence and graduation for these students?

Participants grew up with a habitus of achievement that came from the family wanting to attain the American Dream as well as racialized experiences sustained in the US. This habitus motivated participants to achieve academically and establish a sense of educational entitlement. The same habitus that instilled an entitlement towards education and a drive to accomplish an education that got them into college also got them through college. Participants felt that there were no valid alternatives to not graduating from college. They felt as though they had to persist

and graduate because they wanted to be able to give back to their families and communities; they wanted to prove their greatness to others; and because time, money, and resources had been dedicated to their completion of college.

Cultural capital is cumulative (Winkle-Wagner, 2010), and as such, there were several steps throughout the participants' lives that they or their parents took to prepare them for entering college and graduating. Most participants were from working-class or middle-class backgrounds. In their early years, participants attained cultural capital in the form of English as their primary language, and from the support of people in their churches who served as cultural resources. Furthermore, some of the participants' parents and older siblings had college educations, which exposed them to the rigors and requirements of college. In the high school years, many of the participants enrolled in academically rigorous college preparatory or high-performing high schools. In those schools, most participants were scholastically prepared for the rigors of college, given opportunities to gain college credit via AP and College Now courses, and went on college tours. Participants found high school friends who had similar cultural backgrounds and academic goals and supportive teachers and counselors. Furthermore, some participants were able to gain cultural capital from people or programs in their community including pre-college programs. In college, participants attained cultural capital through interacting with nurturing professors and academic support offices, by participating in co-curricular activities and culturally-related clubs, and maintaining relationships with resourceful friends or acquaintances.

Discussion

Majority of the scholarship on Black immigrant student populations have been limited to students who are attending highly selective institutions and a select few to those enrolled in community colleges. Participants in this study came from a variety of countries of origin, and

variety of institutions in selectivity and diversity. Most importantly this study included participants who took linear and non-linear paths to and through college. This study highlights and provided rich examples of people who endured homelessness, maneuvered undocumented, attained GEDs, attended trade schools, went through community colleges to senior colleges, stopped-out, and had delayed college starts. Regardless of what the participants endured, they persisted and are on the path to or have already graduated. Their stories can provide a more nuanced understanding of the Black immigrant students' college experience.

Other noteworthy points of discussion include the importance of individual habitus in the persistence of Black immigrant-origin students. Participants persisted regardless of their socioeconomic status and despite their parents' educational backgrounds. Participants' habitus helped them integrate into their institutions and find cultural agents who provided resources and helped them graduate.

The findings also align with the broader definition of cultural capital, as per Lareau and Weininger (2003), which "stresses the micro-interactional process whereby individuals' strategic use of knowledge, skills, and competence comes into contact with institutionalized standards of evaluation" (p.569). Cultural capital knowledge, skills, and competence is distinguished from other forms of knowledge, skills and competence if they are transmissible across generations, subject to monopoly, and provides advantages to those who use them.

One of the most popular conceptualizations of cultural capital in higher education research has been knowledge and participation of elite, highbrow culture and activities. Involvement in those activities did not appear to be relevant in the college persistence of the study's participants. Three participants discussed playing instruments, but only one continued playing into college. Participation in highbrow activities did not appear to provide the respective

participants with any advantages over the other participants. However, a habitus of achievement, gained from family, did provide advantages to the participants. Historically, achieving a college education, which allowed access to success, was an activity limited to white individuals. College education was subject to monopoly. Once educational opportunities became more open to other populations, the rhetoric around achievement in education increased, and shared between generations as the way to be successful in the United States and gain the American Dream. Habitus of achievement, alone, did not get participants to the finish line, however. A habitus of achievement provided the pathway, but other cultural capital knowledge about types of schools to attend, ways to build ones' resume, types of relationships to cultivate, or programs to become involved in were also necessary and helpful. Families may not have had familiarity with the U.S. education system to understand what they needed to do to get to and through college. As a result, some participants tapped into cultural resources such as their churches, community organizations, teachers and counselors to fill in the gaps.

Individual Habitus and Persistence

Another notable finding of this research is the role of habitus, expressed as educational entitlement in the college persistence and graduation of Black immigrant-origin students. According to Berger (2000), educational entitlement is a cultural framework by which college degree attainment is the norm and expected post-high school experience. Similar to findings of Griffin, del Pilar, McIntosh, and Griffin's (2012) research looking at Black immigrant-origin's college choice process, habitus was instrumental in the study participants' decisions to attend college. It was also instrumental in participants' persistence and graduation. College attainment was not an aspiration but an expectation for the majority of my study's participants. Participants' habitus of college achievement was prevalent regardless of the socioeconomic status of the

participants' families, lending support to Tauriac and Liem's (2012) conclusions that immigrant-origin Blacks are persisting more than US origin Blacks despite socioeconomic status.

Participants' habitus was guided by participants' cultural backgrounds and the desire to contribute to their families and communities. Participants in this study found value in their cultural experiences. Their cultural beliefs are what drove their habitus for success in education. This finding contrasts with Tierney's (1999) assessment that one must commit cultural suicide to assimilate into an institution, which is a foundation of Tinto's (1975, 1986, 1983) model of student integration.

This research further amplifies the findings in George Mwangi, Daoud, English, and Griffin's (2017), study that focused on the academic achievement motivations of Black college students by generational status/nativity. George Mwangi, et.al. (2017) found across all generations students' personal academic motivation was highly influenced by family and had internalized their family's expectations of college-going. Students were motivated to go to college by family as they saw firsthand the negative effects of not having a college degree on their parents and other struggling family members. They were pushed by those same family members to pursue an education, so they do not succumb to the same fate. Other students, in George

George Mwangi et. al. (2017), were motivated by family members who successfully received college degrees, affirming that college was attainable goal. Students also shared internally driven motivations for academic success. Similar to what was found in this research, many first-generation students, in their study, expressed internal motivations that often could not be disentangled from family. Their internal motivations were driven by "a sense of responsibility and obligation" to provide for and make their family proud. Many of the immigrant-origin

students noted their immigration as their motivation, expressing that they needed to take advantage of the educational opportunities in the U.S. Other motivations for academic success included desire to give back to their family and community, upward mobility, financial stability, and career opportunities that required a degree. Many of these academic motivations, were also prevalent in the stories of non-linear path students, however the internal motivations due to personal struggles from not having a college degree became an additional motivation for many.

Participants' habitus of college achievement and educational entitlement was also dominant regardless of whether participants' parents had college educations. College education of parents did not appear to be as influential in the college persistence of the participants in this study. Participants' parents, guided by their habitus, had the wherewithal to position their children in places (e.g., schools, churches, and community organizations) where they could get the necessary resources and relevant cultural knowledge to prepare for and be successful in college.

Organizational Habitus and College Integration

Mcdonough (1997) posited that organizations demonstrate habitus through their structure and the resources and services they provide. As such, people gain cultural capital through interaction with such organizations. Similar to Massey, Mooney, Kimberly, and Charles (2007) and Bennett and Lutz's (2009) studies, many study participants attended private K-12 schools or reputable public schools. Berger (2000) argued that highly selective institutions attract students who are more predisposed to graduate and have the cultural capital to graduate. Participants in my study attended higher education institutions with varying levels of selectivity. Among the participants who attended less selective institutions, some enrolled in college retention programs like Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), Percy Sutton's Search for Education,

Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK), and Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), or participated in Black Male Initiative (BMI) programming. Many of these programs were designed to increase the retention and graduation rates of targeted student populations and have been successful in doing so (cf. The City University of New York, 2016; Walizer, 2017). Academic support persons are agents of cultural capital as they provide information about how to navigate college and serve as a connector to other sources of knowledge (Kim, 2014). As such, as participants interacted with academic support persons in those retention programs, they gained cultural knowledge and skills. For other participants who were not in retention programs, they were able to find faculty and advisors, primarily those of color, to help them navigate the college system and provide support for their academic achievement and persistence.

This study may illuminate why Tauriac and Leim (2012) found that social integration had an effect on academic integration for immigrant-origin Black students. Many participants in this study saw their schooling as a professional endeavor. The relationships they built with academic support persons were intending to get the necessary mentorship that would provide the cultural knowledge and skills for school and career. Moreover, many of the participants became involved in co-curricular activities as a need to gain information and skills to be successful in their classes, major, and for their future employment.

Berger (2002) also argued that students in lower economic strata might possess habitus for other types of institutions, such as Black students for HBCUs or other diverse institutions. Participants chose schools because the schools had academic programs of interest, and they could afford to attend those institutions. Regardless of selectivity of institution attended, both 1st and 2nd generation participants were susceptible to externalization, or the pressure to perform well to avoid confirming stereotypes. Many of the participants expressed the desire to achieve

and represent others who did not have the same opportunities as them. Additionally, the habitus of the students was driven by the desire to exemplify their culture positively. Participants who attended more racially diverse institutions seemed to express less of a need to prove themselves.

Furthermore, this study highlights Owens and Lynch's (2012) finding that Black immigrant-origin students seem less susceptible to internalization or personal beliefs in negative stereotypes about their own racial and ethnic group. Only two participants, Gordon (2nd gen) and Asil (1st gen), admitted to believing in negative stereotypes of Black people at some point, but both grew in their racial identity development through college. Additionally, at many of the schools, participants sought out and found value from membership in culturally related student organizations like the Caribbean Student Association and Black Student Union.

Adam-Mahaley (2012) found that African immigrant males were highly confident in their ability to earn good grades and felt prepared for college. A potential reason may be because they were enrolled in college preparatory high schools, as many of the participants of this study. Cyrille, who did not attend a school that was labeled "college preparatory," felt his education in Cameroon had prepared him sufficiently for college. He attributed his preparedness to the educational system which is a mix of both British and French educational systems. He stated,

We're bombarded with everything as we're taught, more than we need to know. We learn Europe history. We learn Europe climate. We learn everything before moving, before - flying out of Africa, I knew everything about the world. Geography-wise, history-wise, everything. We don't, they don't teach us our history. Not for who we are, you know. Languages, French, German. I speak French, English, German when I was in high school. I don't need that, you know? Nobody taught me, you know, any other African language but that, you know. So that's the system- is a foreign system to us, you know. But we have no choice but to abide to it, because, and I think that what that's what make us competitive. You know? Because Africans are ready for the rest of the world.

According to Adam-Mahaley (2012) African immigrants' persistence was positively associated with the availability of strong support persons, and African immigrants reported that their ethnic identity was strong and believed their culture, family, and peers had a strong

influence on their motivation to persist. African immigrants in the Adam-Mahaley study also had peers in college. In Williamson's (2012) mixed-method study, participants' families provided financial, emotional, and educational supports, and that support was necessary for their persistence. Likewise, the participants in my study saw their success as a collective effort, and graduating was not only for their benefit but for the benefit of their family and community. Participants also found similar sources of support from their families and people in their communities. According to Wells (2008), students who have most or all of their friends planning to attend college while in high school are more likely to persist into their second year of college. Many of my study's participants had friends who aspired to college. While in college, they found friends or acquaintances with similar habitus and aspirations. The friends and acquaintances served as sources of cultural capital. One participant who did not have friends who aspired to college, while in high school, found herself stopping out during her first year.

George Mwangi and English (2017) warn against a "single story construct" in their systematic review of Black immigrant-origin students. Theoretical frameworks most often used in studies was assimilation or acculturation theories, and Ogbu's Cultural Ecological theory to examine Black immigrant students' experiences. There was inconsistency in comparison samples of Black immigrant groups- comparisons of Black immigrants to native-born Blacks, Black immigrants to other immigrant racial groups, and across race and immigrant generation/nativity. Most studies that made comparisons across both race and nativity tended to be quantitative studies using large national datasets with small Black immigrant sample sizes. In doing so, those studies often made general comparisons across students by nativity/generation, not highlighting the racial experiences of Black immigrant students. Other studies that compared different student populations across race and nativity aggregate Black immigrants. The studies that disaggregate

Black immigrant students tended to be qualitative with much smaller samples, and they focused on Black immigrants broadly or by specific regions/countries. George Mwangi and English (2017) found that there were limited studies that researched the elementary, middle school and graduate school experiences. Among the studies that focused on the collegiate populations, majority included students attending highly selective institutions and made academic performance comparisons to native-born Blacks. Much of the research examined in George Mwangi and English's systematic review touched on how cultural and structural factors impacted the educational experiences of Black immigrants, and/ or the development of a hybrid or bicultural identity.

This dissertation attempted to not perpetuate the single-story narrative of Black immigrant college students. It focused on Black immigrant-origin students more broadly and tried to include a variety of regions and countries. Although participants who attended highly selective institutions were included to the study, the study was not limited to them and included students who attended a variety of institutions. This study also gave voice to Black immigrant students who took nonlinear pathways to gain educational success.

Significance of Study

This study adds to the scholarship on Black immigrant college students in two major ways. It contributes to the expanded definition of cultural capital as defined by Lareau and Weininger. Students' individual and familial habitus of achievement pushed them to want to attain a college degree, a societal standard of success. Additionally, highlighting participants with non-traditional pathways to and through college adds a nuanced understanding of the Black immigrant student population college experience.

Limitations

This study is limited by sample and sample size. The intention was to interview Black first and second-generation students and alumni from a variety of countries. Fewer students representing different African countries were recruited to participate than intended. My background as a person with a Caribbean background may not have been relatable enough to those students. Also, although there was inclusion “of African descent” in the call for participants, some individuals from African countries may not identify as Black. Additionally, U.S.-origin Black students were not included in this study, so comparisons across generations and cross-culture cannot be made.

Implications for Practice

There are several suggestions for practice that come from this research. Participants were able to persist and graduate because of interactions with agents of cultural capital in their schools and communities. My research also provides support for the value of access/ retention programs that exist on college campuses to provide financial, academic, and personal provisions to students who need it. Federal and state legislatures need to continue to ensure sufficient appropriations for college access/retention programs.

At the core of what is needed to aid in the college completion of Black immigrant-origin students is mentorship (see Figure 1). As Asil stated,

I think mentorship is such an important thing especially for students of color, especially first-generation students to be able to have the guidance in their pursuits, in their endeavors. Because if you don't have that guidance and you're almost struggling in the dark . . . And if you don't have that guidance then you end up just OK let me just choose any high school or let me just choose any college without thinking about your future . . . Because if you're coming into these spaces and you don't necessarily know what you deserve because your family also may not have an education or educational background or formal educational background, and so they can't really give you that guidance . . . and if you don't have that person, a real adviser . . . someone that will actually let you know when you're being stupid, when you're choosing and making a dumb decision or when you're not doing what you need to be doing . . . They don't know, they don't understand what it takes for students of the color to move to academia. What we really need to make

ourselves pop, especially when we're competing against White students or other students who are coming from different universities or from different places where they have more opportunities. So I think a lot of this is about looking for opportunities and finding people who can help you with that, who can share those opportunities with you and who can let you know about the resources that exist to make you pop as a student because realistically you're competing against so many people who have probably more privilege than you do.

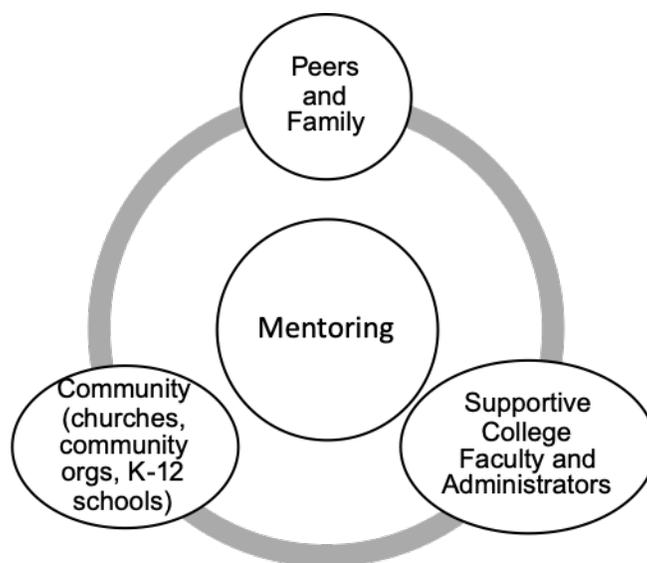


Figure 1. Mentoring Sources of Cultural Capital.

Parents and Guardians

A noteworthy finding from this research highlights the influence of friends in participants' motivations related to school achievement and college pursuits. Parents need to be mindful that the types of friends their children entertain matter. Friends have a strong influence on how your child may view education.

Elementary and Secondary Schools

Recommendations for K-12 educators are that all students have the potential to go to college and should be treated as such. If they decide not to go to college that is ultimately their decision, but do not take that option away from them. Supporting all students means putting biases aside and offering the same level of support and academic rigor. Students need to be

pushed to their highest ability and need to know that their teachers' think they have the ability to do well. Schools should provide mentoring opportunities, so that students can get access and cultural capital knowledge earlier.

Higher Education

Many of the students do not come to college with the necessary cultural capital from their parents as their parents may not be familiar with the American educational system and may not be educated themselves. Schools need to also be aware that Black-immigrant students are typically not pursuing college degrees solely for themselves, but they are also pursuing their degrees for their families and communities. Higher education institutions serve as sites where cultural capital can be accumulated and give students knowledge and skills to help them excel in their classwork and prepare them for graduation and their careers. Universities should invite parents and other family members to partner with them during the college-going process. Institutions can send home culturally sensitive programs and newsletters to share what the institutions are doing, services they provide, and offer ways in which the families could support their scholars.

Student services professionals need to encourage and create peer mentoring programs. Peer mentors would be trained on the resources of the college and the local community, and they can serve as conduits of cultural knowledge to their mentees. Colleges need to hire more Black faculty and administrators, including those with immigrant backgrounds, so that students can find staff with whom they can relate. These faculty and administrators can offer racial/ethnic toolkits to help students navigate college that includes: the unwritten academic and social expectations of faculty; characteristics and skills needed to be a desirable candidate for future employers; and how to thrive when one might be the only person of color in the room.

Nonetheless, supporting students of color is not the sole job of Black faculty and administrators. Understanding that within the Black population, there is much diversity, institutional research departments must collect students' and parents' countries of origin to understand their student populations. Higher education staff of other racial backgrounds with cultural training could provide mentorship and offer opportunities to these students such as invitations to help with research and helping to apply to internship and scholarship programs.

University professionals must catalog organizations in their local communities that cater to particular ethnic groups. With this catalog, universities can do two things. First, schools would have targeted groups that they can recruit and share information in the form of workshops and pamphlets about college applications, standardized testing, financial aid processes, and access programs. Secondly, students may be referred to these organizations so that they are able to find places of comfort and information, particularly for students who do not live in the college area.

Finally, colleges and governments need to work together to ensure that college is affordable for all students. This can be done by reducing costs and subsidizing students' educations with grants and scholarships. College enrollment and completion for many people is dependent on the ability to afford college. Getting in and through college has the potential to change Black immigrant-origin students' lives and communities. However, Black immigrant-origin students who desire to attend college, but cannot due to lack of funding, or those who attend but graduate with an exorbitant amount of debt are not able to realize their American Dream.

Implications for Research

While engaging in this research, several questions came to mind. A more extensive and inclusive study including U.S.-origin Black students could be helpful in illuminating why

persistence and graduation rates are different for US origin and immigrant-origin groups. These questions may be asked: What is the role of cultural capital and habitus in the persistence and graduation of U.S.-origin and immigrant-origin Black college students? Is there a different relationship between cultural capital and habitus, and persistence and graduation for U.S.-origin and immigrant-origin Blacks? Semi-structured interviews with a relatively equal amount of U.S.-origin and immigrant-origin Black students could be conducted. The responses would be compared in a multi-case study. For the second question, a cultural capital instrument would be administered to US origin and immigrant-origin Black students at a particular school to be able to see variances between the groups.

Another question that extends from this research is: Are there differences in the help-seeking behavior of Black immigrant-origin students in comparison to U.S.-origin Black college students? Relationships with faculty and administrators are important in the acquisition of cultural capital. This study would investigate students' feelings about and interactions with faculty and administrators. A quantitative survey can be administered that delves into questions related to the frequency and quality of interactions with college faculty, academic advisors, and student affairs staff.

Furthermore, many national datasets do not include immigrant status and immigrant generation in their demographic questionnaires. National datasets that include immigrant status and immigrant generation can be used to study whether cultural capital and what types of cultural capital affects persistence and graduation of Black students by immigrant generation.

Conclusions

In this basic interpretive qualitative study, I explored the stories of thirteen Black immigrant-origin individuals to illuminated the ways in which cultural capital contributed to

their college persistence and graduation. A habitus of achievement and educational entitlement helped push them through college. Cultural capital attained through relationships with nurturing professors and academic support offices, resourceful friends and acquaintances, and participating in co-curricular activities and culturally-related clubs was important in getting them to the finish line. It is important to highlight that these participants were the success stories. If we can create ways for other students to gain cultural capital and nurture their habitus, we might be able to assist more students in persisting towards degree completion.

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APPENDIX A.**GOOGLE DEMOGRAPHICS FORM**

Cultural capital, habitus, and college persistence and graduation among Black immigrant-origin undergraduates: A basic interpretive qualitative study

Thank you for your interest in participating in my study. I'm conducting a study about how and why Black immigrant and their children persist and graduate from college Please complete the form below. If you meet the study criteria, you will be contacted shortly. Feel free to share the link with others as well.

* Required

Name *

Email *

Phone number

Do you identify as Black or of African descent? *

Yes

No

Do you currently hold a visa (ie. B, F, J, or M) ? *

Yes

No

Gender *

Female

Male

Other:

Where were you born? *

Mother's birth place *

Father's birth place *

Academic Classification *

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduated/Alumni

School attending or graduated from? *

If graduated, when?

2018

2017

APPENDIX B.
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Hello:

I am Erica Richards-Chew a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Administration Ph.D. program at Old Dominion University. I am Jamaican and Antiguan American and born and raised in Bronx. For my dissertation, I am interested in the Black immigrants and their children's college experience to get an understanding of what contributes to their college persistence and graduation.

I will be conducting recorded interviews during the Fall of 2018- Spring 2019. The interview will take 60-90 minutes. I will ask you open-ended questions about your experiences as a college student. The interview will be relaxed and conversational. Your identity will be held in strict confidence. Interviews can take place in-person, via skype, or phone depending on the agreed upon location/ mode.

Study Participants must:

- identify as black or of African descent
- born outside of the US or have parent(s) who were born outside of the US
- not classified as an international student (holding a visa to stay in the country)
- currently enrolled or graduated with a Bachelors in the last year from a 4-year college in the U.S.

If you fit the criteria above and are interested in participating in the study, please complete this form: <https://goo.gl/forms/nCSrvRpL3AJJBec63> or email me at erich026@odu.edu. I will reply to arrange a date, time, and location that works for you. Also, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you have a friend who meets the criteria and may be interested in participating in this study please forward this to them.

Thank you,

Erica Richards- Chew

This study is being conducted by Erica Richards-Chew, doctoral candidate at Old Dominion University as part of a doctoral dissertation. This study has been reviewed and approved according to the Old Dominion University IRB [IRB#1301388-1].

APPENDIX C.

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purposes of this form are to give you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participation in this research, and to record the consent of those who say YES. You are being asked to participate in a research project. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have.

Study Title: *Cultural capital, habitus, and college persistence and graduation among Black immigrant-origin undergraduates: A basic interpretive qualitative study*

Primary Investigator: Erica M. Richards-Chew, Doctoral Candidate, Old Dominion University, Graduate Outreach and Advisement Specialist, SUNY Empire State College

1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:

The purpose of this study is to learn more about Black immigrants and their children's college experience to get an understanding of what contributes to their college persistence and graduation. Your participation will contribute to the knowledge surround the college experiences of Black immigrant-origin students and provide recommendations to higher education institutions on how they can better help a Black students graduate. The study, entitled *Cultural capital, habitus, and college persistence and graduation among Black immigrant-origin undergraduates: A basic interpretive qualitative study*, is conducted by Erica M. Richards-Chew. Please note that if you are under 18 years old, you are not able to take part in this study.

2. WHAT YOU WILL DO:

Each interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes, depending on how long your responses are. The interview will be conducted in an informal, conversational manner with open-ended questions that allow you to talk about your experience candidly. You may agree to be digitally recorded, or you may choose not to be digitally recorded during our conversations. Your identity will be held in strict confidence, and during data collection, researchers will arrange for private or semi-private areas for consent and the interviews.

3. RISKS AND BENEFITS:

Due to the personal nature of nationality and citizenship, individuals may be concerned about experiencing social marginalization or discrimination in other ways if their responses were disclosed. However, because information will be coded and kept confidential, this study poses little to no risk to participants. And, as with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. Participants will benefit from engaging in the process of self-reflection and developing a voice for their experiences while contributing to the

literature that explores experiences that Black immigrant-origin students identify as having a positive impact on their persistence and graduation.

4. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Any direct identification information, including your name, will be removed from data when responses are analyzed. All data will be secured in locked file cabinets and password protected server space at SUNY Empire State College. The data will be accessible only to the researchers associated with this study and the Institutional Review Board. During analysis, numeric codes will be assigned to your information so that your name is not associated with the data files.

During dissemination, findings will be reported by theme (aggregating the data) or by pseudonym (assigning a fake name). The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain confidential. Special care will be taken to ensure contextual details do not give away your identity. Although every attempt will be made to keep your identification private, some distinguishing responses that you share and other comments may reflect your identity.

All data will be stored for at least two years after the project closes. Two years after the conclusion of the study, the data (digital audio files, transcripts, my notes) will be destroyed.

5. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW:

Your participation is completely voluntary. It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later, and walk away or withdraw from the study -- at any time. You may choose not to participate at all, or to answer some questions and not others. You may also change your mind at any time and withdraw as a participant from this study with no negative consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with Old Dominion University, or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

6. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:

You will receive no compensation for participating in this study.

7. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

If you have any questions later on, then the researchers should be able to answer them; please contact the researcher Erica M. Richards-Chew, SUNY Empire State College, 325 Hudson St, NY, NY, erich026@odu.edu, 678 641 2032

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, Dr. Nina Brown, Chair of the Darden College of Education Human Subjects Review Committee at (757) 683-3245 or Dr. George Maihafer, the current IRB chair, at 757-683-6028, or the Old Dominion University Office of Research, at 757-683-3460.

By signing below, you are indicating your voluntary participation in this study and acknowledge that you may: 1) choose not to participate in the study; 2) refuse to answer certain questions; and 3) discontinue your participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you

are otherwise entitled. You are saying that you have read this form or have had it read to you, that you are satisfied that you understand this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits. The researchers should have answered any questions you may have had about the research. The researcher will give you a copy of this form for your records.
Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name (Printed) _____

In addition, your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to allow your responses to be digitally recorded.

Signature _____ Date _____

8. INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

I certify that I have explained to this subject the nature and purpose of this research, including benefits, risks, costs, and any experimental procedures. I have described the rights and protections afforded to human subjects and have done nothing to pressure, coerce, or falsely entice this subject into participating. I am aware of my obligations under state and federal laws, and promise compliance. I have answered the subject's questions and have encouraged him/her to ask additional questions at any time during the course of this study. I have witnessed the above signature(s) on this consent form.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name (Printed) _____

APPENDIX D.

ORIGINAL EXPLORING THE EDUCATION EXPERIENCES OF BLACK IMMIGRANTS (EEEBI) INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (K. A. Griffin et al., 2012)

I. Background and Academic Trajectory

1. Tell me about your childhood
 - Where did you grow up?
 - What was the neighborhood like? (Racial composition, rural/urban, played outside/safe, etc)
 - What was your household like? Who was living there?
 - What language did you speak at school? At home? Did you have language issues?
2. Looking back at your early childhood, when did you start thinking you were going to college? Who encouraged you?
 - What role did your parents play? Other relatives?
 - How were you influenced by your friends?
 - Were there any mentors or early teachers who played a role?

II. High School Background and Experiences:

1. Could you briefly describe your high school experience? Would you describe your school as a “good school” (e.g. school quality, preparation, reputation)? What was the environment like? (orderly, drop outs, violence, talented, focused)? How would you describe the background of most of your classmates (race/class)?
 - What classes did you particularly enjoy? Why?
 - How much effort did you have to put in to do well in high school?
 - How you ‘fit’ in?
 - Tell me about your experiences and relationships with your teachers and counselors at your school.
2. How would you describe your ‘support system’ while in high school? How would you describe your level of self-esteem? (Poor, Average, Very Good, Excellent)
3. Let’s talk about your friends in high school. Take a moment and write down the initials of your 5 closest friends during high school. Then note their gender, race/ethnic background, their immigrant status, and how you met.
 - Tell me about these people – what were they like?
 - What were your friends in high school like more generally?
4. What significant experiences and/or people in high school inspired you (e.g. friends, parents, family members)?
5. What role do you think your ethnic or cultural background played in your high school experiences and academic achievement?

III. College Choice

1. When did you *know* you were going to college? (Probe: Why? How? Motivation? Indicators?)
 - Did your goals/aspirations differ than your high school classmates? Describe how and why.
2. Did you participate in any college outreach programs? Which ones?

3. How did you select which college you'd attend? (Probing for factors, parents, counselors, family, friends, siblings, etc.)
4. Looking back on these early school experiences, how well prepared were you for college?

IV. College Experiences:

1. Please describe your 'transition' from high school to college?:
 - Expectations met? First impressions?
 - Difficulties/problems? (Probe: preparation, work load, fears, doubts, living situation, etc)
 - Facilitators/supports? (Probe: teachers, friends, family, siblings, etc.)
 - What were your interactions with home/family like?
 - Were there any special programs/groups that helped in this transition? Describe.
 - When, if ever, did you feel 'comfortable' (or a sense of belonging) on your campus? How do you define 'comfortable'?
2. Tell me a bit about your college friends. Take a moment and write down the initials of your 5 closest friends in college. Then note their gender, race/ethnic background, their immigrant status, and how you met.
 - Tell me about these people – what are they like overall?
 - What are your friends in college like more generally?
3. Tell me a little bit about your relationships with faculty and staff on campus.
 - Are there any who have been particularly helpful to or challenging for you?
4. Who are your mentors or role models on campus? Were there any significant challenges you have faced while in college? If so, what were they?
 - How well do you feel that you dealt with challenges?
5. Generally, how capable do you feel in your ability to accomplish your goals?
 - Have you always felt this way?
6. How would you describe your level of self-esteem? (Poor, Average, Very Good, Excellent)
7. How would you describe/evaluate 'diversity' on your campus?
 - How would you describe the school composition?
 - Do you think this is a diverse campus?
 - Do you think your racial or ethnic background shapes your experiences on campus or the way you see your campus?
8. What role do you think your ethnic or cultural background played in your college experience and academic achievement?
9. When you're not in class, what are you doing?
 - Are you a recipient of work study funding?
10. What groups and activities are you involved in on campus? How did you go about choosing which ones to be involved in?
 - Are any of them culturally related?
 - Which support services on campus do you make use of or feel are useful to you?
11. Are there any organizations or support services that you feel like aren't as helpful as they could be?
12. Is college life what you expected? Describe.

V. Closing questions (10 minutes)

1. What are your immediate goals?

2. How would people describe you? What do you believe are misconceptions that people have of you?
3. Do you feel you are a 'leader' on your campus? In your community? In your family? Is there anything that you feel prevents you from participating more or becoming a leader?
4. Would you want to or plan to return/live in the US or the country where your family is from?
5. Looking back on your life thus far, what would you do differently if you could?

Thanks so very much for your time and answers. Is there anything else you want to share?

APPENDIX E.

REVISED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction: Thank you so much for volunteering to be interviewed for this study. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Purpose: I'm Erica Richards-Chew and I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at Old Dominion University. I've asked you here today because I'm conducting a study about the experiences of Black immigrant-origin college students for my dissertation.

Procedures: The interview should take no more than an hour and includes about 24 questions, not including probing and follow-up/clarifying questions. May I record you so that I don't miss out on any of your thoughts and ideas? In order to keep your identity confidential, please give me a pseudonym. Turn on recording.

Consent: Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time during the interview you do not want to continue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, we will stop immediately without consequence, so please don't hesitate to tell me. No one will know your identity but me. I will be using information from this interview to fulfill the requirements of my dissertation and no information will be included that will identify you specifically. Do you have any question or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission we will begin the interview.

I. Background and Academic Trajectory

1. Tell me about you and your upbringing.
 - Where did you grow up? What kind of neighborhood? Ethnicity/socioeconomic status?
 - What was your household like? Who was living there? Both parents?
 - What language did you speak at school? At home? Did you have language issues?
2. Looking back what made you want to attend college? Who encouraged you?
 - What role did your parents play? Other relatives?
 - How were you influenced by your friends?
 - Were there any mentors or early teachers who played a role?

II. High School Background and Experiences

3. Could you briefly describe your high school experience? Would you describe your school as a “good school” (eg. school quality, preparation, reputation)? What was the environment like? (orderly, drop outs, violence, talented, focused)? How would you describe the background of most your classmates (race/class)?
 - What classes did you particularly enjoy? Why?
 - Did you have access to and enroll in any AP, IB, and/or community college courses?
 - How much effort did you have to put in to do well in high school?
 - Did you ‘fit’ in?

- Tell me about your experiences and relationships with your teachers and counselors at your school.
4. How would you describe your 'support system' while in high school?
 5. Let us talk about your friends.
 - What were they like? (gender, race/ethnic background, immigrant status, how met?)
 - Did you all attend the same school? Different schools?
 6. What significant experiences and/or people (e.g. friends, parents, family members) in high school stand out in your memory?
 7. Tell about activities that you did outside of school. (Part-time jobs, caring for siblings, extracurricular)
 8. What role do you think your ethnic or cultural background played in your high school experiences and academic achievement?

III. College Choice

9. When did you *know* you were going to college? (probe: Why? How? Motivation? Indicators?)
 - Did your goals/aspirations differ than your high school classmates? Describe how and why.
10. Did you participate in any college outreach programs? Which ones?
11. How did you select which college you'd attend? (Probing for factors, parents, counselors, family, friends, siblings, etc.)

III. College Experiences:

12. Please describe your 'transition' from high school to college?:
 - Expectations met? First impressions?
 - Difficulties/problems? (Probe: preparation, work load, fears, doubts, living situation, etc)
 - Facilitators/supports? (Probe: teachers, friends, family, siblings, etc.)
 - What were your interactions with home/family like?
 - Were there any special programs/groups that helped in this transition? Describe.
 - When, if ever, did you feel 'comfortable' (or a sense of belonging) on your campus? How do you define 'comfortable'?
13. What is your major? How did you decide on your major? What kind of student are you?
14. Tell me a bit about your friends(gender, race/ethnic background, their immigrant status, and how you met).
 - What were their thoughts about college? Did they all attend college? Same/different school?
15. How would you describe your 'support system' while in college? (faculty/ staff/ mentors/friends)?
16. What role do you think your ethnic or cultural background played in your college experience and academic achievement?
17. What groups and activities are you involved on and off campus? How did you go about choosing which ones to be involved in?
 - Are any of them culturally related?
 - Which support services on campus do you make use of or feel are useful to you?
18. Is college life what you expected? Describe.

19. What makes you continue?

III. Closing questions

20. Generally, how capable do you feel in your ability to accomplish your goals?

- Have you always felt this way?

21. What are your immediate goals?

22. How would people describe you? What do you believe are misconceptions that people have of you?

23. Looking back on your life thus far, what would you do anything differently if you could?

24. Would you encourage your younger siblings/family members to attend college?

Conclusion: Thanks so very much for your time and answers. Is there anything else you want to share that you think would be good to know but I didn't ask about? The next steps are that I'm going to transcribe the interview and do some data analysis. I will e-mail my interpretations of our conversation. Please review it to make sure my interpretations are in line with what you have shared with me. You may make any necessary corrections and/or indicate lines that you may not want me to include as quotes in the final paper. I also want to remind you that you may withdraw from the study at anytime. Have a great day and thank you so much for the interview. Turn off audio-recording.

APPENDIX F.
CODES/NODES

Table 2. Initial Codes/Nodes

Social class
Types of neighborhood
Education of parents/guardian
Language
Use of proper English
Educational entitlement/individual habitus
Highschool quality
Highschool college prep
AP/ college-level courses in HS
Help-seeking behavior
Relationships w academic support
Relationships w faculty
Extracurriculars
College going friends
Immigrant “mantra”

Table 3. Final codes/Nodes

<i>Final Codes</i>	
Name	Description
Early Influences	
Busy Working Parents	Stories of parents involvement or lack of involvement
Family makeup	Who was in the home growing up
High-Brow Activities	Involvement in high-brown activities
Immigration Story	Immigration story of participant or parents
1st generation	
2nd generation- Parents' story	
Language Spoken at Home	Language spoken at home
Language Issues	Language issues or stories
Mentors and Mentorship Programs	Relationships with mentors and/or in mentorship program
Neighborhood	Description of neighborhood growing up
Parental Education	Parental education

<i>Final Codes</i>	
Name	Description
Role of church in students' lives	Church going/involvement/support
Sibling Education	Siblings and their interactions with college
Socioeconomic status	Socioeconomic status
Gaining Cultural Capital through Integration	
Academic Integration	Ways in which academics are interwoven into a students' life
Academic Confidence or Self-efficacy	Confidence from doing well in school and getting good grades
Collegiate Academic Integration	Ways in which academics are interwoven into a students' collegiate experience
Collegiate Academic Support	College-level academic support people (faculty, staff, administrators) or institutionalized programs
Not so helpful college support person	Support persons who were not supportive or were misinformed
Collegiate Co-curricular Activities	Student clubs and activities (internships, jobs, research) that complement students' learning in college
Interest-Major Congruence	Alignment between students' interests and students' major.
Parental Influence on Major	Parents opinions and influence on major.
Help-seeking behavior	
HS Academic Integration	Ways in which academics are interwoven into students' high-school experience and directly related to college
Social Integration	Changed from Collegiate social integration 7/22/2019. Ways in which students' social life is interwoven into a students' life
College going friends	Friends in hs who were intending to go to college
Collegiate Social Integration	Social connections established on the collegiate-level
College friends	Friends attending college
Community Engagement and Volunteerism	Participation in volunteer activities and activities involve engaging with their community

<i>Final Codes</i>	
Name	Description
Culturally- Related Student Organizations	Affinity groups related to student' culture/race
Other types of student orgs	Student clubs that weren't academic, volunteer/community engagement, or culturally-related
Habitus	
Individual Habitus	Students' habits and embodied cultural capital
Affording College	How money affected decisions around going to school.
I would recommend college if...	Hesitation in recommending college to others
It really just came down to the money...	College choice being affected by how much financial aid received.
Money has been invested into college, so I have to finish.	College persistence and completion being affected by how much money has been spent on education.
American Dream	
No choice but to achieve	
You go to school, then you automatically get a job	Parent's not understanding what is necessary to be able to be successful in society.
Educational Entitlement	Attending college was the normal expected next step after high school.
Racialized Habitus	Habits that are formed as a result of being black
Awareness of Racism and Racial Bias	Racial incidents students experienced or were aware of.
Identity Issues	Issues pertaining to conflicts of how to identify racially and ethnically.
Black but not so black	Students either self-determining or being told that they are not black enough.
They just see me as an American	Identity issues of 2nd generation immigrants
Response to Racism and Racial Bias	Ways in which students have responded to their understanding of race and racial bias.
Black Activism	Involvement in activism related or in response to racial incidents.
I have to prove I'm great	Feeling as though they have to constantly prove they belong in their school.

<i>Final Codes</i>	
Name	Description
I have to work harder	Black Tax- Feeling as though they have to work more to achieve the same as others
I need to succeed for my community	If I graduate then I can help build/help my community
Organizational habitus	Habits of an institution (mission, practices, norms)
College preparatory and academically rigorous high school	Enrollment in an academically rigorous and/or college preparatory high school
College credit in HS	AP, IB, College credit while in HS
College preparation programs different from school	Programs and activities that exposed students to college that were not facilitated by their high school.
Feeling academically prepared in college	Students expressing that they were prepared for college academically or socially.
Institutional Fit or Congruence	Whether students' characteristics are similar to the characteristics of the population of the institution
Adult workers	Alignment between student being a working adult and school attended
Incongruence	Misalignment between student characteristics and school attended
Racial Diversity of Institution and Fit	Alignment between students' race and school attended
Socioeconomic Fit	Alignment between students' SES and school attended

VITA

ERICA M. CHEW, M.Ed.

emrichal@yahoo.com | (678) 641-2032 | Bronx, New York

Educational Administrator - Academic Advisor - Project Coordinator

Resourceful, accomplished, and results-driven Academic Administrator, offering key credentials and strengths in strategic organizational leadership, project management, and student advocacy. Demonstrates ability to independently direct planning, scheduling, and execution of student programs and maintain optimal efficiency; supports short and long-term school goals. Unique ability to address student needs, uphold policy, and ensure safety and compliance while promoting a passionate, creative, and supportive environment. Recognized for optimizing service and personnel satisfaction rates. Excels during all complex challenges or conflicts. High bias for action, organized, and process-oriented approach that has provided proven business results and solid team performance.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

Ph.D., Higher Education, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

M.Ed., Curriculum and Instruction, College Student Affairs, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

B.A., Sociology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA

Certified Career Counselor, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

Certified Local HIV/AIDS Educator

Certified in Mental Health First Aid

SELECT PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Cromley, J. G., Kaplan, A., Perez, A., Dai, T., Mara, K., Davidson, Y., Balsai, M.J. & **Richards-Chew, E.** (In progress). Combining brief cognitive and motivational interventions to promote college students' success in Introductory Biology.
- **Richards-Chew, E.** (2015, May). "I have to do just as much or more.": The role culture and habitus plays in the college persistence of Black immigrant students [Poster]. National Conference on Race and Ethnicity, Washington, D.C.
- **Richards-Chew, E.** (2015, February). Racial and ethnic identity development of Black immigrant students [Poster]. Harvard Alumni of Color Conference, Cambridge, MA.
- Henry, W. J., & **Richards, E.**, Fuerth, K. M. (2011). Black and gay in college: The experiences of students in double jeopardy. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 30(1), pp. 63-74.
- **Richards, E.** (Fall 2008). Your financial future: A guide to life after graduation [Book review]. *NACADA*, 28(2), <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Journal/Current-Past-Book-Reviews/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/683/Your-financial-future-A-Guide-to-life-after-graduation.aspx>
- Henry, W., Thompson, G. & **Richards, E.** (2006, November). African American Women in the Academy: Best Practices for Winning the Game. SACSA Conference, Jacksonville, FL (refereed).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SUNY Empire State College, NY, NY, 2016-present

Outreach and Advisement Specialist, School for Graduate Studies 2016-present

Main point of contact for all applicants to the 3 combined, 13 masters and 25 advanced certificate online programs; and guides applicants through the entire application process in the Manhattan location. Advise prospective graduate students about program offerings, requirements for admittance into graduate programs via phone and e-mail. Evaluate graduate student applications for completeness and minimum entry requirements for evaluation and review. Serve as the representative for the School for Graduate Studies at the Manhattan campus and several university partnerships including Bryant and Stratton, QSAC, and Ft. Drum. Organize and facilitate online and in-person general and program-specific information sessions. Unofficial evaluations of military transcripts. Create and disseminate information that aids in the retention of first semester graduate students. Drafted policies for unofficial transcript reviews and transfer credit evaluations.

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, 2013-2016

Graduate Research Assistant, Educational Foundation and Leadership (Remote) 2014-2016

Worked under an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) funded grant worth \$1.1M+ with Co-PIs Jennifer Cromely, Anthony Perez, and Avi Kaplan, "Bootstrapping Achievement and Motivation in STEM: An Integrated Cognitive-Motivational Intervention to Improve STEM Grades". Built Blackboard site; developed cost and self-efficacy interventions; and monitored and tracked student responses to interventions.

Graduate Assistant, Higher Education Program 2013-2014

Strategically marketed the program; responded to inquiries from prospective students; organized highly-reviewed programs for masters and doctoral students, including orientation, open house, Graduate Research Colloquium, Summer Institute, and DocTalks. Administered the student-graduate assistantship matching process. Effectively utilized social media to communicate professional development and job/internship opportunities to alumni and current students.

Teaching Assistant, College and University Presidency HIED 764/864 01/14-05/14

Assisted the President in his course facilitation; collaborated on the course syllabus creation. Actively monitored and ensured both the President and students maintained awareness of project and paper deadlines; managed and updated the Blackboard site for the course.

Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY, 2008-2013

Sophomore/ Scholarship Assistance Counselor, Office of Student Development & Retention
2010-2013

Key team member in building a Sophomore Year Program. Led highly engaging, student centered advising sessions for caseloads of 200+ undeclared and pre-health students. Primary source of information about academic programs, college policies and procedures, and scholarships for students from diverse urban backgrounds; coached students to be successful on interviews. Amended Scholarship Assistance Program's processes and procedures, increasing student participation from 200 to 3000 students in its first year. Trained and mentored new staff members to master their job functions. Collaborated with faculty and staff campus-wide to initiate a LGBTQ SafeZone program, including creation of the Curriculum Manual and training program. Voted by peers to serve as the inaugural President. Created and produced the Inside the Faculty Studio Series, where students engaged with featured faculty members outside of the classroom.

Developed website content and managed the Sophomore Year/Scholarship Assistance Programs Facebook and Twitter pages.

Instructor, Career Readiness COOP I ***2012-2013***

Taught course on career coaching skills including resume writing, interviewing, and networking to upperclassmen.

Graduate Admissions Counselor, Office of Admissions ***2008-2010***

Effectively delivered and maintained excellent customer service through contact with prospective and current students. Managed a high volume of graduate student applications and queries, and assisted with processing and evaluation of candidates' admission applications. Streamlined communication materials. Represented the Brooklyn Campus on-campus programs at recruitment events; ensured accurate dissemination and up-to-date information to the public. Planned and wrote a proposal to organize a school-wide graduate orientation designed to help graduate students feel more connected to the campus.

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, 2006-2008

Graduate Assistant, College Student Affairs (CSA) Master's Program ***2006-2008***

Strategically coordinated interview schedules for applicants; provided program information to prospective applicants; successfully obtained fall enrollment of 20+ graduate students. Created and maintained files for 50+ applicants annually; created electronic forms to improve office efficiency. Assisted faculty with research, writing literature reviews, creating surveys, and conducting interviews.

Counselor/Advisor, Project Thrust/Freshman Summer Institute ***2007-2008***

Provided academic and personal support to at-risk, minority student to encourage student persistence; wrote fall semester review report regarding the progress of 178 students.

Instructor, University Experience SLS 1101 ***2007-2008***

Assisted 17 students with a smooth transition from high school; collaborated with staff to create and define a course syllabus.

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, June – Aug. 2007

Counseling Trainee/Practicum Student, Center for Student Involvement, Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life

Actively assisted counselors during student appointments; researched Senior Year Experience programs; drafted a curriculum for a Senior Year Experience program at Northwestern. Created and presented drafts for the Multicultural Greek Council and National Pan-Hellenic Council websites; researched, evaluated, and provided recommendations on computer-assisted career guidance systems.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

ACPA, NASPA, Jackie Robinson Foundation Alumni Assoc., NACADA

Conversation Partner, Old Dominion University, English Language Center, 08/13-05/14

Conversation/Writing Volunteer, International Center of New York City, 09/08-05/09

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated

Community Service Chair, Delta Beta Sigma (Norfolk Alumnae), 07/13-06/14

KE Undergraduate Chapter Advisor, Kappa Sigma (NYC Metropolitan Alumnae), 07/12-05/13

Community Service Chair, Beta Kappa Sigma (Tampa Bay Alumnae) Chapter, 05/06-08/06

Project Wee Savers & Health Fair Chair, Iota Zeta Sigma (North Atlanta Alumnae) Chapter, 08/05-07/06

Charter Member/President, Pi Omicron (Emory University) Chapter, 08/03-05/04

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, MS Outlook, MS Publisher, SPSS, PeopleSoft, Adobe Connect, Blackboard, Hobsons/Radius; basic knowledge of Banner, Colleague, and MS Access.
- Ability to **analyze** and **provide strategic** solutions to ensure successful outcomes; **anticipates** and **understands** student needs and goals; consistently meets and exceeds expectations.
- Works equally effectively independently or as part of a team.