Sacrificing for Gains: Experiences and Community Cultural Wealth of Students of Color at an Elite Boarding School

By

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Dedication

To my grandparents, Tony and Theresa Howell, who sacrificed greatly to let me dream and try things that they never could have imagined or truly understood. Thank you for allowing me to spread my wings.

My B-Boys: You give my life meaning, joy, purpose, and keep me moving.

To Black and Brown youth and their families who are willing to bet on their futures. May your dreams be realized, and your legacies continue a fight for liberation.

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Abstract

Elite Boarding Schools (EBSs) in America were not traditionally created for students of color. Critically examining the experiences of students of color provided crucial understanding and insight into how marginalized groups flourish at EBSs as well as implications for improvements that these institutions should make to dismantle the clutches of privilege and white supremacy. In order to provide holistic insight for students' perspectives, the perspectives of faculty were also included to complete the image that students were painting. Drawing on the intersections of Critical Race Theory and Community Cultural wealth, this ethnographic case study examines why and how students of color stay at these institutions and constructs understanding around why students commit to making sacrifices for education and future endeavors. Counterstories afforded students with the chance to be experts on their educational experiences as well as state their truth.

Two overarching questions are central to this research: 1) What are the experiences of students of color at EBSs? How are these institutions preparing them to persevere amidst adversity? and 2) How are teachers responding to the needs of their non-dominant students in an educational environment that provides autonomy? What does autonomy look like in an EBS setting? Major findings in this study show that students of color at EBSs are navigating through historically privileged, school environments using their Community of Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, this study asks school faculty to examine and reframe how they attend to the needs of students of color through pushing curricular and pedagogical boundaries. Overall, I argue that EBSs need to adopt socially just ideologies and center the perspectives of students of color through honoring non-dominant students' counterstories in order to remedy the deficit and

damaging tradition of EBSs. Lastly, I posit EBS infrastructural changes and additions that will improve institutional dynamics for marginalized students.

Marginalized groups in affluent spaces are often ignored because these spaces are assumed to only be sites of privilege, but they are also sites of struggle. This study problematizes whose kids are forced to make sacrifices. Moreover, it grapples with histories of education disenfranchisement to point towards educational equity for students of color. The findings point to influential theoretical, policy, and practical implications.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Theoretical/Conceptual Frameworks

Introduction

What would you risk to assure that you had access to the best educational opportunities? For many adolescents and their families, Elite Boarding Schools represent the best option for them to achieve their educational goals. Public schools are currently experiencing a major shift with the rise of the school choice movement and privatization becoming the archetype that represents new educational prosperity for historically marginalized communities. Many families of color are pushing for new educational directions because they are dissatisfied with transgenerational subpar education, subsequently limiting the educational access that their children have in comparison to those attending affluent public schools (Anyon, 2005; Noguera, 2008). Thus, private school models are increasingly used as "best practice" in public school spaces, although there is conflicting research about the impact on student outcomes at such institutions. My dissertation aims to examine why students of color choose Elite Boarding Schools (EBSs) as a means to pursue their academic goals and the outcomes of these choices. This dissertation raises important questions about what dreams, desires, and aspirations these institutions represent for students from non-dominant backgrounds.

Framing This Study

Many families of color are pushing for new educational opportunities because they are dissatisfied with what they view as a subpar public education in comparison to those attending more affluent public schools and private schools. Neoliberal agendas have purported charter schools and private schools as the answers to educational disparities instead of acknowledging "systemic neglect and an educational debt that stems from historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies" (Ladson-Billings, 2006a, as cited in Baldridge, 2014, p. 7).

Elite Boarding School (EBS) institutions are fairly autonomous in regard to curriculum, pedagogy, and school structure in comparison to traditional private schools or public schools and place adolescents in collegiate-like environments at a younger age than the traditional college.

Being seated in this moment of educational shifts and in light of the evolving preference of school choice and privatization for historically marginalized communities, I turn towards the experiences of students of color. EBSs were not traditionally created for this demographic, and represent some of the most prestigious, private institutions in America. I respond to Gaztambide-Fernández and DiAquoi's (2010) call for more research that critically examines and reflects the experiences and perspectives of domestic students of color and international students in affluent educational spaces and is not traditional within K-12 research. In doing so, a holistic understanding and implications for how race, ethnicity, class and gender disparities can be elevated for marginalized groups across educational settings. The purpose of this dissertation is to construct an understanding around *why* these students commit to making extreme sacrifices for education and future careers, and to encourage researchers to reexamine what the education system should be providing for students of color.

Researcher Positionality

Neither my parents nor I really knew what we were getting into. Once you've made the journey, you can't pretend it didn't happen, that everything's like it was before except now you play lacrosse.

— *Lorene Cary (1991, p. 4)*

This is one of the first quotations I read in the book *Black Ice,* by Lorene Cary (1991). It stood out to me because it was one of the first things I thought about when I was *left* at Westover School in 2004. By *left* I mean, my grandparents helped me unpack my room and I remember

watching the car as it disappeared down the road… I turned towards that big yellow building… and wondered "What do I do now?" The answer to that immediate question was go back to my room and toss this blue, bean bag pillow to my roommate between our twin beds and talk about how we were going to be "best friends." That optimistic mindset and numerous tossed up prayers were the motivation I thought I needed to get through… Through what? At that point, I was not quite sure. I did not know what the next four years of my life would be like and I did not know what to expect from my high school experience.

After reading *Black Ice* during my second year of graduate school, I sought out other texts that I hoped would provide clarity, or perhaps camaraderie for my experience as a cis-gendered, Black, Woman who attended an all-girls school.[1] I then read: *Best Intentions: the Education and Killing of Edmund Perry,* by Robert Sam Anson (1987); *Maizon at Blue Hill,* by Jacqueline Woodson (2002), and *Prep: a Novel* by Curtis Sittenfeld (2005), just to name a few. I also watched *A Prep School Negro* (Lee, 2012), *American Dream at Groton* (Grubin, 1988) and *A Place Out of Time: The Bordentown School* (Davidson, 2009). In college, I could label some of the peculiar experiences and situations that I encountered in high school and these sources provided insight to the fact that what I experienced in high school was not a singular experience. Then, I was curious about research and theorizing about the experiences of students of color at boarding schools. In this journey, many of the sources discussed the processes of assimilation, reproduction, and a shift in students because of the boarding school environment, but I always wondered… "Why do students go there then?" And not for the reasons and rationalization that scholars had offered, obviously, any students would want to go to a school if it provided them

[1] I will discuss the importance of these fiction and non-fiction texts in Chapter 3 where I discuss my methodological approaches.

with access to top schools (colleges and universities), but are the difficulties truly worth it? How do students navigate these spaces in a way that makes the sacrifices worthwhile?

Elite Boarding School Scholarship

Currently, there are several studies that examine the educational achievement and experiences of students of color in public and traditional private schools (Bankston & Caldas, 1996; Diamond, Posey-Maddox et al.,, 2021; Gutman et al., 2002; Howard, 2006) and examine how public institutions are failing to fulfill their educational promises (Levine, 1980; Posey-Maddox, 2014; Sherretta, 2003; Wolk, 2011). Cookson and Persell (1985) as well as Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) assert that even though only one per cent of the American population attends these elite schools, they are an important section of the population that is not researched often. Historically, EBS institutions have fostered the making and unmaking of various groups of people (Hacking, 1986). Initially developed for wealthy New American families to ensure their sons received a proper education (Baltzell, 1958; McLachlin, 1970) while escaping the mediocrity of classmates and negative influences of their towns, these institutions have also been used to educate and "civilize" entire generations of specific ethnic groups (Adams, 1995; Churchill, 2004). Social reproduction is carried out through the power these schools harness as "total institutions" (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Crosier, 1991) – meaning their environments create "a tightly woven fabric of activities all designed to create an overpowering and undeniable educational environment, a total institution in which young men and women can't avoid the message of the institution" (p. 4). EBSs are historically prized for holding forms of cultural capital that align with dominant cultures as these institutions are traditionally

predominantly white and upper-class (Cookson & Persell, 1991) and uninviting to students outside of those demographics (Horvat & Antonio, 1999).[2]

Empirical research specifically on the perspectives of students of color at EBSs remains small but is slowly growing (Gaztambide-Fernández & Howard, 2012). A majority of studies show that students' experiences have been shaped by one's ability (or inability) to culturally and ethnically relate to their peers and the overall "habitus[3]" of the school (Cookson & Persell, 1985, 1991; Rowley et al., 1998; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, 2003). Horvat and Antonio (1999) found that students felt they needed to sacrifice their racial identity in order to navigate their school experiences. Boarding school students of color reported that they did not feel as though the scholastic setting afforded space for them to completely stay true to themselves. Scholars discuss how the organizational structure of the school stifled Black students specifically from authentically expressing themselves (Cookson & Persell, 1985, 1991; Horvat & Antonio, 1999; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, 2003).

Horvat and Antonio (1999) found that students developed various ways to make themselves feel as though they "fit in" with their white peers, therefore highlighting that interactions with peers and teachers fostered sentiments of alienation, thus forcing them to develop counter-identities to feel more comfortable at school (Anson, 1987; Cary, 1991). At times, students would drop out because of "homesickness, being needed by family, not feeling accepted at their new prep school, or a combination of those factors" (Datnow & Cooper, 1997, p. 57). However, for those who decided to stay, they tried to accommodate two sets of identity to blend in when they were back at home. For example, students report that when they would try to

[2] Most studies at EBSs focus on the racialized perspectives of Black students.
[3] Habitus – defined as the "fluid and constant reformulated set of dispositions that are created through persona and social history and thus influence how the world is constructed around us" (Horvat & Antonio, 1999, p. 319) – within EBSs have been found to be at odds with the individual's habitus.

incorporate what they learned while away at school about meals, or ways of dressing, families would tell them, “Why don’t you leave that St. George’s bullshit at St. George’s” (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, p. 57). All that aside, several students stated that attending boarding schools helps affirm a sense of who they were, one student stated, “I got a lot clearer on my cultural identity” (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, p. 172). All of these studies are centered on how the habitus of these institutions impact students; however, I am interested in how students are flourishing and what skills they are developing to thrive in these environments.

Educational Statistics for Students of Color

Per the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), on average Black and Hispanic students score 20 points or more lower than their white counterparts on assessments in reading and math (Ansell, 2011). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education’s public school data shows that white and Asian students are twice as likely to take classes that are considered academically rigorous in comparison to their Black and Hispanic counterparts (Ansell, 2011). Furthermore, findings from the Editorial Project in Education Research Center state that graduation rates for Asian and white students are at least 25% higher than that of Hispanic, Black, and American Indian students (Ansell, 2011).

According to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights:

- Black children represent 18% of preschool enrollment, and a disproportionate 48% of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014b).
- On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of Black students. American Indian and Native Alaskan students are also disproportionately suspended and expelled, representing less than 1% of the student population but 2% of out-of school

suspensions and 3% of expulsions (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014b).

- 25% of the high schools with the highest percentage of Black and Latino students do not offer Algebra II; a third of these schools do not offer chemistry. Less than 50% of American Indian and Native Alaskan high school students have access to the full range of math and science courses offered in the schools of their white peers (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014a).
- English learners make up 5% of high school enrollment, but 11% of students held back or retained a year. Twelve percent (12%) of Black students are retained in grade 9 — about double the rate of all students retained (6%) (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014a).

This section of the paper is by no means an expansive illustration of the educational disparities that plague students of color, but a glimpse into how students of color are not being served by the public education system. With that being said, this information is particularly important because families of color search for (as they should) educational opportunities that provide their children with what they view as more equitable and fulfilling for their children's hopes, dreams, and future and position them to have "flourishing lives" (Grant, 2012).

Purpose of this Study

Marginalized groups in affluent spaces are often ignored because they are assumed to only be sites of privilege, but they are also sites of struggle. This research highlights how students can use situations of struggle and turn them into strengths. This project raises questions about what public education should and can provide for students of color so that they (and their families) do not feel that leaving home is their only hope for educational gains and future

prosperity. Lastly, this study problematizes how kids are forced to make sacrifices and grapples with how it is possible to decrease the impact of this educational disparity.

My intent is to take up Eve Tuck's (2009) call and push back against damaged-centered research. There are plenty of critiques and criticism about EBS experiences, so this study deepens understanding around why students of color strategically select these institutions as a part of their educational journey versus pinning students of color as happy coincidences that are *expected* to be granted access to these institution because the United States is becoming more and more diverse – therefore, EBS should admit more students of color.

Research Questions

This dissertation engages with these discussions by looking at why students of color choose EBSs to pursue their academic goals. It is informed by the following research questions:

1) What are the experiences of students of color at Elite Boarding Schools? How are these institutions preparing them to persevere amidst adversity?
2) How are teachers responding to the needs of their non-dominant students in an educational environment that provides autonomy? What does autonomy look like in an EBS setting?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

My analytical lens is shaped by Critical Race Theory, the Community Cultural Wealth Model. This decision was made to provide a holistic analytical lens for my data. Through using these theories to work together, I will center the voices of non-dominant students and position them as experts about their experiences (Pillow, 2003). This will in turn allow communities of color to (re)write educational understandings of themselves (Yosso, 2005).

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) grew out of a lack of analysis that used race as a lens for examining legal practices (reasoning and institutions) and sought to uncover how race ideologically infiltrates "American jurisprudence" (Crenshaw, 1988; Harris, 1995; Matsuda, 1987, 1995; Williams, 1987, 1991). It was a means of addressing racial inequality and the role that race plays in the construction of the legal system in this country (Crenshaw, 1988; Harris, 1994), as well as a push back against the systemic practices that perpetuate inequalities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Moreover, it was distinguished from Critical Legal Studies (Taylor et al., 2009) in order to address racial inequality and the role that race plays in the construction of the legal system in the United States (Crenshaw, 1988; Harris, 1994). Critical Race Theory (CRT) has also primed the field for the development of LatCrit, QueerCrit, and Critical Race feminists (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

The idea of developing this new theory was planted in the 1970s and was spearheaded by lawyers, activist and legal scholars – including Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda, Patricia Williams, and Alan Freeman (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) – who were determined to continue the effort of the Civil Rights Movement that was beginning to dwindle (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Lawrence et al., 1993). The purpose of this theoretical framework was not to develop an approach that would fizzle out within a couple of decades, but one which would provide a lasting impact on the way that race permeated legal battles in America (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). It took more than 15 years, and the collaboration of several scholars from varying disciplines to develop this theory was published in 1989 at the first Critical Race Theory Workshop (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Even though Critical Race Theory scholars vary on the main tenets of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Taylor et al., 2009), here I present some of the theoretical pillars here:

A. “Racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi)
B. Storytelling is used as a means to, “challenge to racial oppression and the status quo … in which writers analyze the myth, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make common culture about race and that invariably render Blacks and other minorities one-down” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvii)
    a. “naming one’s own reality;
        i. much of ‘reality’ is socially constructed;
        ii. stories provide members of outgroups a vehicle for psychic self-preservation; and
        iii. the exchange of stories from teller to listener can help overcome ethnocentrism and the dysconscious (King, 1992) drive or need to view the world in one way” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 13; Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 23)
C. Critiques liberalism and instances of interest converge (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009)

CRT naturally extended into the field of Education because of the lack of educational change for marginalized groups and the inability to label the systems of racism that have led to educational disparities (Ladson-Billings, 2009). In 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate placed CRT in the educational terrain when they published *Toward a Critical Race Theory in Education*. Additional keystone scholars of Critical Race Theory within education are Larry Parker, Dolores Delgado Bernal, Daniel Solórzano, Tara Yosso, David Fletcher and David Gillborn (Taylor et al., 2009).

CRT in the Field of Education

Specifically, within education, CRT is promoted as a means to analyze curricular, instructional, assessment, school funding and processes of school desegregation in order to see how students of color still suffer from (historical and current) systemic and institutional disparities, oftentimes done in the name of equality (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Methodologically applied in education, CRT has five main components (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002b): intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination; challenges to dominant ideology; commitment to social justice; centrality of experiential knowledge; and transdisciplinary perspective (p.26). These components highlight the challenges students of color are faced with and navigate through in educational institutions (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002b).

Educationally, Critical Race Theorists seek to change how schools function for students of color and change the future trajectory of education in hopes of dismantling racism's hold on American structures. Peggy Davis (2000) examined the concept of microaggressions, "incessant, often gratuitous and subtle offenses" (p. 142), within the legal system, in *Law as Microaggression.* She traces the cognitive psychological, psychoanalytical, and historical construction and promotion of using stereotypes as a means to categorize, coddle and promote white superiority processes. Work on microaggressions has continued in the field of educational research. Solórzano et al. (2000) examined the experiences of 34 African American college students at three different institutions and found that the school climate was extremely racialized, and students experienced microaggression in classes, around campus while not in classes, as well as in social settings. Students reported that their experiences constantly left them with "feelings of self-doubt and frustration as well as isolation" (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 69). Students felt as though they were charged with the task of balancing their academics while navigating the unwelcoming racial climate of the school simultaneously; in order to navigate this, students

would actively create and seek out "counter-spaces" in academic and non-academic settings. These counter-spaces served as settings "where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained" (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 70).[4] This is just an example of one way that CRT has been employed as a means to frame how students of color are treated (by other students and teachers) and develop implications for educational spaces.

CRT has also been the center of a lot of criticism. Other scholars have stated that CRT scholars center themselves too much within their work, thus leading to articles and chapters that are relatively simple to write and directed by the specific agenda that the author has (Litowitz, 2009). Furthermore, they assert that that the emphasis on storytelling centers emotion (which are easily changeable and context specific) versus objectivity, which makes it useless for changing legal doctrines (there is not a correlation between consciousness development and legal changes) (Faber & Sherry, 2009; Litowitz, 2009); and that storytelling poses a problem for measuring the "truth" about experiences (Faber & Sherry, 2009; Litowitz, 2009). Despite criticism from various fields of research, CRT remains an integral mechanism for investigating the educational experiences of students of color (Taylor et al., 2009). The following section of the paper will explore a theory that was developed through the lens of CRT.

Community Cultural Wealth

Community Cultural Wealth is an analytical framework that was developed as a method of advancing the reach of critical race theories. Yosso (2005) posits six areas of capital (aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational and resistance) that students of color bring to educational settings. Yosso aims to problematize dominant regimes for whose *funds of*

[4] For more research on microaggressions see Sue et al., 2007; Sue, 2010; Solórzano, 1998.

knowledge (González et al., 2007; Moll et al., 1992; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011) are honored within educational spaces. Yosso (2005) traces the guises that students of color bring with them to the classroom that are informed by their home and communal settings. The six forms of capital that Yosso (2005) elucidates are:

- *Aspirational capital*, defined as one's ability to stay focused on their "hopes and dreams" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77) in the face of/despite adversity.
- *Linguistic capital*, defined as social and emotional intelligences developed from possessing multiple linguistic modes because of one's belonging to communities that value oral traditions (Yosso, 2005, p. 78-79).
- *Familial capital* refers to knowledge that is developed from one's family and community. In this case, family is extended to not only encompass nuclear members, but also a kinship network that includes "emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness" (Yosso, 2005, p. 79).
- *Social capital* is one's communal and personal connections that many lead to the insight for how to emotionally and institutionally navigate social structures (Yosso, 2005, p. 79-80).
- *Navigational capital* affords students with the resources (social, emotional, strategic) to navigate "social institutions," especially those that have not been crafted for communities of color (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).
- *Resistant Capital* is rooted in communities of color having histories that are full of stories of resilience and strength under systems of marginalization (Yosso, 2005, p. 80-81).

Overall, Yosso (2005) deduces that aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational and resistant capital are the components that build one's cultural capital. This lens will play a significant role in searching for students' strengths in my data analysis process.

Chapter Summaries

To provide a foundation for this study, chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review tracing historical to modern development of boarding schools. More specifically, it will examine how groups of color have been treated in these educational institutions and present the intersections of students' experiences – specifically for students of color. This is particularly important as I am centering the voices and expertise of students of color vs presenting their experience as obligatory or surprising findings from my research. Furthermore, I include an analysis of the ways that boarding schools have been used against American Indians. Considering that I am writing on stolen land, many boarding schools were constructed on stolen land. In a twisted sense, Native American Boarding Schools were some of the first institutions to which people of color were "admitted," so it is important to include this history. It is often background that I do not see included in other literature reviews about boarding schools.

Chapter 3 outlines my research methodology as well as the methodological tools that I use. I introduce Green's (2014) Double Dutch Methodology and show how operationalized it in my study. Furthermore, I discuss the importance of narrative for my research as it applies to data collection, coding, dissertation writing/style, as well as how I select sources that impact the framing, foundation, and function of my dissertation research.

The first analytical chapter, chapter 4, will present my composite characters and provide your first glance into students' perspectives at Globalville,[5] and introduce my findings. It focuses

[5] This is a pseudonym for my research site. An explanation for why this name is fitting is provided in Chapter 3.

your attention on the strength and navigational skills that EBS students use to matriculate through high school while being unapologetically and strategically themselves. Thus, it exemplifies how students leverage their Community of Cultural Wealth. In doing so, students are chasing their dreams, calling upon knowledge from their communities and families, being adolescents, and pushing back against traditional boarding school environments.

Turning my attention to how faculty craft and impact students' experiences, chapter 5 examines the concept of autonomy for teachers and their interactions with students of color. It examines how faculty autonomy functions as well as how teachers view their roles in the adolescent boarding school experience. Additionally, the chapter explores how some teachers reflect on their instructional choice and influences on students' success (or lack thereof). Lastly, chapter 6, the conclusion and implications, will provide directions for future research and afford space for the expertise of the students of color in this study to show their investment in their educational journeys. Furthermore, my research exposes questions that should be raised about what public educational and other private education institutions should and can be doing so that students of color do not need to leave home for academic prowess. Lastly, this study problematizes which kids are forced to make sacrifices and grapples with how we can decrease the impact of this disparity.

Conclusion

Because EBSs are dedicated to "reflecting a multicultural society in which the schools are embedded" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a, p. 40), this study will uncover insights into how EBSs create well-rounded and culturally savvy[6] students by shaping students' identities in

[6] I have selected these two characteristics as generalization of qualities and buzz words or sentiments that institutions (at all academic levels) generally posit in their mission statements and claim to strive for in the school ethos.

negative and positive ways. Over the course of this dissertation, you will learn why students of color strategically choose to attend these prestigious institutions. Students show a firm commitment and investment in their educational trajectory and use a variety of resources and skills to navigate and EBS environment. Specifically for students of color, I uncovered a rationale for why a student would decide to sacrifice so much of themselves to graduate from an EBS. Developing a foundational understanding and arc of how boarding schools have historically and contemporarily impacted students will prime an understanding of how students are writing and running towards their own future despite attending an institution that has strong footing in the past.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

That's the whole irony… At Groton, I'm Puerto Rican and that's not good; At home, I'm white and that's not good… so what is good?

— *Johanna Vega (Grubin, 1988)*

Introduction

The experience of contemporary EBS students of color is an under-researched area in the field of education; therefore, an in-depth understanding of their experiences will provide valuable insight into how to help these students maintain and reap the purported benefits of attending these prestigious institutions. This chapter will provide the reader with a brief overview of the historical development of boarding schools and then venture into what existing literature, albeit scant, states about students of color at EBSs. This background provides a foundation for the themes that were brought to the study as I formed my research questions and selected spaces on campus to observe. It is the root of where many of my boarding school inquiries stem.

This literature review is not exhaustive – it is meant to be representative, not comprehensive. It will start with a history of boarding schools. This will not only include academic texts from researchers in regard to the construction of boarding schools in America, but also the infamous history of American Indian boarding schools. It would be remiss to exclude this data, because it is integral to examining how boarding schools have functioned culturally in the United States. While the first body of literature focuses on "privilege" and the other on "disadvantage," both emphasize the effect and influence of institutions on social reproduction and stratification (Graham, 2012). This will be followed by literature on the purpose of elite education, historically and ultimately within modern day EBSs. A baseline for the formation of identity will be briefly established among historically traditional students – i.e.,

the white upper class (male) – and then more fully examined among students of color, including intersectional analyses of race & class and race & gender.

The quotation provided at the beginning of this chapter illustrates how "education debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006a)[7] impacts people from different races and socio-economic statuses disparately, often with education as the divider. This chapter is multi-faceted and pulls scholarship and historical moments into conversation with each other. This is not always beautiful or linear. In doing so, you will see the ways that historical and contemporary moments speak to the way that schools have been used to *educate* people. Education has been (and is still) used as a means to indoctrinate and liberate.[8] To hypnotize and mobilize.[9] For persistence (social reproduction) and resistance.[10] To humanize and civilize.[11] The distinction between education and schooling are often blurr(y/ed) and used by officials to promote agendas, spread misinformation, gatekeep success, and to deculturize and humiliate entire groups of people. It has also been used by the marginalized in hush harbors to resist the strategic indoctrination deployed by their enslavers.[12] Education was also used at institutions that modeled and provided safe spaces for students of color to learn during a time when segregation loomed and when public schools failed students of color.[13] Schools and education have also been used as tools for

[7] Education debt is the sum of Historical, Economic, Sociopolitical, and Moral disparities that impact the educational achievements of marginalized communities. For details about the development and impact of each of these areas, please read *From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools* (Ladson-Billings, 2006a).
[8] The Black Panther Party hosted many programs that provided political education for Black Communities as well as taught Black communities how to invest in themselves when white Supremist entities would not do so.
[9] This of the work of SNCC and SCLC to help Black Folks learn how to read so they could pass literacy test during de jure segregation and so we could vote and gain political power.
[10] Think of Democratic Schools (Apple & Beane, 2007), and Freedom Schools for example.
[11] Think of American Indian boarding schools and traditional educational paradigms where banking education and rote memorization was key versus problem-posing education (Freire, 2009).
[12] Enslaved people would congregate, commiserate, and learn to read in the dark and silence of the night. This is also the cornerstone of Black religious traditions in the United States as we know it.
[13] Think of the development of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or the Piney Woods Schools (which is still up and running today).

people to resist purposeful disenfranchisement and resource hoarding. Schools have always been used to solve problems… the power and societal status of the person simply dictates the "angle of the problem" one is trying to solve. This paints a very simplistic view of the way that society dictates, influences, and is reflected in schools. However, this chapter and all of its additions and turns, and jumps provide a glimpse into an educational establishment that is traditionally deemed untouchable or unquestionable.

Historical Impact of Boarding Schools on Students

Boarding schools have historically been institutions that have fostered the making and unmaking of various groups of people (Hacking, 1986). Initially developed as a means for wealthy New American families to ensure their sons receive a proper education while escaping the mediocrity of the classmates and negative influences of the towns in which they lived, these institutions have also been used as a means to educate and civilize entire generations of specific ethnic groups.

Such social reproduction is possible in part due to the power these schools harness as "total institutions" (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Crosier, 1991) – meaning their environments create "a tightly woven fabric of activities all designed to create an overpowering and undeniable educational environment, a total institution in which young men and women can't avoid the message of the institution" (p. 4; also cited in Cookson & Persell, 1985; Graham, 2012). Many scholars have also looked at the role of EBS in social reproduction and this exploration has led to a discussion and analysis about the habitus that the school environments perpetuate and reinforce (Horvat & Antonio, 1999). Habitus[14] – defined as the "fluid and constant reformulated set of dispositions that are created through persona and social history and thus influence how the world

[14] Horvat and Antonio (1999) referenced the definition from Bourdieu (1977) as well as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977).

is constructed around us" (Horvat & Antonio, 1999, p. 319) – within prep schools has been found to be at odds with the individual's habitus. Furthermore, the overall environments (institutional organization) of prep schools tend to not be inviting to students that do not fit into a particular mold (Horvat & Antonio, 1999).

However, "college preparatory boarding schools,"[15] are historically prized for holding forms of cultural capital[16] that align with dominant cultures, as institutions that are predominantly white and upper-class (Cookson & Persell, 1991, p. 219). Conversely, while it is important to develop the cultural capital that comes with attending prep schools, it is equally important for students to maintain their cultural identity (Alexander-Snow, 2011; Cookson & Persell, 1985, 1991; Delpit, 1995/2006). Such knowledge may lead to the alienation of certain individuals within the setting. Distinctions between students' culture and the culture of the school can lead to the teachers, administrators and other school stakeholders to misunderstand the potential, interaction and attitudes of students (Delpit, 1995/2006). At times, the profound habitus of the school and racial background of the students intersect, students discuss sentiments of double consciousness.[17] Double Consciousness pushes the singular perspective of habitus further by showing that the discussion cannot be color evasive (Annamma et al., 2017). Gaztambide- Gaztambide-Fernández and DiAquoi (2010) illustrate the experiences of students of color as they reflect about interacting with their predominantly white high school environment. Students report developing a heightened sense of awareness about their race based on the

[15] Throughout this paper, the terms elite boarding school and prep school will be used interchangeably, and this is also reflected in the literature. For me this is particularly important because there is a double meaning associated with something being "preparatory," hence that short hand of just saying prep. There is an assumption/ indication that the students here are being readied not simply for college, but for life.

[16] Cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) refers to one's mannerisms, values and knowledge that is used to maintain and increase one's social standing (Bourdieu, 1985; Horvat et al., 2003).

[17] *Double consciousness* is just that – possessing two forms of awareness simultaneously which may be at odds with one another. This is a term coined by W.E.B Du Bois in 1903 within his work *The Souls of Black Folks,* a seminal piece.

"outsider" status, concern over judgments made about their "Blackness" (or lack thereof) and pressured to fit into the preconceived notions, battle the "lower opinion" that peers and teacher hold and struggle with independently constructing a sense of self because of consistent categorization (Gaztambide-Fernández & DiAquoi, 2010).

Boarding School Admission

Currently, elite boarding schools are admitting more students of color; however, the student body is still mainly white (Cookson & Persell, 1991; see Table 1.). When students of color leave their homes to live at prep schools, they are entering an environment that is at odds with their cultural identity (Horvat & Antonio, 1999), and a person's cultural identity is connected to one's cultural capital. For African American[18] students who attend prep schools, retreating to an environment that fosters one's cultural identity, an environment that affirms one's cultural capital, is not possible because they live within the predominantly white institutions.[19]

[18] You will note that Black and African American are used interchangeably in this study, this reflected many debates about the importance of distinct and clear racial and ethnic markers. While I personally prefer and use the term Black, African American is used in a lot the existing EBS literature.

[19] Hence, the importance of including "boarding" in the definition of prep schools.

Table 1.

The Progress of Black Students at the Nation's Most Prestigious Boarding Schools

The Progress of Black Students at the Nation's Most Prestigious Boarding Schools+

(Ranked by Increase in Black Students 1999-2003)

School	Black Students 1999	Black Students 2003	Percentage Difference
Cate School	12	23	+91.7 %
Hotchkiss School	30	54	+80.0
St. Paul's School	19	33	+73.7
St. Andrew's School	22	33	+50.0
St. George's School	18	24	+33.0
Westminster School	19	25	+31.6
Middlesex School	20	25	+25.0
Groton School	22	27	+22.7
Miss Porter's School	27	32	+18.5
Concord Academy	17	18	+5.9
Choate Rosemary Hall	52	55	+5.8
Phillips Exeter Academy	76	78	+2.6
Lawrenceville School	70	70	0.0
Taft School	33	31	-6.1
Deerfield Academy	45	38	-15.6
Phillips Academy	85	71	-16.5
Thacher School	16	12	-25.0
Madeira School	26	19	-26.9
TOTAL	609	668	+9.7 %

+As rated by *Town and Country* magazine.

Note: The Brooks School in North Andover, Massachusetts, and Milton Academy in Milton, Massachusetts, declined to participate in our 2003 survey.

Source: Telephone survey conducted by the JBHE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.

Note: Detailing the matriculation of Black Students in the Years 1999 and 2003. Thus, showing the majority of schools surveyed increased their Black student population (JBHE Foundation, 2003).

Review of Boarding School Literature

Examining a fair amount of information about EBSs highlights academic and social interactions for schools (both public and private), and for teacher preparation. Currently, there are several studies that are examining the educational achievement and experiences of students of color in public and private schools (Bankston & Caldas, 1996; Carter, 2007; DeCuir-Gunby, et al., 2012; Gutman et al., 2002; Howard, 2003; Tyson et al., 2005; Zweigenhaft, 1993) as well as examining the failure of public institutions in general (Levine, 1980; Sherretta, 2003; Wolk,

2011). I would argue that an analysis of students in boarding schools, which are considered to be some of the best secondary institutions in the States, can provide a parallel glance at the advantages and shortcoming of schooling, teaching and learning for students of color. Particularly, the similarities will illustrate how the problems with(in) schools are in dynamics that lie outside of students and not intrinsic to the student (as some research may suggest). This insight will show that educational institutions across the board can implement pedagogical, curricular and institutional changes to assure that educational stakeholders are addressing the needs of their students.

Social Importance

Cookson and Persell (1985) as well as Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) assert that even though only one percent of the American population attends these elite schools, they are an important section of the population that is not researched often. Furthermore, studies have also shown that there has been a growth in the number of African American students in prestigious boarding schools; the existence of programs[20] that aim to provide access to prep schools demonstrates that this educational shift is nationally recognized, thus the experiences of prep school students of color should be examined (JBHE Foundation, 2003).

Lastly, examining the experiences of prep school students of color is important because of the importance of education to the communities of color, educational programs that predominantly serve African American students. Several studies have shown that African American families view private education as a means of social mobility as well as an alternative to subpar public education (Allen, 1986; Cole & Omari, 2003; Higginbotham & Weber, 1992;

[20] A Better Chance (ABC), a national consortium, as well as Prep 9 and the Oliver Scholars Program, both based in New York, are funneling programs that strive to provide financial and academic support for African American students to attend prep schools (JBHE Foundation, 2003; Mission and History, 2013; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2003).

JBHE Foundation, 2003; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2003). Thus, families have the understanding that economic gains can be acquired through attending prestigious institutions and continuing to institutions of higher education.

History of Boarding Schools

There are various types of boarding schools in America: Academy, Episcopal, entrepreneurial, all-girls, Catholic, western, progressive, military, and Quaker[21] (Cookson & Persell, 1985). These schools operate autonomously without imposition from local or federal education regulations or funding (Cookson & Persell, 1985; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a). The majority of these institutions are located on the East Coast, with a heavy concentration in New England. However, before discussing such schools, a review of Native American boarding schools is merited.

Native American Boarding Schools

The dark history of Native American boarding schools is often forgotten– excluded in dominant narratives about America's history. However, the deculturalization roles of these institutions merits inclusion here because it is a testament to the impacts that these institutions can have on impacting culture, dismantling cultural legacies and contracting new histories. The organizational habitus of Native American boarding schools was decidedly at odds with the culture of their students, comparable to those of students of color in EBSs, as is the impetus to assimilate.

The Perceived Problem

In the seventeenth century, European-American settlers would begin to change the entire existence of American Indians (Adams, 1995). In addition to being eliminated by foreign

[21] For more details regarding each school type, read Cookson and Persell (1985) chapter 1.

diseases, forcibly converted by missionaries and stripped of their sacred land, experiences in boarding schools may be added to the list of atrocities committed against American Indians (Adams, 1995). As various colonizers came to the land that would become the United States, most were concerned with what to do with the American Indians and the land owned for centuries (Adams, 1995). Sentiments regarding how to gain control over this land were constantly evolving due to ideas about Western Expansion in the growth of the country (Adams, 1995). While many of the early colonizers seemed willing to negotiate the transition to the new society, as evidenced by the development of the Peace Policy (1869) and Indian Rights Association (1882), many American Indian elders were confused and conflicted because of the zeal for change happening in and around their communities. Despite such changes, colonial reformers still felt as though they needed to "civilize" the American Indian as they believed that their religious convictions, way of life, and tradition of oral histories needed to be dismantled. "Education" was deemed one of the fastest means to do so; hence, the development of Native American boarding schools began (Adams, 1995).

The Solution

The education of American Indians happened in three phases once they diverged from missionary schools: reservation day schools (on the outskirts of reservation during the 1860s), reservation boarding schools (located at agency headquarters in the late 1870s), and off-reservation boarding schools. Day schools were initially implemented because the schools were inexpensive to run and because they seemed less imposing on families (Adams, 1995). However, there was the mounting concern that children would revert to their "tribal ways" if they were given the opportunity to return to their homes and this would disrupt the development of their "civilization." This was one of the major push factors for the change from the day school model

to the reservation boarding school model (Adams, 1995). While reservation boarding schools were seen as better institutions to assimilate and deculturalize American Indian children, colonizers remained concerned about children's proximity to their families and other adults who were not receiving the same type of training, thus still exposing children to the "degrading influence of tribal life" (Adams, 1995, p. 31). Subsequently, Richard Pratt led the last educational movement.

After the Red River War of 1874, Pratt gained possession of 72 American Indian "prisoners" and decided to convert the prison into a school in St. Augustine. He made the imprisoned wear military clothes, cut their hair and reassigned positions held by white army members to American Indians at the camp (Adams, 1995). In 1878, Pratt sent a letter to Samuel Armstrong inquiring if 15 students from Pratt's school could attend Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. It was the only school that would accept American Indian Warriors (the impetus for their imprisonment) at that time (Cooper, 1999). When he arrived, he decided that he disagreed with American Indians and Black people being educated together as well as in isolation from white civilization, so he was no longer interested in sending his "students" to Hampton. Pratt saw a posting in the newspaper for military personnel that had insight on "Indian Education." His inquiry was approved, and he started his school in 1879 with Miss Mather. This was the beginning of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. As more reservation schools started to become frustrated with their "results," the boarding method of schooling became more prevalent.

"Educational" Experience

During each phase in the colonizers movement to provide "schooling," American Indians were taught to read, write and speak English, develop ideals of individualization versus

communal identities, Christianized, and given "citizenship training" that would prepare American Indians for their position in society (Adams, 1995). Corporal punishment was used as discipline at boarding schools; students could be punished for any action (cultural, linguistic, artistic or spiritual) (Archuleta et al., 2000; Trafzer, 2006) that showed that they were attempting to hold onto cultural connections (Churchill, 2004). At times, students were required to stay at these institutions for the duration of at least 10 years without contact from home (Churchill, 2004).

Initially, American Indian communities resisted their children being stripped from their homes. As time passed, some children voluntarily left for school because they were curious what education could offer them and they perceived that boarding school life would be easier than life on the reservation (Cooper, 1999). This sentiment was encouraged, especially in instances when other children would visit, showing their assimilated way of dressing and acting.

During this era of assimilation, the BIA used the Carlisle[22] school as a model for how to educate the American Indian Children and the development of these schools boomed (Adams, 1995). With the push for the development of these schools, the Meriam Report of 1928 showed that the schools were severely underfunded, understaffed, too militant and that American Indian were not transitioning to the "American" society as anticipated because they were no longer serving their purpose; it called for a restructuring of these institutions (Adams, 1995; Churchill, 2004). The passing of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 marked the slow decline of boarding schools; there was an ideological shift in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), under the guidance of Commissioner Leupp, about being able to erase centuries of tradition and an appreciation of American Indian traditions (Cooper, 1999). Moreover, it wasn't until the Indian

[22] For more information about the experiences of American Indian boarding school students, please see (Adams, 1995; McBeth, 1983; Thorn IV, 2003).

Child Welfare Act of 1978 that American Indian families could legally resist their child being placed at these institutions (Adams, 1995).

In *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Education Experiences*, Trafzer et al. (2006) push back against the historical portrayal of American Indian Boarding Schools and encourages the readers and historians to "suspend damage" (Tuck, 2009) in their recollection and depiction of experiences at these institutions. Despite all the atrocities that the socio-political, historical and governmental structures have committed against American Indians, many have flourished and continue to flourish in the wake of genocide. Several American Indians have become successful artists, athletes, musicians, artisans, educators, and scholars (Archuleta et al., 2000) and they have learned who to live in "both worlds" (Peshkin, 1997). While the development of Native American boarding schools has a troubling and problematic beginning, there seems to be a (re)appropriation of the intent of the schools. Currently, some students are attending these institutions as "second chances" for graduating from high school because they are not performing well at their local high school (Schrank, 2016). Furthermore, some of the previous students have returned to teach at their school in subjects that they were once forbidden to participate in, such as their tribe's language or drumming. This by no means, erases the past of the American Indian Boarding Schools, but shows the transition to a model that provides cultural affirmation, camaraderie and creates kinship for students. They can partake in the cultural care and cultural maintenance process in the wake of historical pain and disconnect (Schrank, 2016).

Elite Boarding Schools

Historical Construction of Prep Schools

At almost parallel historical moments in time as American Indian Boarding schools, the creation of boarding schools for WASPs in America marked the beginning of the creation of a

new elite class (Baltzell, 1958; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a; Khan, 2011; and McLachlin, 1970). Previously, during the 19th century, members of the upper-class, mainly men, were educated at prestigious private schools or by personal tutors (Baltzell, 1958; Levine, 1980; McLachlin, 1970). Several of these privately educated men were a part of the first generation to send their sons to boarding schools (Levine, 1980). During the early years of some of these institutions, they faced closing due to insufficient enrollment numbers to support running the institution (Levine, 1980). As the number of students attending the first 12 keystone boarding institutions increased, so did the endowment of each institution (Levine, 1980). As a result, each institution increased its amount of property (campus size) and lodging for its students, thus leading to an increase of inheritance that school acquired from beneficiaries and their families (Levine, 1980).

Several studies attribute the rapid growth of boarding institutions to America's shift to industrialization during the late 19th century through early 20th century (Levine, 1980; McLachlin, 1970). With an abundance of applicants because of the shift in the economy, the admission process to these schools became very rigorous (Levine, 1980). As Asbury states, cited by Levine (1980), applicants were admitted to school based on the scores of their entrance exams (if it was an academically focused institution) or the status of their family legacy at the school (if it was a socially prestigious school).[23]

What is Elite Education, and What is its Purpose in Identity Formation?

Definitions of Elite Schools

Historical Definitions

[23] Gaztambide-Fernández (2009b) provides an in-depth study about EBS distinctions. Additionally, Persell and Cookson (1985) outline various kinds of American prep schools.

In 1958, Baltzell created a categorization system in which he deduced sixteen schools to be the most elite boarding schools. He states that each institution "serves the sociological function of differentiating the upper class from the rest of the population" (Baltzell, 1958, p. 293). This list has been adopted to reflect the most prestigious boarding schools (see Appendix A.). All sixteen of these schools would be considered "Old, Eastern, patrician, aristocratic and English" (McLachlin, 1970, p. 6).

In 1959, Mills added to the discussion about these institutions and introduced a definition of the term *power elite.* He defines it in the following way:

> a selection and training place of the upper-class, both old and new, the private school is a unifying influence, a force for rationalization of the upper classes. The less important the pedigreed family becomes in the careful transmission of moral and cultural traits, the more important the private school. The school –rather than the upper-class family – is the most important agency for transmitting the traditions of the upper social class, and regulating the admission of new wealth and talent. It is the characterizing point in the upper-class experience (as cited in Cookson & Persell, 1985, p. 18).

Through this, Mills (1959) asserts that these institutions act as regulators and producers of upper-class standing that serves as a form of gatekeeping for this status. This is the source from which many scholars cite their use of the word. Adding to the power and categorization of these institutions, Goffman (1968) (as cited in Crosier, 1991) created a notion that summarizes the effect that various types of school have over its student population: "total institution," which I've referenced earlier in this chapter (p. 4; also cited in Cookson & Persell, 1985; Graham, 2012). This definition analyzes the daily routine that boarding school students are subjected to and

discusses how difficult the environment makes it for students to reject the structure that is being imposed on them.

Modern Definitions

Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a, 2009b) finds that a school must possess the following five characteristics in order to be elite: typologically elite, scholastically elite, historically elite, demographically elite, and geographically elite. These schools also have very rigorous admission processes and strong ties with elite college and universities (Cookson & Persell, 1985; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a, 2009b) and offer a variety of course across subject matter and content (Howard & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010). Because students are so far away from their parents, they observe the right to be *in loco parentis*[24] (Cookson & Persell, 1985; Graham, 2012).

Purpose of Elite Education

Historical Purpose

As Asbury states, cited by Levine (1980), applicants were admitted to school based on the scores of their entrance exams (if it was an academically focused institution) or the status of their family legacy at the school (if it was a socially prestigious school).[25] Scholars have stated that prep schools help to promote and sustain relations of power because of the social capital[26] that these institutions garner and the selective admission process perpetuates this (Cookson & Persell, 1985; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a, 2009b; Khan, 2011; Persell & Cookson, 1985). On the other hand, studies show that as years progress and members of the lower socioeconomic

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[24] *In loco parentis* means "in place of the parents" or "to repair the ruines [*sic*] of our first parents" (Milton 1644/1944, p. 51-52, as cited in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a, p. 1107).

[25] Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) conducted an in-depth study that distinguishes prep schools into five categories: typologically elite, scholastically elite, historically elite, geographically elite, and demographically elite. Additionally, Persell and Cookson (1985) outline various kinds of American prep schools.

[26] Social capital refers to resources and networks (connections) that an individual has through family or institutional affiliations that afford one to leverage desired outcomes in differing settings (Bourdieu, 1985).

classes as well as students of color gained admission to prep schools, these institutions did serve as a leveler of sorts because students of color who graduated from these schools did have the same career outcomes (banker, lawyers, politicians and government officials) as their wealthy, white peers (Levine, 1980).

Modern Day

The social composition and the environment at EBSs have remained sites of prestigious education and are still primarily institutions that educate the children of America's most elite families; there is pressure to succeed on all students that attend prep schools. When discussing the competitive nature of prep schools Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (1991) state,

> from the moment they jump (or stumble through) the hurdles of the admission to an elite school, they must prove their worth by mastering the curriculum, the students' culture…We began to see boarding schools as crucibles, from which some students emerged as tempered steel and others were simply burnt to a crisp **(**p. 28)

This strong imagery highlights the continued distinction that prep schools, as an institution, cultivate within their student body; so, if students from affluent backgrounds feel strained, imagine how students from varying backgrounds must feel (Lee & Burkam, 2003; Rumberger & Lim, 2008). Furthermore, Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) creates a model that summarizes elite education through these five E's: exclusion, engagement, excellence, entitlement, envisioning.[27] Furthermore, in a study conducted to examine motivation, engagement and psychological well-being of boarding students versus day students, Martin et al. (2014) found that boarding students tended to score higher in adaptive motivation, academic buoyancy, goals, meaning and purpose, life satisfaction, participation in extracurricular activities, parent relations and had lower rates of

[27] To understand how each "E" is defined, please read pages p. 5-8.

being absent (co-variances were controlled for). Conversely, in a study of mental health service for 19 students all in one state of the Northeast, Van Hoof and Hansen (1999) found that there are a variety of ways that school's structure and handle mental health concerns. They propose 15 recommendations for constructing consistency across institutions as well as highest level support for students (see Van Hoof & Hansen, 1999, p. 77). More importantly, Van Hoof and Hansen found that students were hesitant to seek mental health assistance because of the interconnectedness of school structure and the familiarity that students have with staff.

Elite Education in Modern Identity Formation

Historically Traditional Students

School Experiences

Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) finds that identity formation begins once students receive their acceptance letter. This letter serves as a rite of passage that illustrates that students are automatically good enough to be granted admission. Identity development continues through the various experiences that students gain from the opportunities that they take advantage of (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a). More specifically, students' understanding of themselves deepens once they establish themselves academically, artistically, and athletically. He also found it important to highlight the hierarchy of the three spheres, with academics being the most important; the absence of this could hinder or benefit a student as well as other students from accepting one's identification as a Westonian (for the purposes of this study) (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a). Moreover, if students are not talented across all three spheres, especially in the academic sphere, fill their schedule with extracurricular opportunities – ultimately improving their appearance on college applications.

However, few students at Weston embody the supposed "perfect" identity for being a Westonian. The components of identifying as a Westonian involved students making distinctions about others who do and do not embody characteristics of the identity (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a). Several of these variations come with a student's status as a day student or boarding student, as well as the number of years completed at the school. Conversely, he also finds that students gain distinction when they possess the ability to navigate through various social domains with ease (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a). He calls these students "cultural omnivores" (adapted from Peterson & Kern, 1996). This distinction may be due to the ultimate focus of all Westonians on the connections that they have made and the plenitude of their post-secondary opportunities. In contrast to Gaztambide-Fernández's (2009a) stance, Khan (2011) insists that the demographic of those considered as a part of the elite (in regard to those who attend boarding school) is shifting and he names this new group of students that "new elite." He asserts that students can no longer simply rely on their class or legacy status to navigate prep school life. This change is in part due to the diversification of the student bodies at EBS. This shift in demographic changes the perspective of "belonging" at these institutions from an "advantage" to "earned," thus perpetuating the notion of merit and democracy (Khan, 2011; Kramer, 2008).

Differences by Gender

While many studies do not provide specific details gender discrimination or hierarchies at EBSs, it is a component that Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) shared with his research participants during a conversation when they asked if he would consider sending his daughter to an EBS– he said "no."[28] In sharing his concerns, girls who participated in the research study pushed back on the idea that Weston is a *sexist* institution. They stated that boys are simply

[28] For more details about this encounter, read Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a), p. 184-187.

smarter and more athletic than girls as the institution itself does not provide more opportunities for boys to be better athletically or academically– boys are actually better (as in they have earned it), thus explaining how and why they are able to encompass the Westonian identity more (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a). Moreover, Chase (2008) found that while girls sought out community service, boys only participated in community service projects if they were attempting to evade sports or boosting their resume for college applications. Additionally, Khan (2011) asserts that even though most students at St. Paul's had miraculous accomplishments, it seemed as though white males were the main recipients of acknowledgement from school officials at award ceremonies and other school functions.

Historically Non-Traditional Students

Students of Color

Detailed accounts of non-white student experience typically focus on African American students' experiences. While the field of empirical research conducted on the experiences of African American prep school students is small, most studies show that students' experiences have been shaped by the students' inability to culturally relate to their peers and the overall "habitus" of the school (Cookson & Persell, 1985, 1991; Horvat & Antonio, 1999; Rowley et al., 1998; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, 2003). Horvat and Antonio (1999) found that the habitus of prep schools were at odds with the individual's habitus. This tension caused the individual, in this case African American prep school students, to forfeit key components of themselves to align more with the institutional habitus. The institution's habitus embodied values of oblivious entitlement and was perpetuated in part by the inability for students of color to leave the prep

school setting.[29] Furthermore, Horvat and Antonio (1999) found that faculty, staff and students subconsciously exacerbated biases along the lines of race and class because they were from white and wealthy backgrounds, thus aligning with the historical foundation of these institutions. Students reported several instances in which they were unintentionally alienated during conversations because privilege clouded their peers' ability to acknowledge one's individual difference.

For many students, going away to school was the first time that they had to think about their racial group membership and various scholars explain the impact of this racial identity formation differently. Many students stated that attending a prep school made them think about being African American for the first time because they were coming from a homogeneous environment. This shift afforded them with the opportunity to form a more complete perception of themselves (Cookson & Persell, 1991; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991). On the other hand, Gaztambide-Fernández found that students felt as though they were often tokenized and responsible for teaching other students about their cultural background or were asked to represent the perspective of their entire group (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a). Additionally, the issue of race is discussed under the sliding signifier of "diversity." This then implies that all students at Weston possessed a "different" component to the school that completed the school climate, which is the basis for their admission to the school (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a).

Conversely, Horvat and Antonio (1999) found that students felt that they needed to sacrifice their racial identity to navigate their school experiences. Boarding school students of color reported that they did not feel as though the scholastic setting afforded space for them to

[29] Hence, showing the importance of "boarding" in the experiences of African American EBS students. A student's ability to leave school and be validated in a community where they feel loved and supported is often afford to public school student, private school students and to some extent day-students that attend boarding school.

completely stay true to themselves. Scholars discussed how the structure of the school stifled African American students from authentically expressing themselves (Cookson & Persell, 1985, 1991; Horvat & Antonio, 1999; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, 2003). Horvat and Antonio (1999) found that African American students found various ways to make themselves feel as though they "fit in" with their white peers. Similarly, Cookson and Persell (1991) found that African American students consistently felt as though they were forced to toggle between two worlds because of their race, thus students found it hard to be at "ease" during any circumstance while at prep school (Bourdieu, 1984, 1985). Additionally, parents stated that they knew that their children needed to be "chameleons" (Horvat & Antonio, 1999, p. 334) and that they were aware that this was a painful process for them to go through. Thus, in many cases, African American prep school students needed to adjust the way that they spoke, dressed and even the music that they listened to (Horvat & Antonio, 1999). All in all, African American students, specifically, girls in this study, stated that they understood that these were sacrifices that they needed to make because the greatest reward would exist in the diploma that they received from the institution.

Moreover, various studies show that African American students feel as though they need to always be in complete control of their emotions and action (Cookson & Persell, 1991; Horvat & Antonio, 1999). Students felt as though they could never tell their peers if they were frustrated or angry at interactions or insensitive comments that were made. Furthermore, African American students did not deploy the crude humor and behavior like their white peers (Horvat & Antonio, 1999). This is because they felt as though they needed to show an elevated amount of respect in shared spaces to avoid judgment from their peers (Horvat & Antonio, 1999).

In her ethnographic study, Sarah Chase, the wife of a dorm parent at a co-ed school, found that Black students feel as though there is pressure to care for other students of color and to give back for the opportunities that they have been afforded (Chase, 2008). Also, in comparison to other marginalized groups, African American students do better academically and socially (Chase, 2008). Over the course of two studies 12 years apart, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff found that African American students would either make friends with Black or white counterparts depending on race relation trends in the country. During the 1960's- early 1970's there was an increase in friendships with white peers; however, after 1973, this trend started to decline (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2003). Additionally, students of color report that they remember being popular and would leave school with very strong friendships with white peers that would last for years after they graduated (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, 2003). On the other hand, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (2003) found that students of color in their study do not remember very overt experiences with racism. Furthermore, in *Educating Elites: Class Privilege and Educational Advantage* (Howard & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010), Gaztambide-Fernández and DiAquoi found that students of color feel that "while they are *a part* of this privileged world, they realize that they are also a world *apart*" (p. 57). Students are feeling that they always need to pick between who they become friends with at school in fear of alienating themselves from other students of color or not making friends with white students who are the majority. Additionally, they consider if they "fit" the categories of what is expected for someone who is a part of their racial or ethnic group, also known as double consciousness.

Regarding race and race relations, Chase (2008) found that school segregation was viewed as a naturally occurring phenomenon based on students' comfort levels and that the incidences of racial discrimination were viewed as better at these institutions in comparison to

the outside world (Chase, 2008). Furthermore, students who were racist often kept their remarks and actions to themselves because of fear from disciplinary administrative action.

Class

Several scholars found that class also played a role in alienating African American prep school students as well as creating tension after graduating from these institutions. Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (1991) found that upper-class white students at prep school have identities influenced by the idea of being "forever superior" (p. 160). This means that students have a superiority complex that inhibits them from having authentic relationships with other individuals, so students are overly confident, and interactions are indifferent towards others (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991). This sentiment also extends to faculty at prep schools: one student recalls that a teacher stated, "We'd like you to wear pearls. Ask your mother if you can borrow her pearls or your grandmother" (Horvat & Antonio, 1999, p. 330). One study that was particularly interesting found that attending prep schools inhibited African American prep school students from feeling as though they could return to their original neighborhoods (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991). In many cases, African American students continued their studies at ivy league schools or prestigious institutions of higher education (Cookson & Persell, 1991; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, 2003), returning home after this was not a priority as they were no longer comfortable returning to their low-income neighborhoods.

Double Marginalization

Race and Class

Studies show that African American students feel marginalized along the lines of race and class and that the habitus of schools can force students to alter key components of themselves. Zweigenhaft and Domhoff's (1991) *Black in the White Establishment? A Study of*

Race and Class in America is one of the first studies that look specifically at the educational experiences of students of color. Twelve years later, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (2003) conducted a follow-up study that continues this examination: *Blacks in the White Elite: Will the Progress Continue?* In both studies, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff used life histories and interviews to collect data from participants.

In the first study, they found that although students of color may have enrolled in EBSs with the help of educational programs that have been developed, most of the students are still from lower-class inner cities that may not provide what would be considered productive modeling[30] once they return back home (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991). Thus, the schools are not doing anything to impact or change students' home environments. Moreover, students would drop out due to "homesickness, being needed by family, not feeling accepted at their new prep school, or a combination of those factors" (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, p. 57). However, for those who decided to stay, they – like their Native American colleagues – tried to accommodate two sets of habitus to blend in when they were back at home. For example, students reported that at times when they would try to incorporate what they learned while away at school about meal "etiquette," or ways of dressing, families would tell them, "Why don't you leave that St. George's bullshit at St. George's" (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, p. 57). All that aside, several students stated that attending boarding schools helped affirm a sense of who they are, one student states, "I got a lot clearer on my cultural identity" (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, p. 172).

Cookson and Persell (1991) assert that as prep schools are still "somewhat unique and strongly supported by the American upper-class, the African American student's prep school experience requires a personal as well as an institutional adjustment not only in terms of racial

[30] The scholars used the word "ghetto" to describe the students' home environments.

integration but also in terms of class integration" (p. 222). They conclude that African American prep school students were pressured to trade portions of themselves for mannerisms that were reflected by their white, upper-class peers. However, Cookson and Persell (1991) defined the "burden of acting white" differently from Fordham and Ogbu (1986), who conceived the theory in regard to cultural performativity in language, behavior, and musical taste; they also posited the "burden of acting upper-class"[31] to the theoretical discussion (p. 225).

Race and Gender

Horvat and Antonio (1999) found that students reported several instances in which they were unintentionally alienated during conversations because privilege clouded their peers' ability to acknowledge difference. For example, one student recalled an incident with her English teacher and states,

> We were reading *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston, about the mulatto woman, and one of the white girls, obviously oblivious to everything else, [said,] 'How come all black people don't have long, flowing, gorgeous hair like hers?'… And instead of the response being, 'Because she's mulatto and she's part…,' no, [he said] I

[31] In 1986, Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu published *Black Students' School Success: Coping with the "Burden of Acting white."* The research used to support this hypothesis was based on data that Fordham collected to complete her dissertation at a predominantly Black school, Capital High School, in Washington D.C. *Acting white* is defined as when Black people associate "academic success as white people's prerogative, and began to discourage their peers, perhaps unconsciously, from emulating white people in academic striving" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, p. 177). The purpose of this study was to examine how students cope with the "burden" of navigating these academic spaces with pressure from Black peers to not "act white," and pressure from the small population of white students who did not think that Black students could be academically successful. The scholars use an ecological structures approach to explain how students develop this "*oppositional cultural frame of reference*" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Fordham and Ogbu trace how Black students and Black families have been historically demeaned within educational settings, disenfranchised educationally, especially in comparison to the white educational experiences, and hit job ceilings once they complete years of schooling. These claims have since been debunked; several scholars have disputed the findings and thesis presented in Fordham and Ogbu's work, transforming itself into an *oppositional culture* debate (Cook & Ludwig, 1998), Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998), Carter (2005), Harris (2006) as well as Tyson et al. (2005) and Diamond et al. (2007).

> don't know [,] 'Most black people's hair is like frizzy and gnarly and stuff' (Horvat & Antonio, 1999, p. 328)

Furthermore, Chase (2008), examined how issues of gender presented itself at her institution. She found that while all the boys at Bolton enjoyed reading the same magazine, white girls and Black girls had different tastes in magazines. While white girls enjoyed magazines that had tips about beauty and dating (like *Cosmopolitan* or *Seventeen*), Black girls enjoyed magazines that discussed controversial issues and had positive role models represented (like *Jet* or *Ebony*) (Chase, 2008). The author also deduces that girls were overly concerned with their appearance and conforming to the norm. In comparison to their white counterparts, Black girls reported that this decision was made because they were from large cities, and this form of dress reflected that geographical location (Chase, 2008). Moreover, while they were still concerned about their looks, Black girls are less likely to have eating disorders in comparison to their wealthy white counterparts. In this same study, Black boys reported that the only reason they were concerned about their appearance was for the prospect of dating Black girls, who have extremely high standards for who they date (Chase, 2008). Relatedly, Black girls as well as white parents tended to judge Black boys who dated white girls; this was because Black girls reported often feeling excluded from the social scene, especially because white boys did not date Black girls (Chase, 2008).

Biographies and Popular Texts

The experiences of African American prep school students have also been documented through various forms of popular media. In *Black Ice* (Cary, 1991), Lorene Cary documents reflection of the time that she spent at the St. Paul's School from 1972-1976. She has a particularly insightful story because she returns to St. Paul's nine years after graduating to teach.

In reminiscing about her years as a student, Cary (1991) states, “I found my own adolescence… old rage and fear, ambition, self-consciousness, love, curiosity, energy, hate, envy, compulsion, fatigue” (p. 4). She came to terms with an environment that had caused so much hurt but also played an integral part in constructing the person she had become. Similar to Cary’s autobiography, *Best Intentions: The Education and Killing of Edmund Perry* reports about the struggle of Edmund Perry, who was a young man from Harlem who attended Phillips Exeter Academy. Unfortunately, Edmund was killed by a police officer before attending college, but the book details the consistent limbo that Edmund felt between attending a prep school and being a Black male from Harlem (Anson, 1987). Jacqueline Woodson (2002) wrote *Maizon at Blue Hill* detailing the struggle that she experienced when she left home for her prep school; she also published sequels that document her life post-prep school and reflects on the lasting influence of her high school years. Lastly, Brian Walker (2012) wrote *Black Boy, White School,* a memoir documenting the racial journey and experience of a Black boy who leaves East Cleveland to attend a prep school in Maine.

There have also been a few documentaries produced. They put forth similar stories as the autobiographies and detail the nuances, dynamism and confusion that students experience in their journeys to and through EBSs (Grubin, 1988). In *A Place Out of Time: The Bordentown School* (Davidson, 2009), alumni reflect on the educational opportunity that the Bordentown School afforded during a historical moment (that still exists to a certain extent) that prohibited Black people from prosperous educational opportunities. In *Casualties of Privilege: Essays on Prep Schools’ Hidden Culture,* Crosier (1991) garnered the response of seventeen New England Prep School graduates to what he believed was a breakdown in the presence of positive role

models at the school.[32] Similar to the form of Crosier's (1991) text, Craig Thorn IV (2003) edited *Second Home: Life in a Boarding School* a compilation of over 50 essays of teachers and students who attend or are employed at boarding schools as means to help students who are considering prep schools "adjust quickly and comfortably to [the] new environment" (p. 2). The abundance of popular books illustrates that there should be more academic research exploring the educational experiences of students of color at EBSs.

I have intentionally included and woven these sources throughout my dissertation to make sure that all voices and narratives are centered and honored in my research. These educational sources are also sites of learning despite the background or educational level of the person writing them. As a scholar, I am committed to ensuring that "non-academic" texts are granted status and recognition because the insight, expertise, and witness of all people should be honored regardless of one's academic standing. Furthermore, there is perhaps more pressure for validity because these individuals do not have the pressure from the subjectivity of the institutions that are concerned about their reputations. Most importantly, I know that a critique might be that individuals have an agenda… I would not contest this stance. However, I would say that subjectivity is also present in the objectivity of the books and articles that scholars write in their selected venues.

International Students

Fewer studies have been conducted on the experiences of international students at EBSs. Chase (2008) shows that international students found academics were equally rigorous as in their home countries, at the same time they had more academic freedom at schools in the U.S. and could also simultaneously focus on academics and athletics at EBSs (Chase, 2008). Chase found

[32] He finds that the solution to this problem is that more focus needs to be placed on dorm life instead of academics and that resources should be reallocated for adults to be able to spend more meaningful time with students.

that even though many students state that they matriculate school with a sense of duty to their families and at times their government, for some, these ideals changed over the course of their time in school (Chase, 2008). Additionally, students report that teachers and other authority figures at the school uphold and reinforce racialized comments by their peers, thus supporting misconceptions about students of various Asian ethnic groups (Chase, 2008; Horvat & Antonio, 1999). International students at these institutions felt as though American students lacked manners as well as a sense of community or concern about family matters, and were sexually promiscuous (Chase, 2008). Furthermore, they found it extremely hard to be a teenager in the States because of the relative lack of structure and direction from adults (Chase, 2008). Cookson and Persell (2010) and Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) all assert that with the changing demographic of schools, there is a dearth of information on the experiences of international students.

Aftermath: Life After Prep School

Historically Represented Students

Higher Education

Zweigenhaft (1993) examined the transition of prep school students and public-school students to Yale, Wesleyan, Mount Holyoke and Smith. In contrast to other studies, he found that public school students fared better at these institutions because they go through a more rigorous application process, thus translating to being more academically compatible than prep school students. Furthermore, public school students study more because they cannot rely on the cultural capital to navigate through school settings. Furthermore, students of color who graduate from EBSs prove that they can succeed in a predominantly white setting and continue to be

academically successful, this contrasts to the typical experience of students of color that come from under-resourced school districts (Khan, 2011).

Career

Adding another layer of complexity to the notion of the perpetuation of social stratification, Rivera (2015) examined hiring/recruitment, screening, interviews, deliberation, callbacks, and offer-making processes at Elite Professional Service (EPS). Her hope was to deduce the basis for how EPS selects candidates and illuminate how human resources at professional institutions are not as involved in how such employment decisions are made. She places an emphasis on how competitive corporations examine an applicant's hard/soft skills and perceived merit (ability) as a means by which to make a candidate selection. One could argue that the skills taught and reinforced at EBSs prepared graduates to be perfect candidates for these corporations. Thus, perpetuating the elite status of boarding schools.

Gender

Although both men and women students wait until they are finished with higher education (college or graduate school) to get married, several female students stated that they feel the pressure of choosing their career paths over having children or a family (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2003).[33] Additionally, women felt as though their gender impacted their standing at places of employment in addition to their inability to play golf. Golf[34] is seen as a vital time to build relationships with other members of the company that are higher up and to negotiate agreements (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006).

Historically Non-Traditional Students

[33] For more information on the breakdown of marriage, see chapter 5, *Relationships: Friendship, Dating and Marriage.*

[34] Many women experienced discrimination from Golf Clubs, so they did not have the opportunity to learn how to play (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006, p. 55).

Higher Education

While the percentage of elite boarding school students who are admitted to Ivy League schools has decreased slightly over the last 70 years, they have long been considered as feeder schools for such colleges. Elite boarding school graduates are still more likely to be accepted by Ivy League institutions even if their SAT scores and family backgrounds mirror that of public high school students (Chase, 2008; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2003). Thus, we see a continuation of the status attained by attending such institutions (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a). Additionally, students who attend these institutions are more likely to go to college after high school in comparison to their public-school peers.

Career

Rivera (2015) found that in regard to race, career outcomes were not as consistent with college matriculation success. She stated that at times applicants of color would be filtered out before the final applicant pool was created, even when the firm was aware that they were being monitored in hiring practices along the line of race. She found that committees often pushed for discussing candidates versus relying on the scores that candidates received on each portion of the application process. Through these sessions she found that "group conventions actually amplified evaluative biases based in candidates' categorical membership groups, including their gender and race" (Rivera, 2015, p. 212). This shows that attending elite boarding schools does not shield students of color from discrimination based on their race; again, setting them apart from their white counterparts.

Studies have shown that Black students who were admitted to boarding schools during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s were members of the growing Black middle-class. Initially, Black graduates from these decades said that they floated through their careers with ease because of the

cultural and social capital they gained while attending these institutions (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991). While this was the initial experience within their careers, eventually they noticed that they were unhappy with their salary and lack of promotion (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991). In the second edition, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (2003) found that the job ceiling was not as rigid as students reported before, and people did find themselves in the highest echelons of companies. However, they still reported being dissatisfied with racial discrimination.

Students who are "well educated" are more likely to make it into corporate elite companies (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006). However, Blacks report that they still experience discrimination at their places of employment and remain underrepresented in the corporate elite sector (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006). Latinos and Asian Americans seem to fare well in the corporate sector, especially those with "light skin, high status social backgrounds in their ancestral countries" (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006, p. 106). Furthermore, Chinese and Japanese Americans seem to have a strong influence in technological and scientific realms. While findings about the inclusivity of individuals with non-normative sexual orientations were inconclusive, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (2006) find that members who are part of the LGBTQ community have to be aware of how their gender expression matches their perceived genders in order to be more openly accepted. Most importantly, where students are educated bore the most importance and distinction between who makes it in these elite corporations and who does not (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006).

Contrast: Historically Black Boarding School

Prep School Experiences

Alexander-Snow (2011) examined the experience of African American students at a historically Black prep school, Piney Woods, in order to juxtapose student experience in

different prep school settings. Alexander-Snow deduced three major findings along the lines of sense of belonging, cultural esteem and academic achievement. This was the only study that used secondary sources (report cards, curriculum and material produced by the school) as a form of data collection (Alexander-Snow, 2011). In contrast to the findings about African American students at historically white prep schools, Alexander-Snow (2011) found that students had a strong sense of belonging because the composition of the administration reflected that of the student body. Thus, students felt as though they had ownership of the school because they saw other African American people in positions of power. Secondly, the school provided various cultural events that afforded students with the opportunity to form a strong sense of cultural esteem (Alexander-Snow, 2011). The programs supported and allowed students to create spaces that allowed them to learn about themselves in positive ways, thus placing their identity as central to the fabric of the school and not as simple additives (Horvat & Antonio, 1999) to their school experiences. Finally, Alexander-Snow (2011) found that students had academic services that fostered academic achievement. Unfortunately, a parallel cannot be drawn to the experiences of African American students at predominantly white boarding schools because existing literature about African American students at historically white prep schools does not explore academic achievement at the high school level.

Higher Education

In contrast to the experience of their colleagues at predominantly white prep schools, students at Piney Woods had a different experience once they entered predominantly white Institutions. These students felt as though the school climate was" nonwelcoming to difference, academically caustic, and at times culturally alienating" (Alexander-Snow, 2011, p. 333). On the other hand, students felt affirmed and welcomed by faculty of color when they would have the

delight of meeting one. Additionally, students reported feeling a false sense of belonging and this was due to the presence of a large number of students of color during recruiting weekends, but not in actuality once students attended these institutions (Alexander-Snow, 2011).

Conclusion

Reviewing the literature on boarding schools shows that these institutions play a significant role in shaping the identity and educational trajectory of the students who are granted admission. Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) drives the explanation of elite education home when he states that, "having access to economic resources alone does not give a person elite status: rather, the ability to demonstrate particular behaviors, dispositions, knowledge, and aesthetic choices is essential in order to assert particular kinds of status-group membership" (p. 11), thus emphasizing that simply attending the schools does not grant one elite status. Furthermore, several scholars assert that the rationale for the continued dominance of the elite group has transformed from that of wealth and class status to that of merit and earned advantage (Cookson & Persell, 1991; Finn, 2012; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a; Howard & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010; Khan, 2011; Rivera, 2015; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, 2003). In *A Part and Apart: Students of Color Negotiating Boundaries at an Elite Boarding School,* Gaztambide-Fernández and DiAquoi (2010), offers the following definition of EBS in stating that they are normally characterized as, "scholastically, historically, geographically, typologically, and demographically elite institution(s)" (p. 59).[35] For the purpose of my dissertation research, the term EBS encompasses residential institutions that are selective in students who are admitted; exclusive as admission is not afforded to all students; have autonomous curriculum; a wide variety of

[35] See Gaztambide-Fernández *What is an Elite Boarding School* (2009b) for more details, nuances, empirical foundations, scholarly conversation, and gaps in defining EBS.

offerings artistically, athletically, and academically; positions students well for college; plays a part in social reproduction; and is historically a predominantly white institution.[36]

Interpreting Bass's (2014) argument through the framework developed by Asbury and Woodson (2012) points to the development of public boarding schools in order to remedy the current (and historical) educational disenfranchisement of low-income families of color. The scholars assert these institutions would serve as a medium to remove students from detrimental communities and have environments which have a strong impact on academic outcomes (Asbury & Woodson, 2012) in addition to providing students with phenomenal educations.

Gaps in the Literature

After reading the limited literature on the experiences of students at color prep school students, there are several identifiable holes in the literature. First, although a majority of the studies have been conducted at co-educational institutions, there is a lack of research that examines the intersection of gender and race at prep schools. Several studies deconstruct a person's experience along the lines of race and class; however, gender is a key component of an individual's identity and of the school experience. Secondly, there is a need to examine how students of color from differing socio-economic statuses are influenced by their experience at prep schools. Scholars found class as a form of marginalization within the students' experience and socioeconomic status is not easily identifiable. I would be interested to see if students from a higher socio-economic status feel less pressure along the lines of class within the prep school

[36] Here, I provided more insight and operationalization of EBS. My definition is not unique, however it also is not so refined that educational institutions might be excluded for components such as geographical location (being located outside of the East Coast), founding of the school (being founded before 1900), endowments of the school (100 million dollars is a lot of money, substantially more than public schools and most private schools, so I do not consider this to be a "necessity" as schools can do a lot with a lot less). I intend to expand this understanding versus shrinking the category.

setting. Thirdly, students from marginalized backgrounds need opportunities to assert *why* and *how* they choose to attend prep schools with the dynamics asserted in this literature review. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there exists a lack of research that specifically examines the interactions that students have with teachers in the classroom. Although all students depart for prep school knowing that they will be living there for extended periods of time, one of the main decisions for attending one of these institutions is for educational purposes. Furthermore, as Khan (2011) so eloquently stated in *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*, students at prep schools develop a relationship with teachers that stretch further than the classroom. Thus, if studies were conducted that suggested the importance of how to make classroom settings more inclusive, that may provide insight for changing the entire social fabric of these institutions, thus creating a more welcoming environment for prep school students of color. Overall, the plight of non-dominant students in EBS needs to be attended to currently given the advances and societal shifts that have occurred over the last decade. Research should be done about the resources that students from marginalized backgrounds bring to EBSs.

Chapter 3: Methodology

So, he was different in a lot of ways. But at the same time, he didn't want to be different. It's a prove-yourself age, and like everybody else, Eddie wanted to fit in. How do you do it? Well, one way is to talk about coming back to your community, which Eddie did a lot. The only trouble is these schools don't teach you to come back. Their attitude is noblesse oblige, and that's what they teach you: you can be one of the noblesse; you too can pick up the white man's burden. If you are weak, you will turn out having contempt not only for your own people, but for everyone beneath you. However, you turn out, though, it's always a struggle. After you've been to one of these schools, you never completely fit in anywhere

— *Anson (1987, p. 42).*

Introduction

In this section, I provide an overview of my site selection process, data collection, methodological tools, and the significance of my research. Additionally, I provide insight into how I formed connections during my research that anchors and explains my commitment to the educational experiences of boarding school students of color. Lastly, you will see how and why narratives and counterstorytelling are an integral part of the research, analysis, and finding sharing process.

Methodological Approach

My dissertation is an ethnographic case study. This research design is scaffolded by Double Dutch Methodology (DDM) (Green, 2014). I draw on the intersection of these paradigms as DDM softens and cautions us against traditional qualitative dehumanizing dichotomies of participant and observer roles (Narayan, 1993); it problematizes and opens ideals/possibilities of what should be a part of the researcher's role (Green, 2020). Being a participant observer was an

integral component of my data collection process and was the cornerstone in creating connections with faculty, students, digging into the climate/environment of the institution, and experiencing the dynamics of Globalville. Creswell (2013) asserts that case studies research is an approach where "the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 97). EBSs have various settings, so it was imperative to implore a multitude of methodological tools to help paint a full(er) picture of what I witnessed during my time at Globalville as well as form a bond and rapport with faculty and students.

As an ethnographic researcher in a bounded site, I followed Double Dutch Methodology (Green, 2014). Kiesha Green's Double Dutch Methodology (DDM) is the approach that best suited how I needed to carry myself as a researcher. Green describes DDM as a way of navigating the multiple roles that the researcher takes on during participant observations through using a metaphor that is grounded in a Black cultural childhood game. DDM has three main facets: (1) the researcher needs to develop a strong sense of their positionality through reflecting on their intersecting identities (i.e. "learning the ropes"), (2) the researcher needs to develop a strong understanding of the theoretical frameworks that craft new humanizing ways to research topics (i.e. "plant[ing] both feet"), and (3) the researcher needs to engage in dynamic participant observations (i.e. "keeping time and rhythm').[37] I followed the ethos, process, and function of this methodology. Through employing my take on DDM, I gathered data (at times flattening my role as a researcher), created bonds and relationships with students and faculty, as well as analyzed my data. Green's (2014) approach is perfect for "scholars of color who are struggling with the notion of needing to be "distant" and "neutral" observers in spaces or research contexts

[37] Green's Double Dutch terminology is inspired by the work of Gaunt (2006).

that include participants from oppressed or marginalized communities" (p. 149). DDM afforded space to humanize my research participants' lived experiences, honor my understanding of being an EBS alumnus, and the dynamic settings of EBS life. Furthermore, centering participants' voices in my analysis process. At times I needed to be a mentor, coach, teacher, confidant, disciplinarian, participant, observer, or scholar; I often needed to balance several of these identities at once or change according to the environment as dynamics were rapidly shifting and ever-changing. I build on this methodology with my personalization of "the wobble"[38] which illustrates how I understood my movement as a researcher, coding and analyzing my data, as well as sharing findings through the voices of my research participants.

Tending to the ways that students allowed me to enter their world, narrative and counterstorytelling is central to the way that I presented my data. Yosso (2006) captures the power of the utility of counterstories in the education as: "build[ing] community among those at the margins of society" (p. 14), "challeng[ing] the perceived wisdom of those of those at society's center" (p. 15), "nurtur[ing] community cultural wealth, memory, and resistance" (p. 15), and facilitate[ing] transformation in education" (p. 15). Through conducting counterstorytelling, I give power to non-dominant voices that are typically marginalized or overshadowed by EBS literature that focuses on majoritarian perspectives and institutional dynamics (Bell, 2010). Critical Race Theorists and scholars (Bell, 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002a, 2002b) place importance of the use of participants' voices to create collective understandings of race and racism and inform intersectional ways that system and

[38] *Wobble* is a song that was released in 2008 that is a key component to parties, especially parties in the Black community. The wobble is a form of Black group line dancing. Specifically, the term evokes how I utilize the *Wobble* within this research.

institutional structures can be envisioned for the well-being of marginalized communities. Throughout this study, you will see voices as a central component of an analytical process.

Research Design

My research project is a 7-month ethnographic case-study conducted at an EBS that had a high percentage of international students as well as students of color (more details about the school have been excluded for confidentiality purposes). Reflecting on the findings from studies conducted over past more than two decades, I constructed the following research questions:

1) What are the experiences of students of color at elite boarding schools (EBS)? How are these institutions preparing them to persevere amidst adversity?
2) How are teachers responding to the needs of their non-dominant students in an educational environment that provides autonomy? What does autonomy look like in an EBS setting?

Site Selection

Selecting a site was a long and arduous process for me. It included several calls to different boarding schools initially in New England. The process usually involved calling the school main switch board and asking to be connected to the Dean of Students[39] who would listen to my pitch. After the conversation ended, I would send a follow-up of my interest letter that was drafted specifically for each school and follow-up conversations would be held with identified school officials. In a lot of instances, I was told that the school just was not interested. I flew out to a couple of schools for in-person interviews and school tours. The schools told me all things were fine and it seemed as though research could begin, but their trustees would need to be asked/informed and that I would hear back shortly. Unfortunately, in all of those instances, I was

[39] This title varied from school to school, but before I would do some research on the school's website to learn about the mission and see who that appropriate point of contact at each school would be.

ghosted by those boarding schools and not allowed to proceed. The school that accepted my call to do research was not in my targeted geographical area but after completing the tedious vetting process with Globalville, I was happy to finally have a start date.

Data Collection

Observation and Field Notes

In this study, I used several data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews with students, faculty and staff members, observations conducted in and out of classroom spaces, and document analyses of recruitment material, school policy documents (discipline and dress code for example), and admission processes to build a deeper understanding of the school culture. Furthermore, I assisted with planning and facilitating sports practices, chaperoned school dances, and shadowed dorm duty. The school also provided entrance into faculty meetings, student organization meetings, and the opportunity to spend the night on campus.

Interviews

During my field work, I interviewed 23 students, six faculty members, and one staff member. Of the 23 students, five were day students, eight were domestic boarding students, and 10 were international boarding students. Specifically, three students were Chinese students, two Caribbean students, seven participants were white (of the seven, two were bi-racial[40]), three students were Black American, two students were Black African, and four students were Latinx[41]. Three students were Muslim[42]. It is important to note that all the students had at least one parent who was a college graduate. Additionally, all of my participants were cis-gendered.

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[40] Meaning that they there was parent that was white and one parent who was not, but the student identified as white.

[41] Racial categorizations are based on students' self-identification.

[42] While I am aware that this is not a racial or ethnic category, I am listing this here because students were sure to share this as an integral component of their identity. I have left geographical affiliation of these students out purposefully to provide anonymity.

Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two and a half hours in length. Additionally, I have notes from informal conversations with research participants over lunch, during study hall, or in class – I called these "mobile-memos." These were particularly important because some of the designated interview locations[43] did not provide privacy for the participant and me. Impromptu conversations and follow-ups were conducted in settings that provided participants with more "cover" or anonymity, such as when walking to Chapel or between obligations. Copies of the interview protocols are located in the Appendix.[44] My research site was unique because the student body was religiously, ethnically, geographically, and racially diverse and majority non-white (specifically white American). Given the specific demographic of my participants and the environment of the school, it was clear that I needed to craft composite characters to protect their anonymity as well as add depth to the stories that they were crafting and sharing with me. I will provide background information, rationale, and the process for crafting my composite characters in the "Composite Character" section below.

Site Demographics[45]

The demographics of the faculty was almost entirely white. Globalville was not forthcoming with the demographic breakdown of the students body, however, when I was collecting data it was clear that non-dominant students were in abundance through conversations I was able to hear (accents, people speaking in home languages), flags that I would see in students room and hung around campus, and conversations/contributions in class that often started with "in my country" or "back at home". Albeit, according to *U.S. News & World Report*

[43] The school designated where I should interview female students vs male students in order to eliminate any suspected misconduct. While they hoped to protect students, the designated space was glass and did not have a door, so anyone passing the room would see and potentially hear our conversation. It was located on a partially busy hallway, so there were times when we would stop talking or circle back to an issue during an interview.
[44] Appendix B is for students. Appendix C is for faculty. Appendix D is for staff.
[45] I am giving general information here to provide anonymity for my site and research participants.

(2022) and *GreatSchools.org* (2022) websites, Globalville is around 20% Black or African American, less than 15% Asian, and less than 15% Hispanic/Latino, and around 3% American Indian (U.S. News & World Report, 2022). They differ on the number of white students that are in attendance, with around 20% and 50% respectively. The discrepancy seems to lie in how international students may have chosen to identify themselves within subjective United States based ethnic/racial categories that do not encompass the dynamism of student's backgrounds. *U.S. News & World Report* (2022) found approximately 40% of students are two or more races whereas Greatschool.org is showing 5% being two or more races. Furthermore, *U.S. News & World Report* (2022) states that Globalville is 81% minority enrolled. Moreover, *Niche.com* (2022) also gave Globalville an A+ in the area of Diversity.

Participant Selection

The participant selection process for this research project was a little challenging for several reasons. The first primarily being that communication with parents only occurred through three emails that were sent by the school's administration about my study. The only parents that were really seen on campus were those of day students who were either dropping off forgotten items (instruments or uniforms/ clothes for sports) or those coming to tour the school with a prospective student.

Procedures

To ingrain myself into the Globalville environment, I did what I could to assure that I was truly a participant-observer. That meant that I worked hard to align myself with students and faculty in a way that showed them I wanted to bear witness to what they wanted to share with me about their experience. I conducted four months of research with students while school was in session and a subsequent 2 months of research post-graduation and the beginning of their

summer break. While I was in classes, I struggled through Advanced Algebra, figured out coefficients in pre-calculous, learned how to conjugate verbs in Latin, dusted off my music reading abilities so that I could learn ballads with the choir, and I even participated in dissecting a sheep heart.46 I conducted and estimated 330 hours of classroom observations (insight on the details of these observations are provided in Table 2), and stayed on campus overnight several times in the dorms. Non-academic hours are difficult to calculate as nights ran late and mornings start early, in addition to a lot of the in-between times of changing for the next activity, grabbing dinner, breakfast (talking during advisor lunch), coffee chats with faculty between commitments, or perhaps just talking in a hallway or lounge. These interactions are priceless and impossible to quantify. Albeit, I have created a chart to provide a glimpse into the various spaces that I observed during my time at Globalville.

[46] This one is particularly important to note as I wrote a paper to be excused from all animal dissections when I was a biology student in high school.

Table 2.

Classes Attended for Observation by Course Category and Type

Subject or Class Type	Number of Classes Attended • Academic Class = 45 minutes
History or History Elective	35
Math (Advanced Algebra, Precalculus, Geometry)	26
Faculty Meetings	4
Fine Art (Band, Choir, Ceramics, Yearbook) • The Fine Arts block was 50 minutes	10
Humanities (English or English Electives)	11
Language (Spanish or Latin)	17
Science (Chemistry, Astronomy, Biology)	13
RISE[47] (Faculty and tutor supported study hall-not the same as traditional study hall)	4
Physical Education	10
Globalville Institute Specific Subject Area Course	8
Team Sport Practice or Game	7

Data Analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed and coded using MAXQDA. The initial round of coding was conducted with listening to the audio recording simultaneously. This afforded the chance to pick up on any pauses, tone shifts for clarity, and minor banter that may have happened during the interview that was not noted in the transcription. Then a second level of coding was conducted. Written passages from field notes and informal conversations with participants were typed and uploaded into the data analysis software as well. The structure of the

[47] This is a pseudonym.

interviews afforded insight not only into students' experiences at school, but also into students' lives prior to enrolling at the school. Additionally, the methods of data collection and analysis fostered the discovery of themes across participants, thus creating an opportunity to triangulate shared experiences at the school (Bertaux & Bertaux-Wiame, 1981; Mishler, 1999).

Both inductive and deductive analysis methods were used to codify and analyze the data (Graue & Walsh, 1998). Deductive codes were crafted from the findings of previous EBS literature (privilege, tokenism, cultural capital, whiteness as property), personal experiences as an EBS student (educational opportunity, alienation, rigorous learning environment), published autobiographies, and documentaries (alienation, questioning EBS institutions) made by previous EBS students to illustrate their experiences (Anson, 1987; Cary, 1991; Davidson, 2009; Grubin, 1988). I understood that I should not allow my data collection and analysis to be bounded only by these codes. Inductive codes that organically arose from my observation were as follows: hopes and dreams, critical consciousness, academic freedom, family influence. Saldaña (2021) states that "induction and deduction are actually dialectical rather than mutually exclusive research procedures" (p. 41). This facet was integral to my data collection, analysis, and interpretation process.

Data was stored electronically, as well as through a cloud-based system provided by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Printed data and handouts were stored in a locked file box. Field notes and memos were stored electronically, and observational journals were stored in the locked file box. All mobile-memos were transferred to electronic and cloud-based storage and deleted from my phone.

Composite Characters

Composite characters were important for (re)telling the data that collected, protecting my research participants, strengthening the themes that were present in my data, and responding to the phenomenon of the EBSs student of color experience in a holistic versus individualist manner. Critical Race Scholars operationalize composite characters in myriad of ways often using various streams of data in order to humanize and (re)tell the experiences of communities of color (Bell, 1987; Cook & Bryan, 2021; Delgado, 1989, 1998, 1999; Harper, 2009; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002a, 2002b). Personally, I used empirical data that I collect, existing literature on the experience of students of color at EBSs, and personal experiences as a boarding school student to mold the creation of my composite characters. Using this critical race methodological tool affords me with the chance to uncover how race, racism, racialized tendencies, and oppression functions at EBSs through the interactions that students of color have (with peers and faculty) as well as in the curricular silences that perpetuate oppression and marginalization of students of color.

Constructing the Composite Characters

Predominant themes that participants discussed were voiced through composite characters and represented through themes of dreams, microaggressions, peer-peer interactions, student-teacher interactions, and navigational strategies. I crafted identities that centered on athleticism, academics, artistic interests, gender identity, across grade-level, and geographical upbringings. See Table 3 for more information about composite character's description.
Each composite character is an amalgamation of the various participants that I interviewed and reflect actual interactions/conversations with participants. I did, however, splice themes, sentiments, and reflections across the four composite characters as a means to show the richness and complexity of the themes that were salient in this study and also provide anonymity to

participants' experiences. This was particularly important to me because researching with a marginalized group in a small subset of the educational population (i.e., boarding schools), outside of the traditional EBS geographical location (i.e., the East Coast), calls for added layers of protection and care. In doing so, I wanted to honor the five Black and Brown domestic boarding students who participated in my research study and whose voices are illuminated through the composite characters. The next section of this dissertation will present the four composite characters that will speak in chapter 4.

Table 3.

Composite Character Breakdown

	Theresa Hooks	Henry Douglass	Drew Jones	Kendall Lavender
School Interests	Artistic, Athletic	Artistic, Athletic, Academic	Academic, Athletic	Artistic, Athletic, Academic
Home Structure	Two Caregivers	Two Caregivers	Two Caregivers	Two Caregivers
Hometown	Chicago, IL	Chicago, IL	Minneapolis, MN	New York, NY
Grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
Race/ Ethnicity	Black	Latinx	Latinx/Black	Black
Gender Identity	Cis-Gendered Female	Cis-Gendered Male	Cis-Gendered Male	Cis-Gendered Female
Home Language	English	English	English	English

Note: This table presents an overview of background information about the composite characters in this study. The table represents some of the ways that I spliced some of the characteristics and qualities of my five participants amongst the four composite characters that are present in my study.

Theresa Hooks

Theresa Hooks is a first-year student from Chicago, IL. She is very artistic. She is involved with the school choir and is excited about trying ceramics and painting. She was unsure of what she wanted to do after high school, but she wanted to make sure that she was in an academic space that allowed her to exhibit her "geekiness." Her intellect was an important part of her identity and she mentioned that she was often referred to as being smart amongst her peers, but not in a condescending manner. She was hopeful that her time at Globalville would help her to figure out what some of her passions were so that she knew what possible career options should be.

Henry Douglass

Henry Douglass is a Sophomore from Chicago, IL. He was very excited about the prospect of attending boarding school because had heard of people that did choose to attend boarding school, even though he did not know them personally. He loved the free-flowing social life that Globalville was able to provide him with. Walking off campus to local restaurants and perusing through the local stores were one of his favorite activities. He enjoyed meeting people from around the world and from different geographical regions of the United States and would often comment that would not happen if he were still at home.

Drew Jones

Drew Jones is a Junior from Minneapolis, MN. He was the athlete of the bunch and played Varsity Soccer, Varsity Baseball and he was on the Track and Field Team. He is half Black and half Latinx. He was hopeful about playing sports in college but noted that he did not think the athletics program at Globalville would be able to support that transition as the competition was not as rigorous as he had anticipated. With that in mind, he was making sure to take Advanced Placement (AP) classes as a means to get a head start in college credits and make

himself look more attractive to colleges, even though he admitted that his GPA was not as high as he hoped it would be. He reflected the most on how the transition from high school to Globalville was tough and that there was a huge academic transition, but he was thankful that his math teacher helped him with time management and develop additional study skills.

Kendall Lavender

Kendall Lavender is a senior from New York City. She was very analytical and used words such as “code-switching” and “microaggressions" while discussing her experience during our interview. She also sought my advice on a rewrite on a paper about race relations on which she did not receive a decent grade on. She knew that her analysis was correct and wanted to re-word her thoughts without losing authenticity. Kendall was very happy to state that she has focused on her academic journey during her time at Globalville and was excited about heading off to college at a liberal arts college the following fall semester.

Positionality and Relationship Building

My intersecting identities and building relationships were an essential and central component of my data collection and analysis process. Being aware of the way that my “insider” knowledge afforded a deeper level of understanding and possible oversight was a dynamic that I was intentional about monitoring through asking questions to my research participants. The axis of what I saw, what I know (empirically and theoretically), what my participants shared and clarified assured that I was following the story that was being told. The next section of the study offers a vignette that centers (created from) field notes, memos, and offers insight into how I solidified a relationship with my participants as well as negotiated interactions that were present during the data collection process. Furthermore, I will show how I operationalize DDM.

“Wobble Baby, Wobble Baby, Wobble Baby, Wobble…”

I looked up from behind the school store counter where I had been helping distribute capri-suns, Sun Chips, and novelty ice cream. The school dance, a highly sought-after annual event, had started about three hours before. The student DJ was busy mixing all of the latest tones, and it was clear that the students were relishing in their much needed down time. The Cupid Shuffle, Hit the Quan, and Teach Me How to Dougie had all played by this time and the students, all of them to my surprise, knew that choreography and would dance synchronously in little pockets of their closest friends. So, I was surprised to see that all of the kids, even the well-established dancers, were just kind of bouncing up and down like apples in water when The Wobble (Rodriguez et al., 2008) began to play.

I turned to a teacher that I had been chaperoning with and said, "I'm surprised they don't know the wobble," she retorts, "I don't know it either… if you do, why don't you go show them." I was facing my biggest fear. All night I had used the counter and school store activities as a cover to not do anything weird. I had only been conducting research for about four weeks and I was not sure that the students had really warmed up to me yet. But as I watched them struggle to one of my favorites "group dance" songs, I decided to jump on the dance floor and show them how it was done. It took a couple of rotations for them to understand the dance moves– the DJ even started the song over, but by the end of the song all of the students (except one), probably 60 students in total were dancing with me. I was in a circle of wobblers, and they were all pleased to say that they learned a new dance. As the next song started playing and I was excited about the prospect of returning to my safe bubble. I was greeted by high fives and "thanks, Ms. Howell."

At the end of the night when the lights came on and the afterparty clean-up started, two Black male students (both of which I came to understand were "leaders" of domestic students of

color as well international students of color) made a point to come speak with me. This made me nervous especially because I felt as though I had not made a connection with any students of color since I started integrating into the school community. One said, “I see you Ms. Howell– I know you told us in Chapel the other day, but can you remind me why you’re here? … and where you’ll be.” The other said, “Ms. Howell, I didn’t think you’d be able to dance…that’s good we can dance too.” Initially, I found this interesting because this student did not “dance” during the enter social event. He was fixed upon a tall stool and would tap his foot or gently move his shoulder if he was feeling the music.

At the end of the night, as I wrote my field notes, I found that these interactions served a completely different purpose and so did the *Wobble.* Dancing to the song kind of served as a rite of passage. As I was preparing for the Chapel talk the student mentioned about six weeks previously, I talked – more like stressed – to a friend and colleague. I was concerned that I would make some students of color feel as though I was singling them out, that faculty would think that I was trying to ruffle feathers, and I was trying to be intentional about what the message that I was sending about myself and my purpose for being at that school. I stood before them that morning and said,

> *Even though I grew up on the east coast where a lot of prep schools are, I only knew one other person who had attended a school like this. As my grandparents drove away, I remember thinking, what do I do now? I quickly learned that I did not have the same financial, educational or racial background as my new peers, and I had to learn many other skills that I had never considered. There was a dress code, formal events, and I was living away from home for the first time. My bedtime routines, shower routines, and speech patterns were questioned. My peers ridiculed pronunciations and phrases that I*

> *later realized reflected my New York accent.*[48] *I spent the next four year learning new sports, a new language, how to think critically, how to make friends with students who were very different from the kids I grew up with and how to dress appropriately for differing events and although I spent most of those formative years confused about lots of things and yearning to wear jeans on days that weren't just snow days for the public school…I would not be the person I am today if I did not have those experiences. I have always viewed high school as the most pivotal years of my life.*

Until the night of the dance, I did not really have much success breaking the ice with any students of color… we only exchanged that glance of acknowledgement and perhaps a sly smirk. The exchange that happened at the school dance was encouraging because it meant the students decided they could trust me. They simply wanted to know *I'm here, I care, you matter.*

In hindsight, the wobble has also been significant in other ways in my life.

> *Wobble: To incline to one side and to the other alternately, as a wheel, top, or other rotating body when not properly balanced* (Dictionary.com, n.d.).

This reflects the dilemma that I have been in since I was in elementary school, from always being too nerdy to be cool and then going to high school where I was often reminded that I was either too Black or not Black enough. Consistently needing to negotiate the part(s) of myself that I was going to display based on the people that I was interacting with. Researching the boarding school experience of Black students is particularly salient for me because I attended an all-girl's college preparatory school in a small town in Connecticut, where I was introduced to a whole new world, not solely a new school. I quickly learned that I did not have the same foundations as my peers, and I had to learn many other skills that I had never considered. Unlike my peers, my

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[48] For example, my pronunciation of the words "off," "on," and "room" were often sites of great debate.

grandparents did not complete high school and my mother had yet to complete college. I would be the first person in my family to attend college. My grandparents both worked several jobs in unhealthy working conditions to provide for my brother and me. I shared a room with my older brother growing up and we needed to win our home computer through a school raffle versus buying one outright. I had never taken a vacation out of the country, and I had only taken one trip by plane before heading off to high school. These are just some of the ways that my upbringing varied from my new peers.

Students who felt the need to show me their perceived athletic, artistic, and academic superiority over the course of the day were brushing their teeth right next to me each night. Furthermore, I began to realize that I was no longer the smartest girl in the room. In comparison to my High School peers, who had tutors and came from very wealthy school districts with an abundance of resources, I was extremely behind academically: I had never written a lengthy paper; grammar and punctuation were foreign to me; and I was placed in Geometry even though I had never taken Algebra. On top of all the interpersonal matters that I was attempting to cope with, this was a major blow to how I understood myself, because I was no longer at ease in a classroom, my bedroom, or the bathroom.

While I am deeply grateful for the four years that I spent at that school, I am curious if there are other parts of myself that I could have retained along the way. While the experiences that I had in the classroom shaped the person that I have become today, they also caused me to lose the ability to relate to people that I grew up with. I had to adopt a different form of cultural capital in order to “fit in” with peers that were different from me racially, socioeconomically and geographically, so I became an outsider within my own community (Cookson & Persell, 1991)

due to my inability to perform linguistic and mannerisms that were aligned with my peers at home.

> *Wobbling: The act of being off balance, or unsure of one's body position typically caused by being tense or unsure of one's landing or spacing* (Dictionary.com, n.d.)

Wobbling defines my sentiments as I navigated through life in high school, college, as a graduate student and even as a researcher. Always negotiating how I should dress, speak, act and which characteristics would prove my authenticity. Specifically, as a researcher, Double Dutch Methodology describes that we should find "rhythm and time." While this was often a goal of mine, I often found myself wobbling between wearing many hats (and often several at the same time): researcher, participant, confidant, mentor, friend, planner – it was never seamless. This is appropriate and came full circle as I was never a great double dutch jumper as a child.

> *Wobble: A sensation caused by listening to certain styles of Drum and Bass or Dubstep music* (Urban Dictionary, n.d.).

This is telling for me because dancing at the school dance made me "cool" with all the students, it was particularly binding for the students of color. This is telling for me because of the importance of music and dance for many communities of color (Gottschild, 2003). It is great to see that in a distancing environment that music and dancing could still serve this communal/collective/inclusive effect that could offset my *wobble* and serve a rapport developer on my research journey.

Limitations

Even though attempts were made to mitigate limitations in this study, eliminating all limitations is impossible with conducting humanizing research with participants and institutions that have schedules and agendas of their own. One of the most persistent limitations was students whose parents did not want to sign a consent form for them to participate in an interview. This

happened along three threads. The first was, students who were older than 18[49], so their parents felt as though their child (who was legally an adult) should be able to make the decision themselves. One parent told me, "I stopped signing off on permission slips for [them] years ago." The student called their parents the night before study hall thinking that I would be able to convince them otherwise… I could not. Secondly, there were students who could not readily receive responses from their parents. Lastly, there were students whose guardians just did not agree with them participating in the study because they did not want the findings to impact the student's institutional standing in any way. Therefore, they would not consent even though the students wanted to assent into the study.

The next limitation occurred when some of the spaces that I was told I would have access to during my vetting process were not granted when I was collecting data. I will outline a few of those areas here. For example, I was not able to get into the school's museum or archives. This would have helped to build deeper background knowledge and a fuller picture of the history of the school, thus providing deeper insight into the school's climate and context. According to what I was told, there seemed to be only one person that had the key to the space, and they were on leave for a large part of my data collection. Additionally, I was not provided with a school email account. This meant that I needed to get email addresses directly from participants. If I did not receive a legible email address or if a faculty member verbally told me to reach out to them in passing, following-up with them was difficult. I did not want to breach trust or a participant's confidentiality by asking school administrators for a person's contact. I would need to track the person down on campus. In most cases, interview times were made in person because it was just easier to coordinate with daily schedule distinctions.

[49] The school insisted that I retain consent forms from guardians even if students were over the age of 18.

The consistent living, breathing, dynamic environment that a boarding institution offers is unlike most research spaces. Because I did not live exclusively on-campus and had a commute to the research site there were bound to be faculty meetings, student-faculty/student-student interactions, impromptu dorm meetings (just to name a few) that I missed. Furthermore, if an all-school event changed or a student needed to have an impromptu meeting with a teacher, at times, those adjustments shifted interview times unexpectedly. In some cases, I was not able to reschedule them before graduation. It was important for me to be flexible and understand the EBS's non-static environment. These were the limitations of my study.

Significance

Marginalized groups in affluent spaces are often ignored because they are assumed to only be sites of privilege, but they are also sites of struggle. This project raises questions about what public education should and can provide for students globally and domestically so that students do not feel that leaving home is their only hope for educational gains. Furthermore, this study shows how EBS students of color work to shift the school's environment as well as shine light on how these institutions can be more welcoming through peeling back racist ideologies. Moreover, this study also provides implications for how faculty can improve their curricular selections and be more aware of interactions that they have with students. Lastly, this study problematizes whose kids are forced to make sacrifices and grapple with how it is possible to decrease the impact of this unequal educational opportunities and resources, disparate pedagogical and curricular offerings/experiences and intentional historical, political marginalization – educational debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006a).

Chapter 4: Carving Their Way: Students of Color's Community of Cultural Wealth at Work in an EBS

Our time has come, our time was then, but now it has come back around. We feel so, so tremendously pleased that and glad that we went to the institution, but now… we can say to people look at what we had, look where *we came from, we have gained- and I will tell you that there is no clue in my mind that I would not have achieved what I have achieved without the wonderful teachers that we had and leaders at that school.*

— Dr. Arthur Symes (CUNY TV, 2010)

Introduction

Contrary to other studies that focus on the educational experiences of boarding school students, this study does not only center the school's environment or climate. I attend to students' voices, experiences, and expertise at being EBS students, why they wanted to attend these institutions, and how they managed to (or tried their best) to be unapologetically themselves at an educational institution that was not historically created for them. This study transcends deficit framing of non-dominant students at EBSs through analyzing moments where students may feel doubly conscious, focuses on students' resilience, and agency to navigate the racialized school environments or interactions. From coding, observation, and the relationships that I form, it was clear that students were overarchingly drawing on their Community of Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) as introduced in chapter one. Yosso (2005) posits six areas of capital or funds of knowledge that students of color bring to educational settings, and I found that students are drawing on each of these strengths as they matriculate through Globalville. Through honoring the multifaceted ways that communities of color have strength and knowledge, I will disrupt discourses that uphold, reinforce, reify, and center dominant (upper-

class and white to be specific) notions around the utility and functionality of EBSs (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a; Khan, 2011); thus, dismantling constructs that have been intentionally, systematically, historically, governmentally, and educationally sustained by Bourdieuen notions of cultural capital.

Focusing on students' strengths provides integral insight to the educational experiences of students of color at EBS that: (1) does not center EBSs impact on students solely from an institutional level, (2) humanizes students of color as active agents in their educational trajectory, and (3) illustrates there is a reciprocity to the boarding school experience as students also work on and through these institutions. In the quotation above, Dr. Symes, an alumnus of The Bordentown School,[50] laments on how he (and his peers) needed to wait 40 years for his story to be told, to be recognized, and for him to show the world his experiences and all of his accomplishments.[51] The research in this study shifts the gaze (Howell et al., 2019) of this research away from the institution (the entity that possesses power) toward students and their background as sources of strength (Carter, 2003). Therefore, it does not tell non-dominant students where they must adapt and change in order to become academically successful (Yosso & Burciaga, 2016). Analyzing the experiences of EBS students in real time will provide a road map for how students are persevering in these rigorous, constantly changing, and life-altering settings. All of the conversations presented in this chapter will be from the four composite

[50] *The Bordentown School* was opened in Bordentown, New Jersey in 1886. It was a co-educational boarding school originally founded by Reverend Walter A. Rice as a private institution, but in 1894 New Jersey's Department of Education took control of the school thus making it a public institution. New Jersey's Department of Education also renamed it *The Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth*. In addition to having a strong academic focus, the school curriculum included carpentry, facility maintenance, agriculture, hospitality, and beauty. When the school was open it was basically self-sustaining (Davidson, 2009). The school was forced to close its doors in 1955 after Brown v. Board of Education outlawed segregated schools. Bordentown graduates went on to have wonderful careers as doctors, lawyers, educators, and businesspeople (Smither, 2015).

[51] After graduating from Bordentown, Dr. Arthur Symes pursued a Bachelor's degree at Howard University in Architecture. Subsequently, he obtained a Doctorate at the University of Michigan (CUNY TV, 2010). He later went on to become the Dean of the School of Architecture at The Southern University (Wilkins, 2004).

characters that I have crafted for this study[52] unless otherwise indicated. In doing so, we gain insight into how students are learning to flourish (or trying to) in adverse educational environments.

"I Got into My Dream College, Ms. Howell, I Can't Believe It's Finally Happening!": Motivation(s) Explained Through the Lens of Aspirational Capital[53]

I begin this chapter discussing aspirational capital as it was the predominant focus and rationale that students cited as the major factor regarding their decision to attend Globalville and called upon as the reason for continuing their studies and not attending a local or traditional public, private, or parochial school. For them, their hopes and dreams for the future played a large part in building the foundation for the lives and choices that they wanted to pursue after graduation– illustrating aspirational capital. Drew Jones offered the most intriguing and reflective response of the group. About halfway through our formal[54] interview I asked:

> **DH:** So, why boarding school?
>
> **Drew:** I picked it because I feel like, um, it will make me more college ready. In a sense. Where I was originally going to be in the IB program [International Baccalaureate] at our public school in Minneapolis, and then Mrs. Sullivan[55] called my mom and was like, you haven't sent in your application. So, we sent in the application, and I got accepted, and I was, like, okay, I will come here, but, like, my original plan before applying to -- or

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[52] For the description of each composite character, please see Chapter 3, "Composite Character" section.

[53] *Aspirational capital*, defined as one's ability to stay focused on their "hopes and dreams" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77) in the face of/despite adversity.

[54] I state this because I interacted with all of my participants multiple times in varying settings (in class, between class, on the way to class, chapel or other commitments, in the dorm, in other school spaces). As I mentioned in chapter 3, mobile-memoing was extremely important to my data collection process. Additionally, being available on other people's schedules was also important. The inclusion of the adjective formal here is to just signify that this conversation happened during our agreed upon interview time.

[55] This is a pseudonym.

before going to IB -- was I wanted to be in a -- go to a [faith-based school]. My dream school, and I really wanted to go there, but I didn't get accepted.

DH: Mmm. I'm sorry to hear that.

Drew: So, it just was like, oh, I also wanted to do this. Like, I wanted to go to Globalville, but, like, my dream school was, like, I'm going there, so that's why I wasn't really, like -- boarding school wasn't really like a big deal for me until it was actually happening. Like, and it's so funny because we didn't tell my dad until, like -- like, we didn't tell my dad, and then I was graduating, and they said the school that I was going to or, in my -- he was like, Globalville? mm-hmm. And my mom was like, yeah. Yeah, that's where it's happening.

DH: Surprise!

Drew: Yeah. That's what that was like.

DH: That's actually really funny. So, what do you think was the appeal of [coming to a school like this] …

Drew: … being in a different atmosphere and being on my own, because my mom was, like, her big thing was you're not independent. I don't know how you're going to have your own house. And all of this. And I'm like, okay, well, if I go to boarding school, I'll have my own dorm and I have to take care of myself. The teacher's going to be there, but, like, not going to be babying me into my life, so, that's what it was for me. It was, like, okay, I'm going to go to school and I'm going to be independent and I'm going to get my life together.

While Drew did not have Globalville marked as his first choice, it is clear that he was committed to making the correct high school selection to ground him for the rest of his future. He was aware

that his high school years needed to be more than just about the pursuit of academic knowledge, but for the development of life skills and knowledge of self. He knew that he needed to become self-sufficient and learn how to take care of himself. Kendall echoed this sentiment as she reflected on the amount of growth she experienced: "[my parents] are at a point where they don't have to worry about me being influenced by gang violence, drugs, and alcohol and they really want me to focus on what I want to pursue – Lacrosse and Engineering." While Kendall centered her parents here, it was clear that she was stating that she was very independent thinking and that she had learned not to succumb to peer-pressure. She knew what her home and school environments encompassed and the limitations in resources and role models that she faced, but she did not let that define her… she instead decided to focus on what she knew she was capable of accomplishing and centered what she knew her future could be. She went on to say:

> Being the best in Engineering class and trying my best, being able to use the tools that they provided. I have the whole lab to my[self], you know, access. I was the first student to use the 3-D printers. I was the first to like, you know, [to] get something off the 3D printer and publish it. I wouldn't have that opportunity at my local public school.

Thus again, showing that Kendall was forward thinking, invested in being a leader, and positioned herself to gain access to academic resources that afford her innovative, mathematical, design, and problem-solving skills to work.

At times it was clear that the students had a clearer view of their future than what their family may have had, and they did a wonderful job at asserting their desires to their concerned loved ones. Henry shared,

> **Henry:** Um, my friend's family, they were more like oh, that's cool. But the rest of my family, especially on my mom's side, like the ones that still live in [an African country]

were all like, "Oh, dang, what did he do now? Like, are you having that many problems with him that you have to send him to a boarding school?" And all this other stuff. And I'm like, "No, that's a military academy. Two different things." But yeah.

DH: And what did your mom think when you were like, "Mom I want to go away to Globalville?"

Henry: Uh, at first, she was all like, "What do you mean you want to go away?" And then she grew with the idea. So, like um, it got to the point where when we got the letter in the mail from them and I got in, she was like celebrating with me, and like we were screaming in the living room. So, like yeah, it grew on her definitely. I think that talking with her about *why* I wanted to go away helped to ease her nerves. I was always a geeky kid, so it makes sense that I would make an *extreme* choice for school.

Throughout our talk, it was clear that Henry was looking for a *home* where his thirst for knowledge was celebrated and stoked. He was willing to convince his mom that Globalville was the right choice for him and that he would be more successful by "living at school 24/7". I find this particularly intriguing because when I would ask Henry what he wanted to do after graduating from Globalville, he never really provided a clear answer, but he was certain that all of the courses and people that he met at Globalville were unmatched to what he would be able to experience if he were back at home.

Seeing that all of my research participants were so focused on their future was insightful and endearing to see, especially as my time at Globalville became more in-depth – and even more so when it officially came to an end. For the seniors in my study, it was just great to see them excited about selecting the colleges and universities that they would attend during the fall. For them, graduating from Globalville represented a clear signifier that they made the correct

choice as their future was no longer far in the distance, but actually being realized. And for underclass-students, I would hear them asking faculty and older students about classes they should take, where they should consider applying for college, and for insight on how to complete traditional major projects that were coming up. I could see students working hard in study hall, the library, the cafeteria, their dorm rooms, the computer labs, the student lounges (just some of the places I would see students hunker down to get work done), I was privy to watching them turn their dreams into a reality. I would see their perseverance, persistence, and the pressure, but not their parents or caregivers. However, it was wonderful for me to hear about how students' caregivers were continuing to show up in their lives. During their interviews, participants would often talk about how their caregivers influenced and informed the decisions that they made while they were at school. One of the saddest parts of conducting my research was that I was able to build daily connections and bonds with students, but unfortunately, I was not able to have multiple interactions with their families and loved ones– the people who played a huge role in helping them develop into the people that they were. With that being said, in the next section of this chapter you'll be shown how students directly reflect on and point to their family members' being important to their high school matriculation and beyond.

"My Parents and Sister are Gonna be at Graduation. They're so Excited to Meet You… I Mean, I Hope It's Ok That I Told Them That They Could Meet You?" Familial Capital[56]

Scaffolding Students' Perspectives and Interactions from Afar

Seeing how students operationalized, articulated, and carried the lessons that their families had bestowed upon them was truly a remarkable sight. Furthermore, it was great to see

[56] *Familial capital* refers to knowledge that is developed from one's family and community. In this case, family is extended to not only encompass nuclear members, but also a kinship network that includes "emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness" (Yosso, 2005, p. 79).

ways in which students were making sense of and creating awareness around things they had been warned about in real time versus in hindsight. Although none of the students in my research participants had parents or direct family members who had attended boarding school previously, it was interesting to see that they were still able to be prepared for isolating and understanding the role of race in interactions with students and teachers in predominantly white spaces. For example, Drew shared very clear and pointed advice from his dad on how to react when faced with alienating and fear inducing situations. He stated:

> My dad, he's kind of the one, you know [who said], keep it cool. Don't, go out [there to school] and like, do something that you'll regret. And I will tell myself, like, 'keep your cool.' Because there's a couple times where, you know, some white people will yell out the car and say "nigger". You know, I'm walking on the street, and it's [referring to racism] here.

Drew was sharing an experience that happened while walking off of campus – but the worst part is that he was unsure of *what* could/should be done by school officials as these perpetrators were not a part of the Globalville community. When I inquired what Drew did, he retorted "not much, I just quickly made my way back to campus and told my friends to be aware." While it is true that there is not much that school officials could do to the person who yelled racist epithets, it was sad to learn that Drew did not have any faculty member, administrative person, or school appointment space where he could debrief about his experience. He continued:

> To be honest, it didn't really phase me as much as like it [would have] probably phased other[s]. My dad went to college. And he said he experienced rac[ism]. So, he kind of told me this stuff [had happened and] would happen [to me] before [I came to school].

Drew's dad was having the conversation that most parents of color need to have with their children about the ways that people could possibly treat them, so youth are not surprised or alarmed when racist incidents occur. Furthermore, these conversations afford youth of color with the ability to brace themselves, mentally prepare, and know how to respond instead of internalizing interactions and dynamics that are rooted in white supremacy. It was great to see that Drew felt comforted by telling his experience to peers (specifically other students of color) and had develop an ohana[57] at school. The safe school space that he forged with them was enough to help him debrief about the situation and remember that there were members of the Globalville community that wanted him there. Learning more about students' families, biological and chosen, through the stories and experiences that they shared with me provided a foundation for where a lot of their understandings of self, institutional, and systemic paradigms were developed as the family is the source of capital development for children – in this case students at Globalville.

"I've Made Friendships and Connections Here That Will Last a Lifetime": Students' Descriptions and Development of Social Capital[58]

One of the first developments of social capital comes from one's family, but as you rub up against other environments or meet new people, individuals apply systems that they learn as well as grow new mechanisms for how to navigate new environments and dynamics. The students in my study reflected on the ways that they harnessed wisdom that was shared at home, applied it to the Globalville environment, and developed mechanisms for how to cope with

[57] Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten (Sanders & DeBlois, 2002).
[58] *Social capital* is one's communal and personal connections that may lead to the insight for how to emotionally and institutionally navigate social structures (Yosso, 2005, p. 79-80).

issues as they arose. Drew shared how his family played an integral part in feeling comfortable on campus.

Drew: Um, so when I toured here, my parents, grandpa, aunt and little sister came. My grandpa fell in love with it. He saw the field because he's a big baseball guy. And it was not the summer, but it was around this time [referencing the late in Spring semester] actually. They took care of everything. And my grandpa really liked it. He thought that he wanted me to come here. My parents had already signed me up for an IB school.

DH: International Baccalaureate?

Drew: Yeah. But it was an hour and a half away [from my house]. And I would be taking the train and the bus. But like an hour and a half on the train.

DH: Oh, so you would have had that commute every day?!

Drew: Everyday! So, I would wake up early. I would have to commute. And my mom was like that's going to be a lot on you. I was already enrolled in the [IB] school. And maybe like a month before school actually started – I already knew I got accepted [to Globalville]. I got accepted to this school. And I still enrolled into the IB program at another school. But my mom was just like after the financial aid package, because the financial aid package came through later… so my mom thought she wasn't going to be able to afford it. Um, but the financial aid went well. And my mom asked me if I wanted to come. And then we toured, and I really liked it too. And at the time, I was really like me and my stepdad weren't getting along well.

DH: Uh-huh.

Drew: And so, I kind of just wanted to get out of the house too. So, I actually did want to come.

DH: MMMM, that makes sense.

Drew: And they kind of misled me. They said the baseball team was so great and dah, dah, dah, 'it's not' [whispered under his breath] so I was excited to come. And, um, basically my whole family really wanted me to leave home. They said that I needed to get away, um, because I was going to be commuting through not too good neighborhoods and this school had so many more resources and opportunities, here. Even though the baseball team is not all they said it was. Whenever I think about being annoyed with whatever is going on here, I just think about my grandpa's face – how he could never have thought that this [attending a school like Globalville] was a possibility for [people like (pointing at the back of our hands)] us. When I talk to him, he always says 'you're a role model for all of us, especially your little sister, and for kids who dream big.' Hearing that and seeing how proud everyone is makes me realize that me being here is about me, more than about me, and makes it easier for kids who come from cities like mine to see themselves here. And for the school to get used to seeing us here.

Drew's recollection made evident that he was using the influence of his family as motivation for continuing his studies at Globalville. Additionally, it showed that Drew understood that he was acting as a trailblazer for other students of color to see themselves as worthy and capable of having a Globalville education, despite bumps that may happen along the way. While Drew alluded to the bumps here, Theresa shared some of her bumpy interactions directly.

Yeah. Um, I think another thing is probably, well, there's just little slight microaggressions everywhere. Like this other day, [another student] asked, 'Why do all Black girls have short hair?' And I was like, "Excuse me?" Yeah, these little

> microaggressions. Like… I mean, that's basically a common thing like anywhere. Can you think of anywhere where they don't exist? Like I think at Globalville we should be, you know, at a professional level where we can say this is good and this is not, rather than 'oh, let me play with your hair' and, you know, little elementary school types of manners.

While I could have provided insight into spaces on campus where microaggressions do not function or at least where the impact of them is less prevalent, this was not the time or place to do so. She was sharing an isolating experience and to a further extent, she was right. People of color need to go on a quest and try extra hard to live a life microaggression-free, but unfortunately, it is such a common occurrence that this quest would be nearly impossible. In the latter part of her story, Theresa offers an argument about maturity to show how people should treat each other and respect other people's boundaries versus accepting the trope that other students "just need to learn" which is often used as a scapegoat in racialized interactions. Henry furthered this sentiment as he recalled a discussion that he had with classmates that he knew was going to be tough as it was intended to discuss police brutality. It was in response to some of the nationally recognized murders of Black men[59] by the police that had taken place over the previous year. He states,

> You know. They think, like everything's all sunshine and roses and all the other stuff. When actually it's like, you know, people are getting beat up. People are getting shot for this reason. It's not because he committed a crime three years ago– just carrying weed. But you know, he was just a Black man in America. Versus from people saying 'oh, no, he's just a Black guy in the 'hood. He had a bad attitude, you know.' It's something that I

[59] In this specific situation, Drew was referencing Philando Castile who was murdered in Falcon Heights, Minnesota and Alton Sterling who was murdered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

> would take up, like I'd show them the right way [to think]. But they will get mad about [my insight] saying, 'oh, you don't know anything about it.' And I'm like 'I know enough! What do you know? You get to sit there and be comfortable in your skin. It doesn't matter if *YOU* like me, it doesn't matter if that guy was liked yesterday. They [the police] don't care about us in the same way, you don't care to understand or consider that things are just messed up and you can't make it make sense.' You know? At the end of the day, what they know or care to know isn't a reflection of me. Some of them [white peers] get it, and some of them don't. I bet it's the same at your age in grad school… right?

Henry's insight on his peers' lack of social understanding and orientation is representative of what research shows about how students of color need to assert themselves and "teach" others in educational settings. Furthermore, it exemplifies that participants are apt at discussing issues of race with their peers without internalizing *why* their white (domestic and international) peers do not understand the way that systemic racism and white supremacy function – off campus and on campus. Through drawing on communal understandings of police brutality, surveillance, and institutionalized racism, Henry is utilizing his network of understanding to combat preconceived notions of his peers – illustrating social capital.

While trying to help their white peers grow, participants in this study also expressed experiencing growth in their development as well. Drew was very honest about knowing that he had made his share of mistakes while he was a student and was excited to talk about the ways he had matured over the years. He admitted that he did not make as many poor choices anymore. Drew shared the following:

> **Drew:** [I used to do] really like dumb stuff that we really didn't need to do -- I remember

this one time like we were up past lights out. And it was a school night, and we were playing games, and we heard someone come in. And we tried to hide inside of our desk [under his desk], like and it was dumb hiding too. Like I should have hidden under the bed.

DH: Or hopped on the bed?

Drew: Yeah. Exactly. Yeah. And like it was just dumb stuff. Lights out doesn't mean we have to be asleep. I just grew up.

DH: I see [both chuckled].

Drew: I just kind of grew up. I feel that in [the first-year boy's dorm] is just like the dorm head, that he's necessary. He really is. Like, at the time you're like "oh, I hate this guy." But after you leave [that dorm], I appreciated him.

DH: Uh-huh.

Drew: Like really. He really did help me grow up. Like even the faculty and my teachers. Um, like I remember the head of the Music Department here, um, through the year he told me that, this is when I started not really liking the school. But I was like all right, I'm here. I gotta do what I got to do. Um, and I wasn't even doing anything. I was *actually* studying during study hall. [BOTH GIGGLING] Right? He came in. And he's like, that he saw me matur[ing]. And he saw me working harder. He means like you're really becoming a Globalville student. And like I don't even know what I did. I guess I was just so, I guess I kind of just slowly adjusted, I didn't realize it. But I guess I was just slowly maturing. And I just really matured. This has really helped me become who I am today to be honest.

DH: Are you even in any of the Fine Arts options here?

Drew: No, and that's why it's *so big* to me… he sees it and he really doesn't need to or have a reason to. So, I'm happy that he let me know.

Drew showed that he developed the ability to make better choices and that he appreciated being acknowledged for his coming of age and hard work. His internal belief about himself was validated by a faculty member that he had fewer touchpoints with, so he could tell that he was putting in the effort and being seen (and mostly likely was talked about amongst other faculty) by them. The participants in my study showed strong intrapersonal and interpersonal strengths and connections as means to navigate both racial dynamics and school structures during their time at Globalville.

"I Don't Think College is Going to be as Big of an Experience as I Had Here": Navigational Capital[60] Steering Students Through Rocky Waters at EBS

Students illustrated their navigational capital by sharing how they maneuvered through institutional and intrapersonal structures at Globalville. EBSs have so many different and distinct settings, environments, and subcultures so I will provide new findings and analysis of examples that were apparent across 75% of participant interviews. While the students in my study were a small subset of the student body at Globalville, ensuring that they continued towards their goals at this historically, white, prestigious, institution was sustained through their reliance on humor, drawing on faculty, and focusing on their goals. Although all schools should be prepared to handle the stressors that its students are up against, research shows that the hope and push to keep schools neutral spaces often leaves students feeling neglected (Apple & Beane, 2007; Ayers, 2015; Ayers & Alexander-Tanner, 2010; De los Ríos et al., 2015; Lee & Burkam, 2003; Rumberger, 2001) or teachers and staff scrambling to find information and develop appropriate

[60] *Navigational capital* affords students with the resources (social, emotional, strategic) to navigate "social institutions," especially those that have not been crafted for communities of color (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).

ways to talk to students about issues of social justice. With the misconception of schools being apolitical and the lack of support offered by school administration, students of color often need to devise a system of validation, camaraderie, and opposition to combat and push back against individuals and structures that marginalize them– illustrating navigational capital.

For students of color, opening oneself up to faculty or staff who do not understand your point of view can be scary, isolating, and annoying, so students in my study strategically selected when to engage with faculty about issues that they were experiencing. Kendall shared that, "going to teachers and faculty, first there's certain problems. Like, I will look at teachers for social problems. But I can't look at anyone for more racial problems besides Mr. Kermit even though we're not even the same ethnicity." Even though students had decent relationships with their teachers, the homogenous demographic of the faculty made it difficult for students to find an ally who was an advocate and who really understood the issues that they were facing. Overall, students of color were able to find environments of validation and affirmation while debriefing altercations in counterspaces that they created on campus (Altun, 2018; Lefebvre, 1991; Solórzano et al., 2000). These informal counterspaces were held in students' dorm rooms (so this would only support same-sex conversations) as well as one of the student lounges that were centrally located. The students clearly enjoyed having hangout spots that faculty typically did not enter. When I asked participants if there were any school clubs that would afford space for students to build rapport and discuss issues with school officials, I was informed that there was no space where students felt comfortable or confident with being authentic.

Students needed to figure out ways to build bonds with peers on their own and maneuver social interaction on their own terms. This process can be tricky for any adolescent, it can clearly be harder for teens in an EBS setting that is even more stressful and alienating. Drew shared:

Drew: But people here? They're soft. I don't know. So, I kind of like just to read [people]. But at times they are surely showing me that I am too much! You get what I'm sayin'?

DH: Yeah, I think that that's a hard thing especially being from a bigger city. Right?

Drew: I guess that makes sense to be honest with you.

DH: Where you're like, well, why can't I just tell you what I'm feeling --

Drew: Yeah. People are like you're so mean. And you're so aggressive.

DH: Right. Or you're so loud.

Drew: Right! Exactly! And I just don't really understand what's wrong with me.

DH: So, I definitely went through that. And I'm still going through that. [Both chuckle]

Drew: Like especially when my friends, the day student[s] here? Like in the beginning, I guess because I was a city kid and [he] was [from] a small town, in the beginning that's why we didn't like each other, I guess. Like he thought I came off [as strong headed]. We became friends because my girlfriend -- they were friends before. So, like I was just hanging around them, and I guess they kind of realized what was going on because they told me. They used to think, -- like I came off direct. I was really blunt. You know how I am?!

DH: No filter.

Drew: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. I came off direct and I say what's going on in my head, like I kind of just said it. And they - I- guess they didn't like that. And clearly other people felt like that too. I'm just being me. So, they have helped me form bonds with other students I never thought I would be friends with. And it's nice because my mom always said, "find your people." My freshman year and sophomore year I only really

> talked to kids who were from bigger cities, or I guess a major city to be honest with you. Um, yeah. I only - and- then at the end of my junior year or the end of my sophomore year, I kind of branched out and started talking to other people. And now they're really like my best friends for life to be honest with you.

Initially, Drew found friendship in peers who were from similar geographical locations to him so that he did not need to shift or change his mode of speaking. Once he developed an understanding of why other students avoided befriending him, he was able to use the friendship of open-minded peers as a bridge to form new friendships. With these connections he was able to explain to others what his intentions were and dismantle preconceived notions that they held. The passive-aggressive Midwestern mode of speaking was something that I experienced when I moved to Wisconsin (as well as in high school). I spent a lot of time accidentally "offending" people when I was just trying to solve problems or share my opinion. A similar sentiment was also shared by a couple of faculty members who were originally from New England, and they acknowledged that they had a difficult time with other faculty members.

Participants were really eager to share about how they learned to cope with the fast-paced and constantly moving environment of Globalville. Kendall stated:

> **Kendall:** Most difficult part? I don't know. Personally, I've never felt homesick here. And maybe it's because I'm so busy. Like I actually am really busy. Like our schedule is we literally wake up, we have school, we have practice, we have dinner. We have homework. And then basically it's time to go back to bed. It was rough at first because I was fighting the structure… There is no slow[up]… it just kinda hits you, but I watched people around me and realized that *everyone* struggles with the fast pace… it became easier for me to just trust the flow and the process.

DH: Uh-huh.

Kendall: So, like I'm really like I don't focus on -- like I really forget that I'm actually away from home.

DH: Uh-huh.

Kendall: And after the first year, and then you have the summer. [Then] I'm like oh, it's time to go back home. I accidentally called this home. So, I personally never really feel… I've never felt homesick. So, to be honest with you, I really never felt like there was never really a problem with me [being here].

DH: You just said like 5 minutes ago that you missed Minnesota.

Kendall: I mean, I miss Minneapolis. I really don't think about it as much as like I miss Minneapolis when I think about it. But I'm really not thinking about it as much.

DH: Uh-huh.

Kendall: Like if I sit down and actually think about all my friends at home and like my family, like I don't know. There are more advantages to me than there are disadvantages. For example, now when I go home, I want to be around my family more because I don't see them as often. So, I don't take things for granted as much as I did before. When I lived at home, I never wanted to be home and it caused a lot of tension, so it works out in an odd way.

DH: Right.

Kendall: Um, my parents? Because honestly the best thing that happened to me and my parents is me going to boarding school. Like I grew up. One, I grew up. Two, when I'm there, what is there to argue about? Like there is nothing to argue about. Even if something isn't right or I mess up. It's probably like 'well, what am I going to yell at you

for because you're going back to school in a week?'

DH: Ah, that makes sense. Right.

Kendall: Exactly. So that's a good thing I guess for me too. You can't put me on punishment or ground me because I'm about to leave to go back to school. But also, I care about my home rules more and the rules here. Both want the best for me, and I am working on that every day. So, focusing on all of the things that I am gaining here, [there are] things that I can do here that I couldn't even imagine [doing] at home are worth it.

Furthermore, students also wanted to elaborate on areas where they were unwilling to allow peer pressure to influence the ways that they were coming of age while at Globalville. Henry reflects on a time when he was hanging out with a friend at home, he recalls,

> But if someone says, what are you talking about because I pick up lingo from here that like isn't 'in.' And then [they say] 'well, what are you talking about?' Like none of them really say anything negative like I've changed or anything... they kind of wanna know how it applies simply so they can understand the context more. They just really -- I guess they're glad to have me back, I guess. And they can fill me in on any lingo that I may have missed.

Here Henry highlights how he does not allow pressure surrounding the way that "should" sound to impact how he views himself. He posits that he is able to learn from his non-EBS friends and that they can learn from him too. In this section of the chapter, students illustrate strategies that they developed for making friends, and adjusting to boarding school life. They acknowledge that they deal with these situations, even though they cannot always fix them. In the next section, you will be shown how students push back against unwelcoming school structures and interactions.

"No, We Don't Read Anything from Black or Brown People, But That's Ok… I Can Look Them Up Myself": Resistant Capital's Extracurricular Impact on Students' Experience [61]

Although I was not able to get students to really comment about the curriculum offered at Globalville, I was able to see ways that students were supplementing their Eurocentric, traditional subject content sources where they felt as though they could not see themselves. Drew, who was the most honest about wishing his grades were better, shared the following:

> I wish that we read stuff by Latino and African American scholars, but we don't at all… well at least in class. We have a lot of stuff to do with class, sports, homework and everything else, but we [students of color] try together and talk about books or articles that we find online or in the library.

On one hand, I was in no way shocked to hear Drew say that he felt the curriculum did not reflect people of color. On the other hand, I was surprised to find out that students of color were taking it upon themselves to seek out sources to be enlightened and intellectually fulfilled. With all of the pressure, time constraints, and responsibilities of being a boarding school student, I would not have imagined that students would have the time, energy, or effort to carve out additional space in their busy schedules in order to resist dominant narratives.

My understanding of how this worked was deepened when Kendall caught up to me one evening when I was crossing the quad on campus heading to the parking lot "Aye, Ms. Howell what's something you've read that you think would be important for us to read?" she called. I quickly and over-excitedly responded "*Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson" (it was top of mind as it was just UW's Go Big Read[62] for the year). It was clear that a component of my conversation

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[61] *Resistant Capital* is rooted in communities of color having histories that are full of stories of resilience and strength under systems of marginalization (Yosso, 2005, p. 80-81).

[62] Go Big Read is the University of Wisconsin-Madison's campus-wide reading program.

with Drew has circulated amongst students, and I was honored to be asked for my insight. She offered to walk me to my car as it was on her way to her dorm and informed me that students would request books from the library (and have group reads with a couple of people at a time if they could not get multiple copies) or try to read e-book or e-articles so it was easier for everyone to have access it. They coordinated amongst themselves to try to talk about these books on Sundays and if people were not able read or digest the entire text, those who did would fill them in as best they could so that as a group, they would try to make sense of it. I quickly rattled through my imaginary rolodex and tried to think of texts and videos that I believed would be a good mix of coming of age sources as well as "books I wish I had read when I was younger" such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (2009), *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison (1994), *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (1994), *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison (2007), *The Souls of Black Folks* by W.E.B Du Bois (2007), *The Mis-Education of the Negro* by Carter G. Woodson (2006), *The Unequal Opportunity Race* by Erica Pinto (2010), and *Precious Knowledge* created by Eren Isabel McGinnis and Ari Palos (2011). At the end of our conversation, we noticed the time – she was late for study hall. I quickly wrote her a note and walked her to her dorm just in case the study hall proctor was making rounds. As I walked back to my car, I was elated to think about how I was mentoring and continuing a long-standing tradition of passing down knowledge to youth of color.

In addition to searching for scholarly knowledge about themselves, students were also invested in making sure that they did not allow the historically and predominantly white institutional space of their school to pressure them to change a component of themselves that is so important for youth of color – their hair. While all of my research participants reported that they had made great connections with peers and faculty alike, it was still clear that these groups

still had some misunderstandings and assumptions about Black people. One day I positioned myself in the library to type some field notes as I often did, and Theresa and Kendall stopped by to comment about how they liked my new hair style. That segued into a conversation about how hair at boarding school was very difficult to keep up with (there is very little time, and the surrounding areas lack black natural hair salons, sports are a requirement, so it is very easy to sweat styles out or maintain them). Then Theresa shared,

> Yeah, even with my friend, when I try to explain to her about my hair… I think one time she said, 'don't you wish you had hair like mine?' And I was like '– no – why?' She had wavy hair but it's, like, really long and I'm like no, I don't want, like, all of your hair, like, I want my hair the way it is. Basically, everyone has wavy hair, I'm unique, so my hair can't be basic.

Kendall affirmed these sentiments and added,

> **Kendall:** Like I remember last year, I had braids, like box braids in, and it was [swim] season. And [my swim coach] said, 'Yeah, just take them out if you can't swim with them.' And I was just like, 'You don't just take all of this hair out, I just got these in, it was expensive, and it's a protective winter style and protect against all of the chlorine I'm always in.'
>
> **DH:** Were you saying that you couldn't get in the pool or…
>
> **Kendall:** No, I was saying it wouldn't fit in the cap…
>
> **DH:** Oh!
>
> **Kendall:** Yeah. You get it!
>
> **DH:** Yeah, it's so hard to find swim caps that fit all of this magic (pointing to the tops of our hair).

Both: Laughing

Kendall: So, I was just like all right, I mean, I'll swim sometimes without it and like I'll put a conditioner in so then like it doesn't allow my hair to sop up like the rest of the chlorine. But like [coaches and teammates] they'll be like, ‘Oh, you can just get in and not worry about your hair."’ And I'm like, "No".

DH: Right. I completely understand.

I wanted to provide Kendall and Theresa with a place to vent and feel validated, especially because I can remember some of the same conversations happening when I was in high school. Furthermore, I learned that the girl students would plan to have their hair done over break and that there were a couple of students who learned how to braid and help other students style their hair. Amongst the boys, a couple of them owned clippers and would help give each other fades and shape ups, but they did not report having as much of a difficult time finding barbers that would “get the job done enough” near campus. When faced with critiques about their hair, it was great to see that students did not bend to conforming to Eurocentric expectations about hair and that students of color wanted to be unapologetically themselves.

When faced with peers who were overtly biased, students of color would make sure to hold them accountable to the administration even though it was hard or if they were uncertain about the outcome. Henry had a lot to share about his freshman year roommate who was an international student whose home country was in Europe. While he was very resistant to share specific details about his interactions, it was clear that Henry experienced an unwelcoming and contentious living environment. Henry shared,

Henry: He's [the roommate] no longer here though. So, you can imagine the stuff that he was saying, and he got kicked out for that.

DH: Oh. Are you willing to share any quick examples? I know it's rough because the door is open, and it might just be hard to re-hash some of the things that happened.

Henry: No. Ah, I don't know. He told me that like to take my family and go back to where I came from. He was saying some crazy stuff.

DH: Wow! I wasn't expecting that.

Henry: Right, like, how are you saying that and you ain't even from the states. I was letting it go for a while because I figured we were both having an adjustment [to being at Globalville], but eventually I just had enough.

Students' ability to point out and target racist undertones illustrates the ways that students were invested in making faculty, administrators and peers know that the EBS setting was not going to hinder their spirits and they would continue their journey towards success.

"Like, I Do a Lot of Code Switching, so, Like, I Speak Differently and Act Differently When I'm at Home Than Now When I'm Here": Naming Structures Through Utilizing Linguistic Capital[63]

When faced with people who did not understand them and questioned the existence of students of color, Globalville students were still willing to name and enlighten others around them about ways they could adapt and develop a larger understanding of a diverse world. It was wonderful to see how students' critical consciousness was already developed and that they were willing to push back against asymmetrical power relations and analytically question their experiences and environments (Freire, 2009) instead of internalizing their interactions. Kendall shared,

[63] *Linguistic capital* is defined as social and emotional intelligences developed from possessing multiple linguistic modes because of one's belonging to communities that value oral traditions.

Kendall: Also, um, [I] try to see past the microaggressions and stuff. Because like when I was little like when people said things to me like that, I made a huge deal about it. But like, I mean, it was a huge deal, but at the same time it was like okay, well, they're not Black, they wouldn't understand. And why should I expect you to understand and just know… you know? So, it was like you can't really teach them in 30 seconds before you slap the crap out of them… they're wrong. So, I mean. Especially if they're like an adult. Like they should have learned that when they were a kid. If they didn't, then it's not going to get in their brain now. For example, like last year with Miss Jones, like uh, my capstone topic was uh, what was it?

DH: The prison pipeline?

Kendall: Yeah. 'School to prison pipeline in public schools of the United States of America.' You were listening! So um, like she had this breakthrough moment when she was reading it. She was like, 'So they treat Black men as slaves in prison and take away their rights again?' And I was like, 'Yes! And then she had that 'Ohhhhhhhh! Crap.' Yeah. So um, that was a really nice moment for me. I was just like oh, my gosh, she [is] reading my writing, and she had this "Ah" moment. I was like okay. But like um, for her like yeah. She sometimes, like she mostly understands. For Mr. Williams, I feel like he mostly understands. Um. Uh, well those are the only two [faculty] I really talk about this stuff with, right. For students though, it is not enough to just show them or expect them to change from day-to-day… that would be too easy, so presenting a project backed up by research combined with the fact that they have to listen because it is in class– that's the easiest way to go about it. Then, it's bigger than Kendall, trying to explain it… does that make sense?

I knew what she was saying very well. There was this silent acknowledgement between us, we knew that it was not the *right* way, but we knew that it was the way. The way that made the most sense for white people and caused the least amount of stress for us. Kendall's awareness and critical consciousness/naming systems of oppression and inequities illustrates that she is willing to challenge white narratives around the lived realities of people of color (understanding likely formed from home narratives and that of communities of color) and push (herself and her peers) to consider and imagine liberatory society practices (Freire, 2009).

Even though most of the findings about linguistic capital were shown through students' experiences on-campus, Theresa explained that this linguistic capital also functioned off campus. Theresa shared about ways that her mode of speaking changed in her home environment, but she was not concerned with how her speaking patterns or slang that she gravitated to had been impacted by her time at Globalville. She reflected that,

> If someone says, like, what are you talking about like because I pick up lingo I guess from here [Globalville] that like isn't in [cool]. And they'll follow that up with, what are you talking about? Or what does that even mean? But that is really the extent of it. Like but [they] don't really say anything. Like none of them really say anything like I've changed or anything. They just really -- I guess they're glad to have me back, I guess. And they steal some of the things that I say as well as some of the school tricks that I have learned.

Theresa confirmed that she, her family and friends did not fall into the "acting white" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) trope. They saw Theresa's changes as growth and did not view her changing speech as Theresa trying to provide distance between her upbringing and her future path. This allowed Theresa to honor the dynamism of identity and experience.

Discussion

Focusing on the students of color Community Cultural Wealth in this research study allowed me to witness the support systems that they draw on for strength as well how they are actively making a home at boarding school and attempting to impact the school's climate. Through centering the ways students of color operationalized their Community Cultural Wealth, one can see that they are truly some of the wisest and most strategic individuals even at a young age as their aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance capital consistently deflect and redirect pressures of conformity and alienation that are present at an EBS. The results indicate that students are already working on perfecting and shifting from internal questioning to posing questions about society and the actions of others. They are not merely being acted on by the institution passively. Extending previous literature that has focused on students of color being "outsiders within" (Cookson & Persell, 1991), data from this study shows that students are developing institutional critics, moving past self-isolating and marginalizing thoughts, and forming counterspaces (Carter, 2007; Desai & Abeita, 2017; Lefebvre, 1991; Solórzano et al., 2000; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998; Yosso et al., 2009; Yosso & Lopez, 2010) as means to scaffold their matriculation through Globalville.

Students are aware of the microaggressions and slights that are reality for marginalized students at PWIs (Predominately White Institutions). There is a lot of research that focuses on how students of color fare or are failed by institutions of higher education (Harwood et al., 2012; Herr, 1999; Sue et al., 2007). Furthermore, there are studies that focus on community programs that aim to help students prepare to attend PWIs (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006; Jayakumar et al., 2013) as well as that examine how PWIs need to support marginalized students' transition and collegiate matriculation (Carter et al., 2013; Chang et al., 2008; Esposito, 2011; Solórzano et

al., 2000). The data suggests that students have the power and resources to combat institutional barriers versus being stuck and gatekept (Lee, 2009) as "outsiders within" (Cookson & Persell, 1991). This study shifts focus to students at a lower educational level and in turn provides insight into new avenues to examine in the PWI EBS to PWI collegiate high school experience. In a case study conducted by Alexander-Snow (1999), she highlighted the journey of two Black students who attended PWI boarding school and continued on to PWIs for college as a means to gain insight on their transition. Both students were enrolled at "South University." The students found that, on one hand, they were often excluded from activities by white peers because of their race. On the other hand, they were also ridiculed by their Black peers because they "talked funny" and dressed differently. While this study focuses on a small sample size of students in a very specific geographical location (the South has a very strong tradition and culture in general), it would be interesting to see if and how this transition has changed in the last 20 years. Many things have changed, and many things are the same. Following up with the participants in this study to see how their college years went would add to this body of literature. This is particularly important because students who attend boarding school have already learned many of the skills necessary to be successful at pushing for academic achievement, pushing back against racist structures, and finding camaraderie and safe spaces on a campus that was not developed for their success.

Students are aware that EBSs were not created to reflect the experience or knowledge of students of color, but they are still pushing towards making their presence known. While students do not directly mention that they feel double consciousness, it is clear that they do. *Double consciousness* is just that – possessing two forms of awareness simultaneously which may be at

odds with one another.[64] Available literature argues that students' experiences are shaped by their ability to relate to their white and wealthy peers (Cary, 1991; Horvat & Antonio, 1999) and that students of color felt the need to sacrifice their racial/ethnic identity to navigate school experiences, hindering them from authentically expressing themselves (Cookson & Persell, 1991; Rowley et al., 1998; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, 2003). This line of thought perpetuates the trope of that student should not/do not belong at EBS. In interviews and observations, the operationalization of students' Community of Cultural Wealth illustrates how students form positive sentiments of belonging and is illustrative of how families of color continue to strive for fulfilling educational opportunities (Acuña, 1972; Anderson, 1988; Grant, 2012; Lomotey, 1992; Peck, 2001; Walker, 2005, 2009a, 2009b).

A lot of other EBS research focuses on the detriments that students face at elite boarding schools. I am focused on the strengths of boarding schools. And in fact, I didn't hear much about this burden of acting white. In 1986, Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu published *Black Students' School Success: Coping with the "Burden of Acting White."* The research used to support this hypothesis was based on data that Fordham collected to complete her dissertation at a predominantly Black school, Capital High School, in Washington D.C.[65] *Acting white* is

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[64] This is a term coined by W.E.B Du Bois in 1903 within his work *The Souls of Black Folks,* a seminal piece. Du Bois, who was raised by a single mother in Massachusetts and a part of the small population of free slaves in his town, was aware of his position in society– a position not decided by himself, but by white hegemony. While Lewis asserts that Du Bois invites white people, his intended audience (Du Bois, 2011), to consider his stance that Blacks should change in order to fit the systemic structure that whites had created. Posnock (1997) insists that Du Bois is pushing his Black brethren to "soar" in the face of adversity. He asserts, "What, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American?" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 184) Thus placing the identities formation of Blacks at the turn of the century into perspective (Bruce, 1992), Du Bois addresses the complexity of the Black experience. He explains to the reader that,

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring on one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois, 1994, p. 2).

[65] To see more information about methodology and data collection, see Fordham 1985.

defined as when Black people associate "academic success as white people's prerogative, and begin to discourage their peers, perhaps unconsciously, from emulating white people in academic striving" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, p. 177). Their study examined how students cope with the "burden" of navigating these academic spaces with pressure from Black peers to not "act white," and pressure from the small population of white students who did not think that Black students could be academically successful.[66]

Several scholars have disputed the findings and thesis presented in Fordham and Ogbu's work, transforming itself into an *oppositional culture* debate. In a study conducted by Cook and Ludwig (1998), they find a very different story with regard to how Black and white students value education. Using the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) of tenth graders, they found that Black students expect that they will stay in school longer than their white counterparts, miss fewer days than white counterparts, and spend the same amount of time on their homework; moreover, Black students who do well academically and are a part of an honor society are popular amongst their peers and that they spend the same amount of time on their homework as white students (Cook & Ludwig, 1998). Similarly, Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998) found that Black students held positive outlooks on their occupational possibilities and felt that education was vital for their future trajectory as well as maintained perspectives that were positive toward school. Echoing the sentiments of the Black students from both of the

[66] The scholars use an ecological structures approach to explain how students develop this "*oppositional cultural frame of reference*" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, 181). Fordham and Ogbu trace how Black students and Black families have been historically demeaned within educational settings, disenfranchised educationally, especially in comparison to the white educational experiences, and hit a job ceiling once they had completed numerous years of school. This set of barriers lead to the development of *oppositional culture* as a mechanism to deal with all of these barriers. Being a *subordinate minority* and sharing a similar history of struggle, the authors posit that Black people develop a "fictive kinship," "a cultural symbol of collective identity of Black Americans" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, 184). The combination of *oppositional culture* and *fictive kinship* created the environment for Black students to conform to the pressure of their peers about their academic endeavors (committing time to completing assignments, accepting expectations set within educational environments, and crossing other cultural boundaries).

preceding studies, Prudence Carter found in her study about Latino and African American youth in New York-that most students believed that "education is the key to success" (Carter, 2005, p. 11) and are not less involved in school that their white counterparts. Along the same lines, this finding is also supported in studies conducted by Harris (2006) as well as Tyson et al. (2005). On one hand, Diamond et al. (2007) found that students who do well academically experience a different type of ridicule, being called a "nerd," versus being discouraged from academic achievement. On the other hand, students who do poorly in school are often teased for not having higher grades. Both of these stances debunk the *acting white* hypothesis.

Needless to say, the *acting white* and oppositional culture debate is still frequently revisited by scholars even though it is unsubstantiated. Conversely, students of color in all of the studies report there being racial tension surrounding their ability to perform different academic skills and a lack of affirmation from white peers and teachers pointing to deeper issues with how schools appreciated contributions from students of color. My interviews also contradict Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) notion and illustrate that students view their EBS journey as a valuable component of reaching goals that they (and their families) deserve.

I began this chapter with a discussion about aspirational capital because it was the *loudest* sentiment that students shared. Thinking about one's future was often woven into each response and intent of the student regardless of the questions that they were being asked. Moreover, while I separated each of the components of Community Cultural Wealth here to show clear themes and areas of analysis in this chapter; it is clear that they are intersecting phenomena that are often present or "cashed" simultaneously. As Jayakumar et al. (2013) wonderfully articulates about the profound reciprocity of Community Cultural Wealth, "Yosso (2005) notes, the development of capital is a symbiotic process when one form of capital is created or developed, it immediately

instigates or translates into other forms" (p. 569). For example, when students are reading scholarship from scholars of color, this can be seen as navigational, linguistic, familial capital as well, not just resistance capital[67]. Further studies should take into account direct insight from students' caregivers about how they believe EBSs are treating and adapting to the presence of students of color as they would interact more with the administrative sphere of EBSs.

Conclusion

Students reported that EBSs represented an investment in their educational trajectory and that they formed unexpected bonds with students from differing backgrounds due to the "forced integration" (e.g., being roommates, living at school) of the school. Students of color report resisting peers' deficit stereotypes and constructing healthy images and knowledge of blackness and brownness. Students shared that graduating from an EBS represents a major step in pursuing the "American Dream." In answering my research questions, EBS are preparing students of color to persevere amidst adversity by allowing them to develop, harness, and use intrinsic mechanics that they possess to cope and navigate dominant settings– their Community of Cultural Wealth. While the school did provide a World Cultures Club, none of my research participants reported attending those meetings as they did not have time in their busy schedules. Furthermore, the club was for learning about *different* cultures and not discussing difficulties or ways to make campus friendlier and more open.

One thing that surprised me about the accounts, insights, and wisdom shared by Henry, Drew, Kendall, and Theresa is that they did not blame individual people or groups of people for

[67] Navigational capital is reflected as students are being intentional and strategic about searching for voices that their typical curriculum does not include, instead solely accepting the traditional Euro-centric curriculum. Linguistic capital is illustrated because by learning from critical scholars or Black and Brown scholars my research participants are continuing to develop their critical consciousness; thus, affording students the ability to analyze injustices and push back against racist systems. Familial capital is evident as students are building a sense of community with their peers of color to help scaffold, develop, and protect their newly gained knowledge.

historical, political, and systemic disparities that afford disenfranchisement to exist. For such young people, I thought that it was so profound for them to be able to be focused on themselves in their journeys through life and coming of age, without passing judgment on others and the choices that they make. This is not to say that students did not capitulate at all to others' criticisms. There were instances where students needed to watch how they reacted and shift their behaviors to "fit" or not get in trouble. They needed to learn to soften the way they expressed themselves in order to not offend people and they stood firm and explained components of themselves that were truly important. Most importantly, this is not where they were stuck, as they relished in the growth that they experienced and marveled at how responsible they had become for themselves and the success of peers around them. Through operationalizing their aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic capital, students of color at EBSs show how they manage to bring themselves to these environments without completely losing all components of themselves. Students acknowledge that they "work" on the institution as much as the institution "works" on them.

Stories of "resistance" and "challenge" are necessary to develop a holistic understanding of how race, ethnicity, class and gender can be liberating for marginalized groups across varying educational settings. Most EBS data discusses and illustrates how schools change students and centers the ways that the institutional habitus puts pressure on students to change, thus centering what students need to capitulate in order to develop "taste" (Bourdieu, 1984) of the upper-class. These dynamics are often discussed in regard to students "bettering" their knowledge and appreciation for products. I posit that it is advantageous (and a part of life) for students (and people) to grow, develop an appreciation for, and expand their horizons based on the environments that they engage with. It should not be viewed as an odd or developmentally

inappropriate manifestation of means and access that are reserved for others (i.e., wealthy and white communities). These sentiments are inherently anti-Black and perpetuate the notion that poor folx should remain comfortable with their sub-par societal status.

Chapter 5: Faculty Autonomy, Engagement, and Dismissive Diversity at EBS

We weren't selling meeting attendees on the idea of being rich or New York Poor, but ***wealthy****. Privileged. Well-rounded* ***and*** *well-off. Their children would finally be on a level-playing field with the children of executives, movie stars, politicians, and Mike-down-the-street–that one inexplicably well-off neighbor whose great-great-great-grandfather happened to have grabbed a homestead and enslaved three people in Missouri at some especially opportune time in 1843 and they've just been wealthy ever since, because* ***America****.*

"Your kid could be one of them! Well situated! Connected for life! Achieving the American promise that a child will ***always*** *have the opportunity to be even better than those who came before them," we told parents, once their children had been herded into another room, to take the ridiculously outdated test they needed to pass in order to be considered for our program. Being granted access to upward mobility required, in this case, being able to neatly fill in a Scantron sheet, sit still during a three-hour exam, and solve math problems in a booklet copied via a machine that was just as likely to make a + look like a –.*

— Kendra James (2022, p. 3-4)

Introduction

It is common knowledge that students go to elite boarding schools, to harness the benefits that these institutions provide. While the name, status, and age of the institutions impact the perceived rigor of the institution as well as the networks that the school may easily have access to (for college), faculty have a large impact and influence on each student's experience. Goffman (1968) described this thoroughly as he labeled EBSs as "total institutions" where students are educated, taught, live, and have very little interaction with environments outside of the campus. In the quotation above, Kendra James (2022), a Taft alumna (Taft's first Black legacy student to

be exact), details the dream that she would sell to parents and students as she worked with an agency that helped place students at independent and boarding schools after she graduated from college. “The American Dream” that she references is delicately and intentionally crafted by faculty.

In chapter 4, data showed how students of color perceived their matriculation and journey through EBS and this chapter shifts the focus to how teachers mold the student experience. Looking at the choices and interactions that students have with faculty is important as studies show that they play an integral role in shaping the student experience (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Ford & Sassi, 2014; Warren, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a). Furthermore, outside of schools’ history, the faculty tows the line and is the on the ground enforcement of the administrative decisions in action in addition to all of the other roles they play. Scholarship that examines “quality educational experiences” always discusses that school resources, qualifications of the teachers (Farmer-Hinton et al., 2013; Kozol, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2019), building community connections with students (Gay, 2000, 2010, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2004, 2006b), and experiences with the students all increase the positive interactions with school as well as promotes student engagement and academic achievement. I would argue that EBSs have all of these components to a certain degree. The endowments, student tuition and funding raised ensure that the campuses are large and spacious with the latest technology, manicured campuses, and a magnitude of academic, musical, and athletic offerings (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a; Peshkin, 2001). In most cases, teachers have acquired advanced degrees (Peshkin, 2001) and seek out teaching at these institutions.

Unlike the structure of your typical public, private, or charter day school structures that "end" each weekday, faculty at EBSs faculty day's linger[68] and wear many hats as they are: teachers, uncertified therapists, activity planners, snack providers, chaperones, chauffeurs, coaches, advice givers, mediators, role models, rule enforcers, nightmare soothers, consequence givers, immediate health care providers, life coaches, and this is just a few of the positions that they occupy. They provide homework support off-hours (Sundays are a great day to catch up on difficult work or to help students plan for larger future projects), they even catch up on the latest shows that kids are watching so they are up to date with current cultural references. This means that faculty and students can form very strong bonds as they spend almost the entire day together. This can be beneficial if the teacher is welcoming and shows an interest in getting to know you individually, but this could be a problem if they have microaggressed you (or did not correct a peer who microaggressed you) during second period and subsequently need to interact with them four or five more times during the day.

The assumption that an abundance of resources can holistically fix the educational experience of students of color is inaccurate as this does not take into account the daily interactions that students are having with peers, faculty, and curriculum. Even all things considered– resources and teachers that build community--teachers need to know how to dismantle preconceived assumptions about students as well as consider expansive classroom possibilities in order to change the experiences of students. It's not as simple as "let's give schools resources and widen the curricular selection a little." Research on EBS has already shown that,

[68] My observation days were often 6:45am- 11:30pm. I was able to go to bed "earlier" and wake up "later" than faculty members who were dorm parents… they would often need to handle filling out documentation (for example, if a student was sick and went to the health center), planning classes, or conduct the dorm wake up call.

> The curriculum offered by elite boarding schools is not a response to state mandates or policies developed by economists or politicians. Rather, it is negotiated between the educators who deliver the curriculum, the expectations of parents who pay the high tuition, the demands of students who take the courses, and– of course– the requirements of elite colleges and universities that expect to admit students with particular academic backgrounds (Persell & Cookson, 1985; Stevens, 2007), as cited in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009b, p. 1102.

With that being said, teachers are offered pedagogical and curricular freedom, but how do teachers use this structure? Does the selection really leave traditional and Eurocentric canons behind? Outside of school resources, building a sense of community, and broadening the curriculum, teacher autonomy is often lauded as one the of the most important factors for students' educational experiences, achievement and engagement. As teachers are in control of many facets of EBS life, it behooves research to focus on what teachers are doing (or not doing) so that practical and theoretical implications can be developed for how to improve the experiences of students of color. Furthermore, it will also show how students of color are responding to these autonomous learning environments.

The research presented in this chapter will present first-hand accounts offered by five faculty members and one health staff member. The faculty represent insights from the English, Math, Language, and History Departments. As each faculty member is initially discussed, I will provide brief background information as I would like to respect their confidentiality. Moreover, I will answer my second research question: How does teacher autonomy and interactions shape non-dominant students' experiences at EBS? In doing so, depth will be provided to the insights offered by students of color previously highlighted in this dissertation. This chapter will illustrate

the advantages and disadvantages of teaching at Globalville. This chapter will show how faculty feel as though they are meeting the needs of non-dominant students, but as you will see, they are often falling short as they are unaware of the magnitude of students' need.

"It Turned into Tons and Tons of Documentation, Tons of Paperwork. It Wasn't About Kids Anymore:" Teacher Autonomy at Work in an EBSs

When debating one of the most efficient ways to grant teachers authority back in the classroom as a means to push back against the impacts of neoliberalism on the terrain of education (deskilling the art of teaching, attaching students' outcomes to teacher pay, promoting scripted curriculum), granting teacher's autonomy within their classroom is often promoted as a key component of re-vitalizing the field of teaching. All of the faculty members interviewed in this study stated that the main reason that they loved teaching at Globalville was because of the autonomy that Globalville offered. When asked "What do you love most about teaching at Globalville?" they all retorted "relationship with students and autonomy" as though it were rehearsed. However, it was unclear how this said autonomy was operationalized. In this section of the dissertation, the research will show how faculty utilized the autonomy that they were granted at Globalville.

It became very clear that teachers' autonomy was synonymous with "academic freedom." And that this freedom was applied easily to the pedagogical aspect of teaching, classroom dynamics, and school climate. While none of my research participants directly mentioned Socratic, constructivist or Harkness methods which are typically associated with EBS learning styles in their response (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009b), the operationalization of those methods was seen within their daily teaching and classroom structure. In each interview, faculty members always referenced their fascination with the conversations that they were able to have in class. I

was privy to a lot of great conversations about "how the sheep heart's dissection would compare to dissecting a heart in med school (why are the heart structures different or similar?)" or "How is it possible for Donald Trump to win the election, here, in the United States?" Nancy Gallagher,[69] one of the school's language teachers offers, "I love that it's a United Nations. That I look around my classroom and there's all different ethnicities and thought processes going all around." And she was very proud of the fact that students could wholly bring themselves to her classroom. Furthermore, it seemed as though leveling the hierarchy between teachers and students was very beneficial to the dynamics that teachers wanted in their classroom. Benjamin Dylan[70] asserts that students are,

> More prepared to ask questions and not afraid of it, because kids here ask questions all the time, whether it's in the classroom, whether it's in the cafeteria, whether it's in the dorm… And I think amongst the faculty, there's a level of humility that facilitates that. [My colleague] is very humble in her dealings with the kids. And yet, you look at her academic credentials, and they are incredibly impressive. I say to the kids all the time, 'I'm not any smarter than you guys. I've just been doing this longer. I'm 20 years older than you, so I've been reading books longer than you. That's all its is.' So, I think we have a good approach with students.

In the sentiments offered above, Ms. Gallagher and Mr. Dylan highlight that students' curiosity is stoked in the classroom as they are allowed to freely ask questions about content. Moreover,

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[69] Ms. Gallagher is a veteran teacher as she was in her 22 year of teaching. She has teaching experience that ranged with students from middle school through college in various types of schools, not just boarding. She has been a part of the Globalville community for five years and her classroom was definitely the most distinct classroom at Globalville. She had a huge sofa, love seat, and a larger Harkness-style dining room table along the back of the classroom as well as a wall full of games. This is important to note as she did have the most non-traditional classroom set up in the school.

[70] Mr. Dylan is an English teacher in his seventh year of teaching at Globalville.

students are considered life-long learners who are at the cusp of their intellectual journey. In these examples, faculty are showing that they grant students opportunities to influence the classroom experience instead of sticking to rigid standards.

When directly asked about ways the curriculum could be diversified to include more perspective from marginalized identities, the faculty struggled with figuring out where it would "fit" with everything else that they are supposed to do. Stacy Walsh[71] shares,

> I don't know. I think part of it is curricular, in a sense. Particularly with ninth graders, I teach World History. So, I'm not supposed to just focus on Greece, Rome, and Europe. I'm supposed to talk about China, Japan, and Africa, and all those things. Then they move to U.S. History, I think a lot more can be done to broaden those perspectives. But traditionally, U.S. History is a pretty white narrative. And as much as you try… It's hard. The textbook is a white-male, narrative, textbook. You know, you try to bring in Native Americans, or the perspective of African Americans, or women. And it ends up being, kind of, forced, or/and rushed. It's like, "the women were doing this." And then we move on. Which I don't think is anyone's fault. It's just hard. And then they go to Europe. And that was one of the reasons I was hired, is because I said that I could teach non-Western history. The school recognizes that we don't do enough non-Western stuff in general. And I think because of the confines or the way that we've set up our curriculum-- there's no need for a teacher-- I guess-- to be more open, because that's not what they're expected to be teaching. Like, if you're teaching European History through no fault of your own, you're probably going to be talking about a fairly white narrative. And that's just how it is. I think it's a hard [thing to navigate]. I think, on a personal level, all of our teachers are

[71] Ms. Walsh is a History teacher who is in her third year of teaching at Globalville.

very broadly aware. I don't know if it always comes [across in] the classroom… It's not so much, like, their personal thing. It's what their job has, kind of, boxed them in. It's something that I know the school has thought about and has been looking at. OK, what does it mean to take World History. Well, what does the world mean? You teach Euro, you can cover all sorts of stuff. But something's still going to have to get cut. And so, if you cut the stuff that would make the class more diverse, but perhaps kind of pull it away from its core objectives? Or do you skip something that might be really important in order to grow a more diverse perspective? It's a hard balance to strike. Especially because here, things move so fast at Globalville. Like, there is not a ton of time to just linger in something. It's like a well-oiled machine– at least in that sense, curricularly, and being like, you do this, you do this, you do this [tone mimicking the passing of time]. And people have to go on. So that's super hard. Yeah, so we've kind of mitigated that with electives, particularly in the Social Studies Department. And I think I've been a big part of that. I taught a sub-Saharan African class. And then Change the World has been probably the most diverse class-- other than the world history-- that we have. And it was designed purposely for that. They wanted somebody who was going to do that. I think really, all of our faculty members-- if you get them outside of their classroom during the academic day, if you want to talk to pretty much any of my colleagues, they could talk intelligently on all sorts of topics that they don't necessarily teach them. And I do think that that softens it a little bit, because I know how our curriculum comes off– or it can come off. And I know there's always room for improvement. But I don't want it to feel as though, just because they don't teach it doesn't mean they can't talk about it. Because they can, and they do.

Instead of offering a response about the curriculum including more diverse voices, Mr. Dylan thought that the character development component of the school's curriculum and campus climate was more important than the content. He offers,

> I actually think that diversity does more for our kids than really anything. I think we do good stuff structurally. But I think the opportunity to study and live with kids who are nothing like you does so much more for our students than really anything else. I think it gives them the opportunity to challenge their beliefs, to defend their beliefs, to figure out what the hell they believe, to figure out who they are. And I think, in a lot of ways, boarding schools are like a giant sleepover. And there are things that happen after hours, when the [dorm] parents go to bed. And while that stuff might not be always with the rules, it's stuff that, probably, is what the kids remember. It's the stuff that they love. And it's the stuff that it's going to help them figure out who they are. So, in a lot of ways, I think that's what makes Globalville, Globalville-- is that you have the opportunity to-- it's all implicit, little things. And I think just the opportunity to live and study with people who are nothing like you, and to practice a new language, or to learn it from your roommate. And to see people at their best and at their worst… I think it really does teach humility, and kind of, what it means to be human, in a way that day school students don't get. And I think kids who go to school and maybe at another boarding school that's a bit more homogeneous-- they would never[experience] that. 'Cause that's just not the same.

Elizabeth Murphy[72], also thought her relationship with students was just as important as any of the content specific things that she could teach. She shares,

[72] Ms. Murphy teaches a variety of math courses. She is in her fourth year of teaching at Globalville.

> I knew that when I was taking my education classes that I was in it more for the relationship than I was for making sure kids knew how to solve a right triangle [just concepts]. So, I knew in my teaching career I'll probably only be able to do it in an elementary school, where you have them all day, or a boarding school setting where you see them all the time. I wanted a place where I could talk *with* students instead of *at* them.

In speaking with the teachers, it was clear that their relationships, fostering dialogue, and an ethos of learning (both in and out of the classroom) were the most important aspects to the teachers. Their prized autonomy afforded space to foster those relationships. Furthermore, there was a concern and emphasis placed on maintaining scope and sequence in the content areas. Teachers mentioned that if they "tried something new and it flopped," they were happy that the administration would trust that the choice was made with student learning in mind and that they would either eliminate that component or try to adjust it to make it better in the future.

Teachers' autonomy also allowed teachers to bend the rules in instances where they felt that certain students needed leeway. In talking about the needs of international students, Ms. Walsh mentions,

> I have to always remind myself that this kid is learning history in their second, third, fourth language. I couldn't take any class in a second language. I would not be able to do it. On the one hand, these kids are sent here to learn English, to be in an American high school, to be challenged. And so, we're not supposed to lower our expectations for these kids. But at the same time, how can you hold them to the same standards? It's totally different in my opinion.

It is clear here that some of Ms. Walsh's colleagues may not agree with her or make the same kind of exception for their students. However, she is allowed to make the decisions in her

classroom that she thinks are the fairest for her English Language Learners – illustrating how Ms. Walsh uses her "academic freedom" to provide extra support for students who need it.

Capstone and senior thesis projects represented the largest space for students to explore and research diverse topics that were not reflected within the curriculum. Margaret Brown,[73] discusses being an advisor for a senior who shared a similar interest as her. She recalls,

> She was interested in game theory. And I'm also interested in game theory. I know a bit about game theory, though I didn't take the class in college. So, when she was sort of searching for what she was going to do her capstone on, because game theory is so broad, we decided on "Hunger Games" book series books, and look at game theory in play in those books. We sat and sort of talked about the game theory things that we knew, such as prisoner's dilemma And then, um, I don't know how it came up, but then we just discovered, like, oh, you know, when Katniss and um, the boy, when they eat the berries… That is a typical, game theory, prisoner's dilemma right there. The Game Keeper has to decide 'Let them die or stop the game.'

Ms. Brown's excitement was palpable as she continued to discuss the project. Mentioning the senior capstone project made me think about one of my Black, female, research participants who approached me in the library one evening. She inquired about if I could help with her sophomore capstone project because her project advisor "just doesn't understand." She then added, "I know that I'm right, but he just doesn't get it like *we* get it" (Field notes, 3/15/2018). I introduced her to Google Scholar and taught her about the importance of using "AND," a Boolean search strategy, to strengthen her research parameters for topics related to colorism (e.g., colorism AND school discipline, colorism AND education, colorism AND beauty). Here these two instances

[73] Ms. Brown teaches a variety of math courses. She was in her eighth year of teaching at Globalville.

show a very stark difference in experience between an international student and a Black student who are trying to employ their academic freedom (as reference earlier in this section about teachers and students being "life-long learners"), but teachers were not able to support them in the same way. If the curriculum were broader about social justice topics and teachers were more up-to-date on how to anchor it in the curriculum, the Black students would not have needed to work as hard to "prove" herself. The project was clearly more than an exploration, it was a way that the student was pushing the curriculum to open its confines to discuss non-normative modes of thought.[74]

The same can be said about a Hip Hop lesson that I encountered with Mr. Dylan. I passed by his class and caught the end of the lesson. A couple of the students invited me to come to the next couple of classes. I was informed that students had been looking forward to this unit all year, but I was surprised to find out that Mr. Dylan created it purely out of his admiration for Hip Hop, but he was unaware of Hip Hop Pedagogy. I sent him sources that included Hip Hop Pedagogy Seminars that would be held over the summer in a city nearby. Here faculty are consistently focusing on the interactions and discussions that they have, but oftentimes ignore the conversations that are not happening. The silences are strong. Faculty cannot rely on teenagers to moderate all the tough conversations on their own. What does it mean when these conversations are kind of missing from the curriculum or positioned as an elective? Positioning and communicating that engaging with issues of social justice, as an option but not a requirement shows students that they can adopt color-evasive (Annamma et al., 2017; Gotanda, 1991) practices that ignore the nuances of students' lived experiences. Furthermore, dominant students are not encouraged to shift their ideologies. Kevin Kumashiro (2002) asserts that when students

[74] This is an example of the students using her resistant, navigation, and linguistic capital.

arrive to the classroom they are "already invested in their thoughts, beliefs, and desires… educators need to address is not merely a lack of knowledge, but a resistance to knowledge (Luhmann, 1998), and in particular a resistance to any knowledge that disrupts what students already know" (p. 73). By ignoring conversations around races or other categories of oppression and marginalization, faculty are affirming that dominant students can ignore developing social justice lenses. In the best schools in America, which pride themselves on developing leaders of tomorrow, EBS – not just Globalville, should be invested in developing students' critical consciousness.

"Watch Your Language! I Don't Know Many Chinese, but I Heard That:" Faculty and Student Engagement at Globalville

Extra-curricular conversations are also an integral component of the student-teacher relationship at EBS. Of course, faculty were friendly and in a lot of instances they were literally cheerleaders (or the sports field or in the classroom on a difficult problem or concept), but when it comes to directly responding to the needs of students of color, the connection was not always clear. In some instances, the tangential conversations that students and teachers have during class time are formative for how students of color view themselves and their belonging at boarding school. At times, guidelines outlined in the school's handbook are what causes tension and alienation of students.

All of the faculty members discussed that they are often torn between enforcing one of Globalville's rules or allowing students to break the rule. When discussing how she manages enforcing the school's language policy, Ms. Walsh shares,

> They want to go hang out with their friends from home and talk in their native language. And we've seen a lot of it. And sometimes it can be really productive for kids. And it's

> good that they can… we have students who don't do very well in some of their classes. They can find a peer who can go back and forth—that's been awesome. But it also does mean that we have groups and gloms of kids who section themselves off, and never speak to anybody other than kids from their native country. So again, everything, kind of, is a double-edged sword. It's really hard. [This distinction is] fine [in the] classroom. Dorms—it's such a tough line. And it's something I feel bad about, because technically, those rules are common space, common language. So, if they are in any common space, they're supposed to be speaking English. So, if they're playing sports, if they're sitting in the lounge, hanging in the cafeteria, they're supposed to be speaking English. On a Friday night when all you and your buddies from China, or Korea, or Japan are sitting around, and you just want to speak in Chinese together. But I am still supposed to go over there and remind you to speak in English. And it does feel very adversarial. But the reason we do that is, so the kids don't… you don't know if they're speaking in their language because they're trying to feel, like, homey, or if they're trying to talk about you without you knowing. [It's] also to make sure that [other] kids who don't speak their language, who might be in that area, don't feel left out, because they can't engage in a conversation. So, I don't know if there's a better way. Like, I think it, kind of, has to be, "common space, common language". It sucks, because you want them to feel like they can be at home, even when they're not in their dorm room by themselves.

Instead of trying to challenge the "common space, common language" rule, Ms. Walsh perpetuated the problem. Furthermore, she was not the only faculty member who took this stance. There are many times that I saw adults walk over to a group of kids and remind them that they were in the hallway or passively ask, "So, what are you guys talking about," just to have the

group members look away, stop talking, or disperse. Unfortunately, this rule is likely very common at boarding schools as the same rule was present at my high school. In a moment when students are trying to build a stronger sense of community and connect with their home culture by simply speaking in their native language, we can see the pressure of the institution breaking down this bond for the sake of mono-lingual, specifically English, comfort. While teachers are aware that this a "tricky" rule, they allow the school to overtly microagress and alienate students whose first language is not English. The term "common space, common language" is supposed to evoke a sense of community and unity, but it is very divisive and clearly tells students that parts of themselves are – arguably one of the most important parts, is not welcome. Faculty need to understand that neutrality, or the guise of neutrality, allowed inequity to flourish in schools (Hess & McAvoy, 2015).

This notion of white comfort was prevalent in other areas of teacher-students engagement. One of the most interesting components of interviewing the faculty was the fact that all of them thought that their students got along really well. Additionally, there was this overarching narrative that faculty enforce and oversee that students learn how to speak to each other. There was also this common understanding that students were more willing to speak with one another openly as they became older. Mr. Dylan shared an interaction that happened in one of his classes, he recalled:

> **Mr. Dylan:** There's a lot more trepidation with younger kids when you talk about things like race and sexuality than with seniors-- but we got into the question of race, and I'm trying to think. Oh, I remember. It was about the 'n-word.' And a white student brought up what I think is a fair question if you're 15, which is why do Black people use this word with each other, but it's very offensive if someone outside-- they're like what's that about?

> And I think the kids generally handled it well, but there were definitely some who had– they were locked and loaded. The way she framed it, they looked for the part that could have been offensive. You know what I'm saying? And it was the only time I've ever really intervened in a discussion like that. Where I'm like you guys need to change your tone right now, because that was a question asked in honesty, and you guys are making it a fight.
>
> **DH:** It shouldn't have been perceived as an attack?
>
> **Mr. Dylan:** Right, exactly. I'm trying to see how I can phrase this-- we are accepting to the point where we're not accepting of non-acceptance, if that makes sense. So, if there was a student, I think there were a couple, who overtly supported, say, Donald Trump, that person would have some social repercussions for that, because the assumption would be, well you're racist, and your xenophobic, and you're all these other things. And right, wrong, or indifferent, that's how that person would have been perceived, right? So, we could have a student who is from Neptune, and we'd be like, great, that's awesome, but if somebody, especially an American student, had associated him or herself with anything that's intolerant, or not accepting, there wouldn't have been, I don't think, an effort to really engage. You know what I mean? There wouldn't be like, why do you feel that way? Why do you support somebody who feels this way? It would have been like no, you're wrong, and you're an idiot…

In this classroom conversation, Mr. Dylan is more concerned that the "honest" white peers will feel attacked by the tone and direct rebuttal that the Black student offers. He is choosing to ignore the historical, and violent past as well as the generational pain that the "n-word" has inflicted on Black folks. I hoped that my questioning would cause him to think about the

symbolic violence that he allowed to infiltrate his classroom, but he missed my inquisitive inflection. This interaction shows that the faculty were aware of the ways that racism can flourish at Globalville and were only prepared to respond to overt instances of racism versus moments that were interpreted as "curiosity" or "learning." Furthermore, they were less aware of the fact that they needed to be aware of the subtle compounding instances of racism that were at play. Behind the answer of "the students get along pretty well," there seemed to be this missing ending of the sentence that should have added "in front of us." Ms. Walsh and Ms. Murphy were the only faculty members that alluded to the fact that the school cannot control or monitor student's social media accounts, so they were sure that there could be some problematic encounters there. While students may follow groups on social media platforms that did not "reflect the Globalville way," peers could clearly signal to one another what their beliefs are. Unfortunately, these engagements were out of their purview.

Globalville did not have a school-sanctioned club or group that catered to the needs of students of color. When looking at the class schedule and the list of school clubs, they were both robust and very long; however, there was only one club that gestured towards "diversity" – The World Cultures Club. At first glance this seems very welcoming, interesting and cool. Unfortunately, it serves as a space for students to go and learn about others, but not as a space for students of color to turn to for validation, affirmation, and allyship. The students would gather to learn about food, festivals, fun (Banks, 2014; Sleeter & Grant, 1987) and it was obvious that they were enjoying communal down time, but the space was predominantly white. This is not surprising as the students who participated in this research corroborated, they did not feel it was the space that they needed. Most times, I would find groups of students of color in the students' center hanging out, their dorm rooms, or the door room lounge (located on the floor vs near the

main entrance). Ms. Walsh also confirmed that some of the girls would often be in the dorm lounge doing each other's hair and bonding in those regards. Furthermore, in each faculty interview I was told that "students do a great job supporting each other." This quasi-mentorship and these counter-spaces that students form and carve out are important, but I would argue that it would have been equally influential for there to be a school appointed liaison who could advocate on behalf of the needs of students administratively. Carter (2007) has posited that "identity-affirming counter-spaces", distinguished by same-race peer groups, afford opportunities to discuss racist interactions in an environment that validates and affirms their experience (Tatum, 2003). Missing an affinity group space for students of color shows that the school has not put enough thought into making Globalville a welcoming space for students of color. Students are expected to tolerate experiences that impact their understanding of self without support from the institution, thus alienation persists. Faculty and students may be nice, but that is not enough to remedy all of the difficult nuances of EBSs, especially when faculty of color are also missing at the school.

"There is Not Time to 'Smell the Roses,' if you do, You'll Have Missed Something Here": Grappling with Students Changes on Campus

Taking a moment to slow down was a rare occurrence at Globalville, so it was interesting to see how faculty debriefed and made sense of their daily interactions with students. During our conversations it was clear that the reliance on what was perceived to be going well overshadowed understanding or investigation processes that would serve the needs of marginalized students. Research has shown that teachers "good intentions," "niceness," facilitates the perpetuation of centering whiteness in the and inequity within school spaces

(Castagno, 2014; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Milner, 2006). When asked how students' identities changed during their time at Globalville, faculty members shared the following. Mr. Dylan said,

> I think that they've become much less monotone in their perception of themselves. They come in with a sense of what they want to be. They want to be the athlete, they want to be the scholar, they want to be a musician, they want the actor, they want the class clown, they want to be whatever. And I think they grow and try different things. And I think they stop seeing themselves as that one thing. And again, to contrast it with my experience in high school, you were that one thing in high school. Pretty early, you committed to what you were going to be. And freshman year, if you played three sports, you probably weren't in band, probably didn't do any plays. You were an athlete. And that's who all your friends were, et cetera, whereas here, not only do kids try different things, but they also try different things at unusual points in their career. [They are] not going to look at something and say, well, I'm not one of these people, so I'm not doing that, whether that's a career path… I'm not smart enough to be x, so why even try? Or maybe it's a social group, or maybe it's an activity, I hope he'll have that fearlessness. I think they find a strength within themselves that they didn't know they had. When your parents-- and you're a parent, and I'm a parent-- we try not to baby our kids. But it's hard when you're a mom or you're a dad-- it's hard not to want to just squeeze them to pieces all the time, and nothing is never going to hurt you. And our kids get here, and I think we care about our kids, but we're detached enough that if what needs to happen here is you need to feel a little discomfort, and then work through that, then that's ok.

Mr. Dylan chooses to focus on the way that students expand their understanding of the world. This is also reflected in the responses of students of color who state that they have "grown up." Schools should do this; schools should broaden students' horizons. Ms. Walsh shares,

> So, I teach Judaism. But I also teach Islam. I teach Christianity. I teach Buddhism. I teach all these other things. So, it's been good to show the kids, your teacher believes this one thing, but they can talk intelligently about all these other things. It doesn't mean they agree. It doesn't mean that they believe. But it means they're converting you, but it means that they know… if my teacher can do that, so can I. But we can talk about similarities and differences of how we carry ourselves. Because one of the things [we] have is diversity versus the world is-- you know, Globalville is actually diverse. Right, but then also coming, having backgrounds in which those countries shouldn't be friends, period. Like, forget about what's happening now-- just, like, historically-- like a Japanese and a Korean student should not be buddies. But like, everyone is forced to be friends because you live there. Like, there is literally no escaping them. You see them in class. You see them in sports. It's our school culture, it kind of demands that you are tolerant of everyone. And on the surface level, the kids do a really good job of it. And it's a very welcoming place, regardless of where you're from, and regardless of what you believe. But it is kind of a bizarre anomaly that we are a very gay-friendly school. And for a kid who's questioning, I think we're very open and tolerant to that. [There are] people from very conservative countries, just in general, where things are different. I think on the surface, it's different than how the kids are feeling deep down. I think 99.0% of the time, every student feels welcome, safe, and comfortable. I think the kids do more of it than we give them credit for. I certainly have never had to say, like, you need to be nice to so-and-

> so, because they're X, Y, Z– figure it out. I think part of it is just the kids figure it out naturally. Like, they see, and they get used to people who are from Muslim countries. And they're like, OK, I can now recognize that not every Muslim is a terrorist. Like that just happens.

In their responses, teachers center what they hope students are developing from their time at Globalville instead of centering what students need. However, do not consider students' "racial opportunity costs" (Venzant Chambers, 2011). Yes, students should grow, but they are more positive ways that this growth can happen that focuses on the needs of students. Venzant Chambers and Huggins (2014) examine the way problematic and nuanced ways that high-achieving students of color in white centric educational settings often need to forfeit components of their identity or compromise authenticity when faced with peer relationships, teacher and administrative interactions, school culture and climate, as well as opportunities to discuss racism.[75] Furthermore, they are ignoring what students may need in other areas of their development like compassion, empathy, and attention to sensitive topics such as race, while maintain that they still have great relationships with their students. By dismantling the development of *false empathy,*[76] Warren (2014b) found that teachers can become aware of how systems of "power and privilege" oppress their students, as well as ways in which they might also be perpetuating the problem through their teaching practices. Generally, teachers think that students are fine, but there does not seem to be an instance where faculty directly *asks* students of color if they are ok. Ms. Walsh continues,

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[75] For more information on racial opportunity cost, please see Venzant Chambers et al., 2014; Venzant Chambers & Huggins, 2014; and Venzant Chambers et al., 2015.

[76] According to Rodrigo, one of Delgado's students, *false empathy* occurs when, "whites believe he or she is identifying with a person of color, but in fact is doing so only in a slight, superficial way" (as cited in Warren & Hotchkins, 2015, p. 6), thus still promoting white dominance even though their actions seem to suggest otherwise.

> So that was one of the things my first year. And that was, like, I was hit over the head with all sorts of instances coming up with Black students or Asian students [doing] stupid little things. Like, someone yelled at them from a car. Someone with a mask came out and, like, did a bogeyman dance around some kid. On the one hand, you're like, this is stupid and small. But on the other hand, you're like, I couldn't imagine being that kid who's many hundreds, or thousands of miles away from home. Mom and Dad across an ocean. And I'm stuck in this little racist hick town. And as an upper middle-class white person, I don't know what the right thing to say is. And I don't know what exactly to do. And there really is no good training… how do you support students-- who don't match the cultural makeup of this town-- when something happens to them that would never happen to me. I would never have to deal with that.

Continuing this sentiment, Mr. Dylan said, "I think that's really pushing me as a teacher, because I realized that I teach things with some underlying assumptions. It's made me more aware of my own prejudices and biases. And everything like that." Here Mr. Dylan discusses the ways that students have encouraged him to change, but he does not discuss ways that this change impacts his curricular or pedagogical choices. In this instance, we are provided with a glimpse into how non-dominant students influence ideological shifts within teachers. As a part of the academic freedom that EBSs afford, faculty should be committed to transferring this "growth" from the interpersonal realm into the academic/intellectual realm (i.e., classroom structure, curriculum choices). This is profound as it strengthens the perspective that students should be seen leaders in deciding how EBS infrastructure can and should change.

"I Wish I Could Understand What Our Students of Color are Experiencing": Faculties' Reflection on Diversity, Diversifying the Curriculum, and Institutional Shifts.

Even though the faculty members all reported loving their jobs, the students, and the autonomy that working at Globalville affords, they all reported wanting stronger mental health support (for themselves and students alike), more time, fewer responsibilities, the ability to shift some of the rules of the school, and more faculty of color. I can attest, Globalville was a quick-paced campus. The days were very long, the nights seemed fleeting and almost non-existent. Four of the six faculty members that I interviewed lived in the dorm and their days seemed never ending. Mr. Dylan articulated this phenomenon when he said "You have to be in teacher mode *all the time*. You can't really have your moments where you act unprofessionally. It's not from 8:00 to 3:30. It's forever. I mean the joke is, if someone asks me, 'when does the school day end?' I say, May. That's when school's over. You're always on otherwise." During the hustle and bustle of daily campus life, I did not often have a chance to sit down with my adult participants to talk about how they felt things were going on a consistent basis, so interviews were a great place to ask them to reflect.

Time is of the essence is the theme that arose when talking to faculty. It seems as though they wished that the schedule afforded them the chance to have more interdisciplinary planning time as well as content area specific planning time with instructors across grade level. Ms. Walsh and Ms. Murphy offer the most insightful response to this inquiry instead of the "I think we do a good job" glaze over. In a follow-up question, I asked them both if they thought the school "did a good job with being aware of and offering courses that reflect the diversity of the students or that shifted focus from traditional paradigms." Ms. Murphy brought the conversation to the issue of needing to hire more staff and course offerings needing to be more robust. She asserts,

> After pre-calc, we only have AP options. But some of the pre-calc[ulous] students aren't AP math students. They're just not motivated in math. It's not their favorite subject. And

> for APs, you have to have a passion for it. You have to be working hard to make it worth your time Or they already have four other AP classes. So, they're not wanting to make math their AP class.

Ms. Murphy's focus interprets the students' needs as need more diverse course offerings. In Ms. Walsh's response, she is resistant to understanding faculty's role in weaving diverse content into the curriculum. She asserts,

> I think, if you asked, people would say, 'yeah, I want to do that, but kind of, like, need to be like, I don't know how you do that.' I don't know how feasible it is to make our curriculum that for years, and years, and years has been fairly traditional, and fairly Euro-centric, particularly in social studies, obviously, math does, like, whatever math wants. But it's hard. And also, just the way we structure our curriculum in terms of giving kids [freedom to select classes] I think people would be all over teaching electives. But we don't have enough kids who have enough free time in their schedule. Kids don't have enough time to take an elective. So even if we did, it's not like they're going to be able to take it. So, I think that's really hard. I think [the] Adulting 101 [course] is a good place to talk about a lot of these things. But one of the many things I've seen about diversity in particular-- is it feel-- it often can quickly feel very forced. So, I think that's really hard. I think Adulting 101 is a good place to talk about a lot of these things. Like, we have these discussions. That we're supposed to [have] this one thing-- and like, boom, boom-- done. Whereas I think it's more genuine when the kids are exploring on their own, and asking questions on their own. I think we create a space where the kids can feel comfortable saying, you know what, 'we're not going to talk about this anymore. Like, please stop. Please don't touch my hair.' All that kind of stuff. I think that if we have a space where

> the kids can do that. And I think we, the school, is like that in a lot of ways. But I am always hesitant about putting it more in the curriculum, because then it just feels forced. And it's hard to engage a kid who doesn't want to engage. And I don't know if it's my job to force them. Like, I force them in some ways. But I don't know if I should force them further.

Ms. Walsh's reflection and jumping train of thought provided an honest glimpse into how Globalville appreciates attending to non-dominant thoughts and illustrates that students should be approached to talking about issues related to race and racism: (1) they do not have time for it, (2) they do not know how to have the conversation or crafts the curriculum, (3) students need to take upon themselves to "explore" topics of diversity versus it being integrated into curriculum as required topic learning, and (4) students of color are responsible for speaking up to injustices. On one hand, she is correct, students of color should feel comfortable directly correcting students who are being racist or making them feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, it shows dominant students and students of color that engaging with them socially and intellectually (as a part of the main course offering) is optional. That students can elect when, how, and where to acknowledge students of color experience (at Globalville or larger society currently or historically) or people of color's expertise and contributions to any of the content areas. Furthermore, Ms. Walsh's hesitation illuminates a lack of knowledge around conducting these conversations and interactions in a harmless and informed way. How can a teacher who does not understand the nuances of being a person of color conduct conversations in ways that do not perpetuate racism when they are unaware of how they themselves are not aware of all of the ways they may perpetuate microaggressions? Where does that leave students of color to turn when there are not any faculty of color who are better positioned to direct these necessary conversations? This does

not mean that students of color should be excluded from directly combating racism, but if you do not have infrastructure to handle ruptures what is the best way to handle racism? Freire describes ruptures or cracks as moments awakening or tension that clarify a person's perception of reality and allow them to see that there are inequalities with their society (Freire, 2009). Globalville allows most of the responsibility to fall on the students.

The pressure to maintain rule consistency and move the school year seamlessly also seemed to weigh on the faculty. There seems to be an omnipresent need to answer the responsibilities that the school was expecting of teachers when it came to enforcing expectations in the classroom. Ms. Walsh discusses how hard it is to meet the needs of students, differentiating content to students with the parameters that they are given. She asserts:

> We're touting an American education. And so, by that standard, you shouldn't need to differentiate as much as I think we do with the amount of kids that we have with varied English abilities. And it's not just our international students. We have kids coming in from the inner city, who have some English fluency issues, who have never written a paper, who can't put together a sentence. They write the way they speak. And sometimes that's not grammatically correct. And that's our inner-city kids. That's our rural kids. That's everybody. I think we need to do more scaffolding to bring the kids up, so that they are where they're supposed to be. They're at Globalville because they're motivated, intelligent students. I think some teachers fear that by doing that, we're lowering our standards, and we're going to spend all of our time, kind of, remediating where we don't want to. But I think we have strong enough kids. And our admissions Department does an amazing job getting really cool, interesting, motivated kids. I think [if we] just a little bit more differentiation and scaffolding that might help you stop fighting with this junior

> who still can't write a paper well. Because it might be that junior's fault. But likelihood is that it's not that junior's fault. They don't know any better.

Here Ms. Walsh is discussing the need to slow down and support students in areas that they have difficulty in. She specifically points out that two groups of students who have a harder time with writing and the two populations would represent that students are coming from lower-income communities. Moreover, she is showing that their writing abilities are not as strong as they need to be, but there is push back from other faculty and the administration about providing writing support. Furthermore, all of the teachers that would extend understanding to student's whose first language was not English as they understand and sympathize with the fact that it would be very hard to take a class or complete an assignment in a second or third language. However, they knew that they were "not supposed" to do that.

The faculty seems to be processing a lot of structural inconsistencies, but they did not really have a chance or place to discuss and resolve the issues. Ms. Gallagher mentioned that she was often also concerned about the mental health needs of the faculty. While she knew that the students definitely needed support, she was dumbfounded by the fact that teachers were supposed to be like "energizer bunnies". Moreover, she was concerned that students would not see teachers modeling how they took care of themselves and that this could mirror that it was healthy for students to continue to push themselves. Specifically, in regard to students Ms. Murphy informed me that the school did not have a guidance counselor and it was often hard for students to get the professional help that they needed because it was difficult to find time to go to session and insurance coverage (depending on the coverage that they had) often prohibited students from the help that they needed. While it could be assumed that teachers at EBS have a job that is relatively easy in comparison to teachers at more traditional schools as federal and

state oversight are not present, this research shows that there are still many components that are difficult or troubling for faculty. Ms. Walsh offers some great insight into why she chose to teach at Globalville. She shared,

> It's a trade-off, but also, I think people are always like, oh, private school… Those kids are all rich, snobby, blah, blah, blah. You should be ashamed, because you're not serving public school kids. And in some respects, I think that's fair. But I also think that you find very quickly that kids, regardless of their socioeconomic status, need love, support, and care. And you know, cancer doesn't depend on how wealthy you are, or you know, divorce, or whatever. So, I think I don't feel guilty like I used to. I like that I have worked at a private school, and that I'll continue to work in private schools, because those kids need it too.

Her sentiments capture why I set out on this research path and why I am interested in taking a closer look at the educational experiences of students of color in EBS settings. Developing a deeper understanding of the way that faculty view their roles and impact on students of color's experience provides depth to the accounts that they shared. While faculty are trying, it becomes clear that they do not know how to combat or flatten the historical undergirding of the institution to completely mold to the new demographic of students that Globalville attracts.

Discussion

Hearing faculty discuss all of their intentions and care for the students was very insightful, but it did not translate to students of color getting the support that they really needed. The findings shows that teachers are not directly responding to the needs of students color because: (1) they are not aware of the magnitude of problems that students of color have, (2) students of color do not tell them about their issues, (3) they have not had professional

development or training about ways to diversify curriculum, and (4) they feel ill-equipped to tackle issue of racism directly themselves. This study finds that it is clear that comfort– teacher comfort, maintaining white-prestigious comfort– is the theme that undergirds teacher-student engagement as well as the expression of teacher autonomy.

Faculty were aware of the presumed reputation of the school but were unwilling to examine if they could actively change the ways that the school environment impacted its students. They conflated their want for complex, rich student relationships and "academic freedom" with ignoring the privilege and promotion of dominant ideologies that were functioning within the school's climate. Faculty prioritized wanting to leave oversight and surveillance behind, through breaking away from the limiting environment of public schools. However, in doing so they assumed that the Globalville's school climate was adequate for their diverse student population. To resolve racial tensions with peers and compensate for the overwhelmingly homogeneous curriculum, Globalville faculty relied on the religious, ethnic, racial, geographic, linguistic, and socio-economic mix of the student body to flatten ruptures and fill curricular holes (as it is presumed that students can learn from each other). This belief harkens back to Bonilla-Silva's notion of "Racism without Racists" (2009), which explains the phenomenon that the presence of diversity mediates the need to focus on difference, distinctions, and the existence of racism.

It was clear that time was not on the faculty members' side. Creating new syllabi and interdisciplinary planning are almost insurmountable when up against the constantly moving atmosphere of boarding school and the need to unwind during the summer months. If you are not in charge of an elective, when are you supposed to redirect or change the content that has been used traditionally for years or that has been selected by school administrators? Faculty relied on

what they (teachers and administration alike) thought would be the most beneficial for students and neglected to examine what students needed to become the global citizens of tomorrow– an ideal that they were promising. The struggle between tradition(s) and things that are traditional illuminates a fine line at EBSs. Do you keep a component that ties students together for decades (at my high school it was learning, memorizing, and reciting the first 18 lines of *The Canterbury Tales* in Old English)? Or do you change it and break from an activity that connects generations of alumni? Is the tradition worth it? Can it simply be revamped to something new, innovative, and relevant and still ties students together?

The data in this study show that combating racism and biases in curriculum as well as interpersonally was a difficult paradigm for faculty to navigate. Ms. Sullivan asked if she should "push the students further" when it comes to having discussions around race. It was astute for her to acknowledge that she was not an expert in the area and hinted that it may do more harm than good to make students of color talk about race in a white-centric environment. While this is very insightful, it negates that talking to students about race as well as any other issues of social justice is her job– this sentiment can be extended to all of the students in this research. Albeit students of color need to learn how to navigate educational environments that center and bolster whiteness. In return, white teachers should learn how to remedy these ruptures and how to implement paradigm shifts in real time. This dynamic is not surprising as research has shown that schools tend to center whiteness (Delpit, 1995/2006; Sleeter, 2017) and, as Ms. Walsh pointed out, that textbooks honor Eurocentric ideologies (Calderón, 2014; Delpit, 1995/2006). With so much curricular and pedagogical autonomy being offered at EBSs, faculty should see themselves as activists. Picower (2012) posits two key components to teachers developing this identity and being committed to being change agents. She outlines that:

> 1) isolated teachers acting alone cannot put sufficient pressure on systems to create change and 2) the process of how change is brought about is equally important to the product, therefore change best happens in a democratic way, in which all stakeholders—including parents, students, and community members—have a voice in the outcome (p. 9).

Faculty at EBSs need to view themselves as change agents in the realm of social justice, just not in the process of creating "the best of the best" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a) … things can always get better.

Conclusion

When looking at the accounts that faculty at Globalville shared, one can see that their concerns, compassion, and challenges are about the same as any other teacher. On a daily basis they are responsible for ensuring that students are physically safe and well taken care of. Additionally, they need to plan all of the leisure events, so that students can have some fun on the weekends such as dances, trips to the mall, or local restaurants. Here we find that autonomy is almost synonymous with freedom, but this perk is only really extended to faculty in regard to course selection, rule enforcement, and relationship building. Students are not afforded learning autonomy to the extent that teachers assume they have been granted. For students this autonomy only trickles down to gently asking questions (curiosity in line with being inquiry-based and exploration of the world as opposed to questioning the world), building relationships with peers and teachers that they may have avoided at home, and sharing options only in instances when they can assure everyone else's comfort.

At an educational institution where resources and faculty expertise are in abundance, we are seeing that the needs of students of color are still not being completely met. The classroom

structure at Globalville may have been more lax as the hierarchy between faculty and staff was more even and students were expected to ask questions, but the parameter of the dialogue was rigid and lacked a social justice orientation. Furthermore, faculty relied heavily on maintaining sentiments of "tolerance" when it benefits whiteness (e.g., diversity is nice, we have in-depth conversations, learning a language is great) and was disciplined in moments when it did not (e.g., we don't talk about race, only English in all common areas). In applying a CRT lens, it is clear to see that there are moments of interest convergence and liberalism operationalizing here– perpetuating race and language biases. Even though teachers may have advanced degrees they need to be informed about current applications of social justice, and multicultural education paradigms being used practically. Research shows that having an expansive curriculum is beneficial for students from all backgrounds, not just students of color (Sleeter & Grant, 1987; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014).

My dissertation research illustrates that faculty at EBS need to have teacher activist mindsets, curriculum development support, and professional development around ways to expand the curriculum in all content areas (not just history). Additionally, they need administrative buy-in and family buy-in as well to change the ethos of what students are expected to learn. More specifically, students of color need to be asked directly what they need and have a space (affinity group or club) or forum to share their insights. These insights must then be considered and acted upon by the institution. EBSs are definitely different from public schools. However, some of the "blind spots" that the schools possess are synonymous.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Implications

This summer I plan to prepare for boarding school. I plan to study Spanish and Latin, to get good grades, to expand my vocabulary, and increase my education. The extra-curricular activities I'm interested in are basketball, baseball, and horseback riding. After high school I want to go to college and medical school, and when I grow up, I want to become an obstetrician. I would like to contribute to my community by helping babies to come into the world safely.

The Storefront has helped me realize these goals. I am confident because I truly think that I will achieve them, and I will become what I want to become. It will be hard to leave, but I know that I have to move on with my life. I have matured and gotten much smarter, but I am still the happy-go-lucky update girl. I wish to all students that they continue to work to make The Storefront a much better place.

— *Diamond Howell (Howell, 2004)*

Harlem
What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

— *Langston Hughes (Hansberry, 1994)*

Introduction

Examining the educational experiences of students of color illustrates the strength, resistance, and strategies that they operationalize to pursue their dreams within the paradigm of Elite Boarding School institutions. A case study may seem singular, but the perspective and insight gained are expansive. Furthermore, utilizing counterstorytelling affords direct insight into how EBS should change through dismantling the grasp of privilege, whiteness, and dominant perspectives in these institutions. This dissertation research pushes back against narratives that solely and wholly paint/present students' experiences as negative, for the purpose of developing privileged identities, and centers the ways that schools “work” on students. If the environment is only defined as subtractive (Valenzuela, 2010), students of color and their families would be framed as ridiculous or disengaged in their intentional quest for better educational opportunities. Breaking this deficit model affords deeper understanding, examination, and analysis to point to remedies for these century old institutions and their changing demographics.

The central questions of this dissertation uncover so much information about the function of EBSs for students of color in addition to how faculty can be active in meeting the needs of their students. These revelations were arrived at through the following questions: 1) What are the experiences of students of color at Elite Boarding Schools? How are these institutions preparing them to persevere amidst adversity? 2) How are teachers responding to the needs of their non-dominant students in an educational environment that provides autonomy? What does autonomy look like in an EBS setting? In Chapter 4, “Carving Their Way: Students of Color's Community of Cultural Wealth at Work in an EBS” I illustrated the skills, resources and knowledge that students of color at EBS drew upon to resist the dominant regimes of EBS life. In detailing their Community of Cultural Wealth, students are in charge of reshaping how they journey through

these private (and usually unquestioned) institutions. In chapter 6, “Faculty Autonomy, Student Engagement, and Dismissed Diversity at EBSs”, I argued that faculty need to understand that drawing on the experiences and knowledge of students of color will make curriculum, pedagogy and classroom practice richer and fill in holes of what students *actually* need instead of centering institutionally directed assumptions about what students need.

I conclude this dissertation with a quote from 8th grade Diamond Howell– me, and Langston Hughes because our words reflect sentiments that Kendall, Henry, Drew, and Theresa really wanted me to understand– they had dreams. Growing up in Harlem, an epicenter where Black folks worked to craft new definitions and possibilities for themselves and their families… it was hard to not have some of this magic rub off on me as a child. I dreamt big too. Too many dreams of children, families and communities of color are stunted, colonized, or destroyed by the ways that white supremacy has dictated the categorization of “worthiness” for communities of color for centuries. Critiquing the terrain of boarding schools is just one of the axes necessary in the fight to dismantle asymmetrical power relations, social reproduction, and the perpetuation of liberal ideals. The implications presented in this study cover three important areas to consider moving forward: theory, policy, and practice.

Theoretical Implications

School Climate, Curriculum, and Pedagogy Through the Lens of Counterstories

Globalville students of color were adamant about sharing the way that their backgrounds, families, and experiences prepared them for Elite Boarding School life. I argue that students' counterstories are rich with data about how, where (in what areas), and why boarding school settings need to change curriculum, pedagogy, and structure. Through listening to and honoring the voices and expertise of students who are marginalized in society and then doubly

marginalized in an educational setting that should solely afford growth and trust, students of color at these institutions are facilitators of sharing intricate details on how students can become agents of change. Their stories also challenge faculty to view themselves as activists -best intentions are not enough. Using counterstorytelling methodologies to highlight and examine more of Elite Boarding School students of color experiences dismantles dominant frameworks that perpetuate and center what students "need to develop" (i.e., cultural capital) versus what resources students do have (Community Cultural Wealth). Additionally, this angle of approach will help to truncate teacher-students' relationships that are one sided and microaggressive for students. Furthermore, this situates students of color and their families as a part of the long historical tradition of communities of color who fight for educational equity and access; thus, silencing sentiments that paints families of color as culturally deprived or disconnected from school. The fact is that communities of color have historically, and intentionally invested in themselves through centering education (and questioned/critiqued the function of schooling) as a keystone in the fight for social justice, activism, and liberation (Anderson, 1988; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Du Bois, 1935; Fine et al., 2004; Grande, 2015; Peck, 2001; Watkins, 2001; Woodson, 2006).

Decentering Whiteness in Teacher Education Programs and Beyond

In chapter 5, I showed that teachers are not sure how, when and why they could expand their curricular choices. Furthermore, they were not aware of preconceived notions that perpetuated microaggressions and centered whiteness. Several scholars detail the importance of having teacher education programs where pre-service teachers (Gomez, 1993, 1996; Gomez et al., 2014; Grant, 1994; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2001) and practicing educators (Banks et al., 2005; Wager, 2014) can begin to craft practices that humanize students and shed

remanences of traditional and Eurocentric paradigms and beliefs (e.g. Carter Andrews et al., 2019; Hassett & Schieble, 2007; Sleeter, 2017). This fight needs to continue. Moreover, faculty in this study shared they have advanced degrees, so I assert that it is important to increase the disciplines that adopt socially just and anti-oppressive paradigms (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Advanced degree programs (Cupples & Grosfoguel, 2019), undergraduate programs and K-12 educational institutions need to shift whose knowledge and information they have deemed to be important (Closson, 2010; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). CRT demands that we have interdisciplinary action to uproot the thinking present in racist and liberal ideologies (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Moreover, the fight to dismantle racism and racist practices an interdisciplinarily (across departments) lens of analysis needs to be used (Picower, 2021), therefore the work is not only in responsibility of Teacher Education programs.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Intersecting Harkness Teaching Method with Social Justice

It is obvious and expected that classroom spaces at EBS align themselves with "Executive Elite" (Anyon, 1981) practices which are forward thinking, open-ended, and student-directed projects, thus affording students with practice in accessing higher echelons. However, with such flexibility and autonomy, the hidden curriculum (Apple, 2006; Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 2002) is still creating boundaries and expectations surrounding "what is allowed to enter the sphere of dialogue and critique" versus what is to be excluded because it will cause discomfort. For example, when a Black student stated the use of the "n-word" is problematic and Mr. Mr. Dylan subsequently disrupted the learning process because the particular Black students' sentiments were "too strong". Thus, he perpetuated notions of liberalism that circumvent the problem-posing process (Freire, 2009) that is necessary in a true socially just critical practice for

students to become critically conscious. Socratic and dialogic processes that function in a way that centers whiteness and white comfort perpetuates the cycle of racism and notions of liberalism– CRT asserts that we need to be active members in uprooting these practices.

Mentor-Mentee Alumni Program

In my research, it was very clear that the older students of color were invested in trying to help younger students of color navigate Globalville life. On one hand, this support is integral to students (further) developing and maintaining familial, resistant, navigational, social, and linguistic capital while they are in an environment that is not home. On the other hand, adolescents should not be tasked with this additional free labor. Furthermore, it would be beneficial for them to gain insight into how to navigate life post-graduation. Recruiting alumni of color to mentor current students will afford students with a chance to ask questions, build stronger understandings of their experiences in real time, and most importantly, afford a space for students to discuss their experiences (Datnow & Cooper, 1997; Lee, 2009; Yosso & Lopez, 2010). Moreover, if the school does not have formal affinity group spaces or faculty of color to help mitigate, validate, and educate the institution on how students are faring, alumni can be a great bridge for this gap. In making this suggestion, I firmly believe that boarding school institutions should also incentivize these programs and create avenues to facilitate this bond (school swag, funds to plan events, create a position to run this position through the alumni office) as a means to reciprocate alumni of color for their time, efforts, and insight.

Future Research Endeavors

Y-PAR Research and "Survival Guide" Creation

In this YPAR study, students would work together as well as across EBS to write and illustrate a children's book or young adult novel about transitioning to EBS settings as well as

how to navigate the institution in a way that is most beneficial to them. The book(s) could also provide insight for families about the best ways to navigate the financial aid or discussing/pursuing discrimination practices at the school. In this process, students (and their caregivers if possible) will become researchers and work towards finding solutions for institutional and community improvements. The YPAR research will provide insight for prospective students and families about the unique experience of attending an elite boarding school. These investigations will afford students with an opportunity to create a list of demands that will serve as a blueprint for actions that EBSs can implement.

Analysis of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practice

In the wake of George Floyd's murder, EBS Black students took to Instagram as a part of #black@(insertnameofEBS). Each school's page lamented story upon story of discrimination, alienation, racism and detailed how faculty and administration would often exacerbate, take part, or ignore student reports altogether. Many schools have "committed" to hiring Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officers or officials. Some schools may have already had programs or offices that acted in this capacity. Follow up should be conducted to ensure that: 1) These offices know how to analyze school settings appropriately and 2) EBSs are not stifling their efforts (i.e., solely having these departments to perpetuate ideals of cultural tolerance versus striving for critical institutional change. Moreover, investigating these structures will show how schools are successfully hiring more diverse school staff and implementing initiatives. As a part of this process, faculty can be surveyed and focus groups can be held to gauge how comfortable they are with changing the curriculum.

Concluding Thoughts

Various scholars have stated that “studying up” is typically not the aim of researchers (Nader, 19), thus inhibiting the perpetuation of asymmetrical power relations. Howard and Gaztambide-Fernández (2010) posits, “seldom have educational researchers considered class privilege and educational advantage in their attempts to understand inequality and foment social justice through education” (p 2). In this dissertation, I “studied up.” I am often left asking, did students not talk about more serious instances of racism, sexism, classism, or other forms of marginalization and oppression because they knew I could not do anything to solve it? This sentiment extends to not having in-depth conversations about why curriculum or teacher interactions were not more vast and versatile. Globalville and institutions like it, do not provide space to honestly hear and see students in ways that are instrumental and operationally recognized versus simply as a performative practice. Or is it because these conversations happen so often with little change, so students just figure that they should not waste their breath, energy, and time worrying about things that they know they can not immediately change? Or lastly, is it somehow an amalgam of all of these concerns and it's become a component of our lived experiences in institutions of education, specifically, so why bother asking in general? Apple (2013) reminds us that marginalized people are often in situations that are too risky to speak up. Therefore, my research participants chose to focus on their (super)powers.

As a scholar, it is important to me that this dissertation be read and understood by those inside and outside of the academy. There are many audiences that I hope will read this work. I would like to make my stance clear; this study is not meant to romanticize the idea or ideal of leaving home for educational opportunities. Yes, attending an EBS is a privilege filled with privilege, but it represents more than that. This dissertation research is intended to humanize the realities and journeys of students of color who are invested in making lives for themselves–

when faced with current societal structures versus the "freedom dream(t)" society we strive for. I end this dissertation with mini memos to teachers, policymakers, education stakeholders and families of color and EBS alumni:

To white-centered Educational Institutions,

You still do not serve the needs of students well – do better. You have "tried to figure it out" for long enough. Stop being complicit, reproducing, and reinforcing curricular and pedagogical practices that are "e-racing" (personal communication, 12/8/2013) students, families, communities, contributions, and histories of color.

*

To families and students who are choosing to invest in themselves and their children,

Keep making the best choice for you and make sure that you give back to your community.

*

To Elite Boarding School Naysayers,

I understand your perspective, let's talk. What solution do you have that can serve families of color and their future goals right now?

*

To Elite Boarding School Graduates,

Reach back out to your alma mater. Talk to current students. Demand that the schools do better. Mentor current students and give them advice you wish someone had told you when you were a student. Give back to your communities. Sit at the metaphorical table. We always discuss that it is important to look at "who is sitting at the table" and that change will come with the "tables" being no longer predominantly white. As a graduate of an EBS, go forth and pursue

careers in politics, medicine, law, and education (just to name a few). Sit at the table and influence structures to change.

*

To Educational Stakeholders and Policy Makers,

Communities of color are strong, vibrant and they are here to stay. Educational Researchers, Scholars, Practitioners and Community Members have provided implementable guidelines and structures for how to "fix" schools– listen and honestly act upon them. Teachers are professionals, let them teach. Change the way that public schools are funded, so kids have equitable educational opportunities at home.

Sincerely,
Diamond Howell-Shields
Diamond Howell-Shields

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Appendix A. Sweet Sixteen Table

Baltzell's Select-Sixteen Elite Boarding Schools Table (Howard & Gaztambide-Fernández,

School	*Location*	*Founded*
1. Phillips Academy	Andover, Mass.	1778
2. Phillips Exeter Academy	Exeter, N.H.	1783
3. Deerfield Academy	Deerfield, Mass.	1797
4. Episcopal High School	Alexandria, Va.	1839
5. Hill School	Pottstown, Penn.	1851
6. St. Paul's School	Concord, N.H.	1856
7. St. Mark's School	Southborough, Mass.	1865
8. Lawrenceville School	Lawrenceville, N.J.	1883
9. Groton School	Groton, Mass.	1884
10. Woodberry Forest School	Woodberry Forest, Va.	1889
11. Taft School	Watertown, Conn.	1890
12. Hotchkiss School	Lakeville, Conn.	1892
13. Choate School	Wallingford, Conn.	1896
14. St. Georges School	Newport, R.H.	1896
15. Middlesex School	Concord, Mass.	1901
16. Kent School	Kent, Conn.	1906

2010, p. 19), an identical list can also be found in McLachlin (1970) p. 9.

Appendix B. Student Interview Protocol

Interview Questions for First Year Student:

__(Student's Name)__, Thank you so much for coming to speak with me about your experiences at (School's Name). I have prepared a couple of questions and feel free to ask me to repeat or skip any of them. Additionally, throughout the interview, please avoid using the names of other people…instead state their connection to you or descriptions– for example, teacher, friend, coach or caregiver. Ok, let's get started.

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
    - What is your favorite hobby?
    - Where did you grow up?
    - What do you do in your free time?
    - Where do you consider home? Tell me about the people who live there.
2. What type of school did you attend before coming here to (School's Name)?
3. Are any of your middle/junior high school friends going to a school like this? What do (did) they think about you deciding to come here?
    - Have any of their opinions changed?
    - Do you think any of them would want to attend a boarding school as well?
4. Do you know anyone else who has gone to a school like this?
    - What are your family and friends' opinion about you coming to school like this?
5. How did you find out about boarding schools?
6. Why did you decide to come to this school or who helped to encourage you to pick (School's Name) over other schools that you were considering?

7. What are some things you are excited about for this coming year?
    - Class?
    - Projects?
    - Plays?
    - Sporting Events?
    - Dances

8. What are some things you are concerned about for this coming year?
    - Class?
    - Projects?
    - Plays?
    - Sporting Events?
    - Dances?

Non-First Year Student Additional Questions:

9. What classes do you find to be particularly challenging?
    - In what ways are they challenging?
    - How do you navigate or handle these difficulties?
10. What kind of relationships have you been able to build with students, teachers or other school staff during your time here at (School's Name)?
    - What makes them interesting?
    - What do you have in common?
11. Is it harder to connect with some students, teachers, or staff members than others?
    - In what ways is it difficult?
    - Why or why not?
12. Have some of these relationships shifted over time?
    - What do you think caused that change?
    - What have you learned through that process?

Follow-up for first-year students:

1. What has been the most promising aspects about this year?
2. What has been the most difficult part about being away from home?
3. Are there any faculty or staff members who have helped ease your transition to (School's Name)?
    - If *yes*, how have they helped you?
    - What areas do you need help in?
4. How does this differ from other staff or faculty members?
5. What kind of relationships have you been able to build with students, teachers or other school staff?
    - Are there coaches that you connect with?
    - Are some faculty members more approachable than others?
6. Is it harder to connect with some students, teachers, or staff members than others?
    - Why or why not?
7. What advice would you give to your younger self about coming to a school like this?
8. If you could change or improve anything about the school, what would it be?
    - What would make it easier to be a student here?
    - Do you like the types of classes that you can take?
9. Is there anything else that I should have asked or that you would like to add?

Follow-up Questions for non-first year students:

1. What have been some of the most difficult aspects about being away from home?
    - How have you learned to cope with these concerns?
2. What has been the most difficult part of this year?

- How does this compare to other years here at (School Name)?

3. Are there any faculty or staff members who are particularly influential to your time here?
    - How to they help you?
    - How does this differ from other staff or faculty members?
4. What kind of relationships have you been able to build with students, teachers or other school staff?
    - Are there coaches that you connect with?
    - Are some faculty members more approachable than others?
5. Is it harder to connect with some students, teachers, or staff members than others?
    - Why or why not? How so?
6. What advice would you give to your younger self about coming to a school like this?
7. If you could change or improve anything about the school, what would it be?
8. Is there anything else that I should have asked or that you would like to add?

Appendix C. Teacher Interview Protocol

(Name), Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me about your time at (School's Name). I will just ask you a couple of questions and feel free to ask me to repeat or skip any of them at any time. Additionally, throughout the interview, please avoid using the names of other people... instead, state their connection to you or describe them- for example, teacher, friend, coach or caregiver.

1) How long have you worked at (School' Name) and what positions have you held?
    i. What duties were you expected to fulfill as a *(say name of the position)?*
2) *If they have taught at other institutions:*
    i. Why did you decided to leave where you were working to come work at (School's Name)?
3) What are some things that you have enjoyed most about your time here?
4) What are some of the most challenging aspects of working here?
5) What are the various ways that you have been able to build relationships with students?
6) What do you enjoy the most about working with students?
7) What are some of the most complicated aspects of working with students?
8) 6.What would you say are the components of the school that students struggle with the most?
9) In your opinion, what could improve a student’s ability to be successful here at (School's Name)?

10) What is the most influential feature of the "(School's Name's) way"? Prompt: In other words, what foci makes this school unique for the holistic development of students here?
11) What activities or courses would you like to see implemented in order to enhance and continue to push the mission of the school?
12) What ways have you grown during your time here?
13) If you could change or improve anything about the school, what would it be?
14) Is there anything else that I should have asked or that you would like to add?

Appendix D. Staff Interview Protocol

(Name), Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me about your time at_(School's Name)_. I will just ask you a couple of questions and feel free to ask me to repeat or skip any of them at any time. Additionally, throughout the interview, please avoid using the names of other people... instead, state their connection to you or describe them- for example, teacher, friend, coach or caregiver.

1. How long have you worked at (School's Name) and what position have you held?
    - What duties are you expected to fulfill?
2. What type of institution(s) did you work at before coming to (School's Name) and why did you decide to leave those affiliations to work here?
3. What are some things you have enjoyed most about your time here?
4. What are some of the most challenging aspects of working here?
5. What are the various ways that you have been able to build relationships with students?
    - What do you enjoy the most about working with students?
    - What are some of the most complicated aspects of working with students?
6. Besides the expected cold or sinus infection what health concerns do students battle with?
7. I know that you said you have been here for (#) years, but do you have insight into (School's Name)'s students might experience adolescence/ early adulthood differently than traditional high schoolers?

8. How do you feel students across differing ages and from varying socio-economic, ethnic, and religious background cope or don't with the expectation of being a student at (School's Name)?
    - In what ways does the school help students cope with stress?
9. What facets of the school are unique and promote holistic development of the students here?
    - What activities or course would you like to see implemented in order to enhance and continue to push the mission of the school?
10. In what ways have you seen students develop and change during their time here?
11. In what ways does (School's Name) provide a safe environments for students to explore and understand their gender identity and sexuality?
12. If you could change or improve anything about the school, what would it be?
13. Is there anything else that I should have asked or that you would like to add?