

COLLEGE CHOICE PRIORITIES BETWEEN FOREIGN-BORN AND US-BORN

BLACK STUDENTS

By

Sarah Okorie

Submitted to

Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

of American University

in Partial Fulfillment of

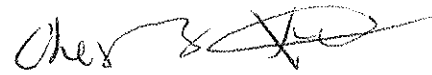
the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

In

Sociology

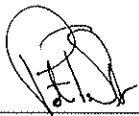
Chair:



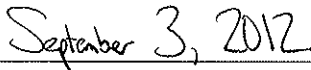
Chenyang Xiao, Ph.D.



Natalia Ruiz-Junco, Ph. D



Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences



Date

2012

American University

Washington, D.C. 20016

© COPYRIGHT

By

Sarah Okorie

2012

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

COLLEGE CHOICE PRIORITIES BETWEEN FOREIGN-BORN AND US-BORN BLACK STUDENTS

By

Sarah Okorie

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the differences in college choice priorities between foreign-born and US-born Black students in order to explain the large presence of Black immigrants in the Black population at top universities relative to their proportion in the nation's Black college-age population. Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory and Bourdieu's cultural capital concept guided this research in that foreign-born students were expected to seek aspects of colleges that would enhance their cultural capital, such as college rankings, while US-born students were expected to choose colleges based on more practical aspects of colleges, such as low tuition, because of these groups' different historical contexts in America. However, there was no supporting evidence for our main hypotheses. Instead, mother's education, number of college applications, and income were found related to college choice. Such findings suggest that for college choice immigrant status is not important. Further research may switch focus to college admission officers' decisions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any body of knowledge is a result of a community effort. For this reason, I would like to take the opportunity to thank people who have helped me create this important work that is a testament to *our* love, commitment and dedication. First and foremost, I would like to thank God because through Him all things are possible. I want to praise my family for always being there for me and helping me through this process. I also want to thank my committee for taking the time to work with me on my ideas and helping me sharpen my delivery. Professor Xiao, thank you so much for truly caring and sharing your knowledge base. Professor Ruiz-Junco, I appreciate you for believing in me and imparting your expertise. Along with my committee members, I would like to thank Professor Dickerson for the dedication in helping me apply to the next level in my academic career while I completed my thesis and masters degree.

A special thanks to my department for supporting me through my time at American University. I developed real professional relationships with faculty and students that I will forever cherish. I would also like to thank the Center for Health, Risk and Society for providing an assistantship for me, giving me the opportunity to partake in scholarly research activities and helping me hone my research skills. Last but not least, I thank the sociological discipline for the literature created on a daily basis that helps each and every one of us in our scholarly journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
Chapter	
1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
3: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	6
4: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES.....	11
5: METHODOLOGY.....	12
Data and Sample.....	12
Measurement.....	12
6: RESULTS.....	15
7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	20
REFERENCES.....	27

LIST OF TABLES

1: Demographics of Sample.....	13
2: Cross-Tabulations of Differences in Fixed and Cultural Capital Index Items by Immigrant Status.....	15
3: Model 1: OLS Regression for Immigrant Status and Cultural Capital Index.....	17
4: Model 2: OLS Regression for Immigrant Status and Fixed Characteristics Index.....	18

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Prior research has shown that US-born Black students are underrepresented in the Black college student population compared to foreign-born Black students, especially at the most prestigious universities, despite performing similarly in college (Charles et al., 2007; Bennett and Lutz, 2009). Though foreign-born Black students make up only 13% of the Black college-age population, they constitute 27% of Black students in top-tier universities. The purpose of this research is to investigate the extent to which foreign-born Blacks and US-born Blacks differ in their reasons for choosing a college.

Charles and colleagues (2007) investigated differences between foreign-born Black and US-born Black students in their background, including grade-point average, standardized testing scores, and parents' education. Researching the factors that could potentially impact performance and ultimately college acceptances, they found very few differences between these groups. While the background of these students can impact what they achieve and how they are perceived by college admissions officers, what makes foreign-born Black students be highly represented in top-tier universities may be a result what propels them to apply to certain schools.

In a cultural-ecological theory, Ogbu (1998) proposed that foreign-born Blacks and natives differ within schooling based upon their history in this country. He asserts that being “voluntary minorities”, foreign-born Blacks are more likely to have a “positive frame of reference”, expecting to be treated well by White Americans by following the steps necessary to attain success in this country. On the other hand, being “involuntary minorities”, US-born Blacks are more likely to have a “negative frame of reference”, expecting to be held down regardless of success. It is important to

note that foreign-born Blacks may not necessarily be in this country voluntarily especially in a child's case in which the decision to be here is not their own. However, the terminology is being used to refer to coming to this country by will or by a parent's will without the historical background of the institution of American slavery. A potential difference between these groups lies in Bourdieu's (1977: 487) cultural capital concept, defined as "instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed". A combination of these two theorist's assertions suggests that cultural capital will be more readily developed by foreign-born Black students because of a positive frame of reference in this country and a strong acceptance of dominant ways, leading them to be more swayed by the prestige and reputation of schools versus the cost or financial assistance offered.

In order to examine this phenomenon of college choice difference between foreign-born and US-born Black students, this study will utilize The Freshmen Survey 1999 from the Higher Education Research Institute. This study presents an opportunity to further understand racial disparities in the United States, taking into account differences within a racial group as an effect of overall discrimination. This research will delve into the reasons why US-born Blacks may be underrepresented within the Black college population at top universities. Their college choices may show that they are less likely than foreign-born Blacks to apply to top colleges, considering the effects of a long history of racial discrimination in this country which may result in a lesser propensity to develop cultural capital as it is understood within the context of American culture. This study was intended to elucidate possible holds on US-born Blacks in applying to our nation's best schools.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before College

Research concerning the education of Black students overwhelmingly focuses on comparing US-born Black students to their Asian and White counterparts (Steele, 1997; Osborne, 1999; Roscigno, 2000; Murphy, 1986; Johnson 1992; Bankston et. Al, 1996; Crosnoe et. Al, 2003; Cheng et. Al, 2002). Conversely, studies surrounding the occupational and socioeconomic background of foreign-born Blacks largely focuses on explaining the extent of success foreign-born Blacks achieve in America in comparison to US-born Blacks (Obiakor et al 2000; Kalmijn 1996). Little research compares US-born Blacks to foreign-born Black with regard to education. In fact, most literature comparing nonimmigrants and immigrants in education focus on Asians and Latinos/Hispanics, considering they have very large immigrant populations (Hao et al., 1998; Fuligni 1997).

The comparison of foreign-born Blacks and US-born Blacks in education is a growing field of research. Studies suggest that before college, US-born Blacks and foreign-born Blacks have essentially similar backgrounds. Waters asserts that particularly Black immigrants face similar realities in America as African-Americans face. Because they have the same skin color, they cannot escape racial discrimination. Black immigrants are virtually forced by the American system to adjust to the same dire situations many African-Americans live in. (Waters, 2001). Nevertheless, Ogbu (1998) suggests US-born and foreign-born Black students possess different orientations to schooling as a result of their historical contexts in this country. He suggests that US-

born Black students are more likely to view racism as insurmountable despite achievement, whereas foreign-born Black students are more likely to be optimistic about the potential outcomes of hard work and a good education because they are less connected to a history of racial conflict in America.

Entering and Applying to College

Charles and fellow researchers (2007) utilized a large national sample of Black college freshmen focusing on the differences in social characteristics between these groups as they entered college. They found that while foreign-born Black students aged 18 or 19 make up only 13% of the total national Black population in that age range, foreign-born Black students comprise 27% of the Black student population at top-tier universities and about 40% at Ivy League schools. As a result, they expected there also would be differences in academic performance. Yet, among other variables, there were no significant differences in GPAs in the first semester after matriculation between the US-born Black and foreign-born Black college freshmen. (Charles et al., 2007).

While in many respects the US-born Black students and foreign-born Black students did not differ (including in academic performance once enrolled), the results showed a few significant differences between the two groups. Foreign-born Black students were slightly more likely to have a father present in the home, to have a father who holds a college degree as well as an advanced degree, to have attended private school, to have slightly higher grade-point averages, slightly more Advanced Placement courses, and a significant difference in SAT average compared to US-born Black students in high school (1250 to 1193) (Charles et al., 2007). Therefore, this research showed that despite similarities in these groups, there were some indications of greater cultural capital

among foreign-born Black students than US-born ones. Bourdieu suggests that cultural capital is valuable material and symbolic possessions that can translate into greater monetary gain, or economic capital (Bourdieu 1986).

Bennett and Lutz (2009) found that foreign-born Black students were more likely than US-born Black students to utilize African American institutions and means of socioeconomic mobility, including attending HBCUs and selective institutions at a greater proportion. Attending such institutions can provide greater future socioeconomic outcomes (Brewer, Eide, and Ehrenberg, 1999; Constantine, 1995; Solomon and Wachtel, 1975). Thus, Bennett and Lutz' (2009) research suggests that since the college decisions that Black students make may impact their future socioeconomic outcomes, foreign-born Black students may be at an advantage over US- born Black students.

Research suggests that students choose colleges first from aspects of their own background and family and then by external influences, such as the fixed college characteristics like student to faculty ratio and whether the college reached out to them (Chapman, 1981). Other research shows that high-income and high-aptitude students are less deterred by less financial aid at a school of choice (Avery & Hoxby, 2004). Foreign-born and US-born Black students may choose their colleges based on their background and family in addition to external factors but the development of cultural capital may be a priority among foreign-born Black students. In this study, Black refers to all people of African descent in the diaspora including the Americas, Caribbean, and Africa. However, foreign-born Blacks are those born abroad and US-born Blacks are those born in America whose recent generations were also born in America. This research will address the college choice priorities between foreign-born Black and US-born Black students as it relates to cultural capital and historical context.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Theorist John Ogbu (1998) made the transition of comparing minorities to the dominant group to comparing minorities among themselves when he noticed that immigrants among minority populations tended to do very well in school. He theorized that differences in academic success for immigrants were not a matter of genetic superiority, better cultural practices, or advantageous language styles. Instead, he professes a cultural- ecological theory. Minority groups differ among themselves based on their response to their history of incorporation in the US and the subsequent treatment or mistreatment of them by White Americans, as well as how these responses to their history and treatment impact their perceptions and responses to schooling (Ogbu et al, 1998).

Ogbu (1998) suggests that voluntary minorities, who come to the US of their own free will, and involuntary minorities, who came to the US by enslavement, experience different frames of reference. Voluntary minorities come with a positive dual frame of reference. They expect to be successful in the land of opportunity, so they work very hard to succeed, particularly because they have two frames of references simultaneously. One frame of reference is their stay in the US while the other is their life “back home”. When they compare their experience “back home” to the US, they recognize greater opportunity here and strive towards it. They believe that they only get mistreated in the US because they have not yet fully understood dominant culture, they do not speak English well or they have heavy accents. The expectation is that they will be treated better when they achieve their goals (Ogbu et al, 1998).

Unlike voluntary minorities, involuntary minorities have a negative dual frame of reference. One frame of reference is their social and economic status in the US while the other is the social and economic status of middle-class White Americans. They see their social and economic status as inferior to middle-class White Americans. Regardless of their class, they do not see the US as the land of opportunity where everyone has an equal chance to succeed. When compared to their White peers, they do not see their hard work paying off in education and work quite the same. Based on their history, they see discrimination as a permanent feature of US society, making them more mistrustful of institutions and teachers than immigrants would be.

Voluntary and involuntary minorities also differ in the folk theory of “making it”, role models, and trust in White institutions. Voluntary minorities come to the US optimistic about hard work and good education being ultimately rewarding in the society, whereas involuntary minorities believe that hard work and good education should lead to success but they are less certain of it since they see less people around them “making it” because of discrimination. Moreover, voluntary minorities look to role models in their communities such as engineers, lawyers, and doctors while involuntary minorities tend to look to entertainers, athletes, or people rebelling against society with courage as role models because they tend to view minority professionals as “unconventional” rule-breakers, who worked twice as hard, were twice as smart, or just plain lucky. Certainly, the practical and optimistic attitude of voluntary minorities when they arrive leads them to trust White-controlled institutions but there is a lack of trust from involuntary minorities with a heavy suspicion that the public schools will not educate their children in the same way they do White children based on their history (Ogbu et al, 1998).

Additionally, the symbolic response between voluntary minorities and involuntary

minorities is also different. Voluntary minorities adopt dominant ways which they see as requirements to succeed in this country but they see adopting these ways as challenges to overcome and an additive to their identity. Involuntary minorities do view learning the dominant culture as important for success but they see it imposed requirements by White Americans and important markers of collective identity to be maintained rather than overcome. Thus, involuntary minorities see adopting dominant ways as a subtractive to their identity (Ogbu et al, 1998). This theory elucidates differences between US-born and foreign-born populations with regard to education.

The *cultural capital* concept (Bourdieu, 1986: 47) may also inform this research in that foreign-born Black students may use or develop cultural capital to be successful in education, ultimately impacting their college choices. Cultural capital has three important categories including embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. The *embodied* cultural capital would be a person's way of thinking that is established over time, such as linguistic competence. An *objectified* cultural capital is a physical object or space that is owned indicative of higher status, such as a within-home library. Moreover, *institutionalized* cultural capital is in the form of institutional recognition, such as academic credentials. And cultural capital is convertible into *economic capital* which are monetary funds and resources held in large part by higher classes (Bourdieu, 1986: 47). Based on Ogbu's (1998) theory, foreign-born Blacks may strive to gain forms of cultural capital indicative of higher classes in order to achieve success in this country.

Ogbu (1998) demonstrates that US-born Blacks view the social and economic status of White people as much higher than their own overall even when Blacks possess high socioeconomic status relative to other Americans. Therefore, Ogbu suggests that

class and race appear linked in America to US-born Blacks such that being Black is associated with a lower class, prompting some US-born Blacks to avoid striving for some cultural capital they may feel would not release them from institutional barriers and prejudice. Foreign-born Blacks, on the other hand, who may push to achieve cultural capital in this country, may also view Whites as higher class but believe that achieving cultural capital is attainable for themselves because class and race is not linked in their own countries. In this way, the negative dual frame of reference and positive dual frame of reference is related to cultural capital.

Bourdieu (1986) also asserts that cultural capital is built over time and often takes shapes within the home. However, in the educational system, cultural capital that children of upper class families achieve from an early age, such as proper language, possession of books, high vocabulary, are expected of all students, which is why lower class students do not perform as well. Still, Bourdieu suggests that the educational system can not impart to students all the necessary cultural capital that is needed to survive yet it expects these same traits in students. The resistance of some US-born Blacks to assimilating to cultural norms in this country may be derived from a negative history and the deviance of these norms from what was valued in their own homes. However, these cultural norms may not deviate from what some foreign-born Blacks valued and practiced at home and they have no history here to deter them (Ogbu, 1998). The symbolic response of foreign-born and US-born Black students to their own experiences in America affects their acceptance of dominant ways, which is key to the establishment of cultural capital.

Going to prestigious universities is a trademark of higher class students and

potentially renders one greater economic capital. If foreign-born Blacks are more likely to adhere to certain forms of cultural capital than US-born Blacks, this may give them more leverage in the country even at the level of college entry. Though cultural capital is convertible to economic capital, we focus on the cultural capital concept in order to measure the priority to choose a college based upon symbolic possessions indicative of cultural capital. A combination of Ogbu's theory and Bourdieu's cultural capital concept may elucidate the potential differences in college choice priorities among foreign-born Black and US-born Black students.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES

My primary research question is to address the following: How does immigrant status affect college choice preferences, even after controlling for variables theoretically linked to college choice? Understanding voluntary minorities as foreign-born Blacks and involuntary minorities as US-born Blacks for this research, my hypotheses are the following (1) when controlling for potentially confounding variables, US-born Blacks will be less likely to cite influences on their college choice that are related to cultural capital such as academic reputation and the ability to get into top professional schools as big influences on their college decisions than foreign-born Blacks; and (2) when controlling for these theoretically relevant variables, US-born Blacks will be more likely to cite influences that are related to fixed college characteristics like cost of school than foreign-born Blacks.

For this study, foreign-born Blacks will refer to self-reported Black non-citizens, while US-born Black will refer to self-reported Black citizen students. This examination will involve quantitative analysis on the differences in college choices among foreign-born Blacks and US-born Blacks. Previous research has shown that parent's education and income, among a host of other variables, show no significant difference between these groups. Thus, this research opens up the platform to learn what influences Black citizens and non-citizens college decisions. An examination of the college choice priorities between foreign-born Black and US-born Black students can shed light upon the key factors that make Black non-immigrant students underrepresented in the Black college student population. Further research may use this analysis to look deeper into the main identified influences on this phenomenon.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

Data and Sample

This study utilized The Freshmen Survey 1999, a multipurpose self-report instrument, from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI, 2011). This survey was created to find out how the experiences of freshmen impact their college success and was administered to incoming first-year students annually at colleges and universities across the country. It was important to use a survey that focused on incoming freshmen because their knowledge and memory of their college choices would still be keen.

The survey has a random sample of students including a sample size of 14,368 Black students. Of this sample, 95% are citizens and 5% are non-citizens. In the survey, the citizenship variable included items for both non-citizen and permanent residents, but both groups were coded into non-citizen.

Measurement

The primary independent variable is immigrant status and the dependent variable is college choice priorities. Immigrant status will be the citizenship variable of citizen, permanent resident or non-citizen. In the survey, the variable college choice priorities will be broken down into 2 indices; one “fixed” and one “cultural capital”. The fixed index items will include low tuition, getting financial assistance, and not being offered financial aid at first choice school, because these are fixed college characteristics. The fixed college characteristics are those that are practical and short-term (Chapman, 1981). The cultural capital index will include the items, reputation of college, college rankings, potential to get a good job, and potential to gain admission to graduate or professional

schools, because these are the things people use to develop cultural capital in the long term (Bourdieu, 1986). Each index item is measured with 3 levels of importance: not important, somewhat important, and very important. Each index is a composite score that combines additively scores of index items in the group.

This survey provides data on theoretically relevant variables, including household income, parent's education, number of college applications, and first generation in college status. These variables will be used as controls upon citizenship and influences on college decisions.

Table 1: Demographics of Sample

	All	Citizen	Non-Citizen	Data was
Total (%)	100%	95%	5%	analyzed using
Median Income	\$30,000-39,999	\$30,000-39,999	\$30,000-39,999	OLS multiple regression
Median Mother's Educ	Some College	Some College	Postsec other than college	technique and
Median Father's Educ	Some College	Some College	Some College	creating 2 models.
First College (% yes)	29.0%	28.9%	38.3%	The dependent
Native English (%yes)	97.0%	98.6%	62.7%	variable will be one
Median No. Apps	2	2	2	index that measures
Full-time (%yes)	100%	100%	100%	the cultural capital

and the other will be an index measuring fixed college characteristics.

The entire sample of Black students are full-time students. The median income is \$30,000-39,999 for both citizens and non-citizens. The median highest mother's education is some college for citizens and some post-secondary education apart from

college for non-citizens. The median highest father's education is some college for both citizens and non-citizens. Of the sample, 28.9% of citizens were the first to go to college in their family, whereas 38.3% of the non-citizens were the first generation in their family to go to college. Approximately 97% of citizens are native English speakers while 62.7% of non-citizens are. Both groups had a median of 2 college applications.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

There were three stages in our statistical analysis including cross-tabulations, OLS regressions, and VIF multi-collinearity. The results of this study demonstrate that US-born Black and foreign-born Black non-immigrants share similar college choice priorities.

Table 2: Cross-Tabulations of Differences in Fixed and Cultural Capital Index Items by Immigrant Status

Index Items	Citizen			Non-Citizen			Sig
	1 Not Impt	2 Smwht Impt	3 Vry Impt	1 Not Impt	2 Smwht Impt	3 Vry Impt	
<i>Fixed</i>							
Low Tuition	31.60%	41.10%	22.30%	30.60%	45.60%	23.80%	0.305
Offered Financial Aid	39.70%	31.60%	23.70%	41.20%	33.30%	25.40%	0.940
No Aid by first choice	75.00%	15.90%	4.10%	79.00%	16.70%	4.30%	0.010
<i>Cultural Cptl</i>							
Academic Reputation	4.50%	40.40%	50.10%	4.40%	41.80%	53.80%	0.839
Ability to get Good Jobs	11.00%	40.10%	43.90%	12.90%	42.60%	44.50%	0.506
Get into Top Grad/Prof	25.30%	42.10%	27.50%	28.60%	43.80%	27.50%	0.466
Rankings	50.20%	36.30%	8.50%	55.20%	36.50%	8.30%	0.450

these two groups. This bivariate analysis showed no statistically significant difference

on all seven index items (low tuition, financial aid offered, no significant difference on all seven index items (low tuition, financial aid offered, no aid offered from first choice college, good academic reputation, ability to get good jobs, gaining admission to top graduate and professional schools, and national rankings), between citizens and non-citizens, as shown in Table 1. These cross-tabulations demonstrated that our hypotheses were incorrect. However, we needed to do more in-depth analysis involving control variables.

In the second stage, we ran the OLS regression. This involved first creating the indices for cultural capital (good academic reputation, ability to get good jobs, gaining admission to top graduate and professional schools, and national rankings) and fixed characteristics (low tuition, financial aid offered, and no aid offered from first choice college). Then, the citizenship variable was used as the primary independent variable in the model. The control variables (income, mother's education, father's education, first college generation, native English speaking, and number of applications) were then introduced.

Table 2 shows that when controlling for by income, parent's education, first generation in college, English as a native language, and number of college applications, immigrant status has no statistically significant relationship with the cultural capital index.

However, income is an important predictor for cultural capital college choice priorities. The relationship is positive, thus those with higher incomes will be more likely to have college choice priorities related to cultural capital.

Table 3: Model 1: OLS Regression for Immigrant Status and Cultural Capital Index

Cultural Cptl				Moreover, like income, number of college applications is a better predictor of the cultural capital index than immigrant status. However, both Black citizens and non- citizens had near equal number of college applications which was also found not statistically significant. The
	B	p-value	Beta	
<i>Predictor</i>				
Immig Stat	-0.026	0.765	-0.003	
Income	0.007	0.036	0.020	
Father's Ed	0.002	0.826	0.002	
Mother's Ed	0.018	0.147	0.018	
First Gen	0.058	0.292	0.013	
English Native	0.087	0.412	0.008	
No. Apps	0.156	0.000	0.190	
R Squared	0.037			

relationship between number of applications and the cultural capital index is positive, therefore the more applications one sends out, the more likely they will be interested in cultural capital items in their college choice priorities.

In Table 3, it also shows that when controlling for relevant variables, immigrant status has no statistically significant impact on the fixed characteristics index. Income no longer had a statistically significant impact on the fixed characteristics index as it did

Table 4: Model 2: OLS Regression for Immigrant Status and Fixed Characteristics Index

Fixed Characteristics			
	B	p-value	Beta
<i>Predictor</i>			
Immig Stat	0.002	0.969	0.000
Income	-0.003	0.218	-0.012
Fathers' Ed	0.005	0.505	0.007
Mothers' Ed	-0.021	0.021	-0.028
First Gen College	-0.044	0.272	-0.014
English Native	-0.008	0.914	-0.001
No. Apps	-0.020	0.000	-0.033
R Squared	0.002		

with the cultural capital index. However, number of college applications maintained a statistically significant impact upon the fixed characteristics index. The difference, however, was the relationship became negative for the fixed characteristics index. Therefore, the more

applications one sends, the less likely they are to be interested in fixed characteristics in their college choice priorities.

Also having a statistically significant relationship was mother's education and the fixed characteristics index. The relationship was also negative, demonstrating that less education for one's mother leads to higher likelihood for interest in fixed characteristics in college choice priorities.

The third stage of the analysis involved the multi-collinearity diagnostics. It was

shown that there was no issue with colinearity among the variables in this study, as no VIF statistic was above 2.5.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of our study do not support either hypothesis in this study. The first hypothesis was that when controlling for other relevant variables, US-born Blacks would be less likely than foreign-born Blacks to be more interested in cultural capital items in their college choice priorities but we find that there is no difference between US-born and foreign-born Black students' interest in cultural capital items in their college choice priorities. Likewise, our second hypothesis expected that when controlling for other relevant variables, US-born Blacks would be more likely than foreign-born Blacks to be more interested in fixed characteristics in their college choice priorities but we find that US-born and foreign-born Black students do not differ in interest in fixed characteristics items for their college choice priorities as expected. Between both the bivariate analysis and the OLS regression, no statistically significant findings towards the hypotheses were shown. Our findings have theoretical and practical implications.

Adapting Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital concept to Ogbu's (1998) cultural-ecological theory is not shown as true in this empirical research as anticipated. Ogbu discusses the differences in frames of reference and symbolic response that US-born and foreign-born Black students have towards education (Ogbu, 1998), while the question of Bourdieu's cultural capital should interact with these concepts. Foreign-born Black students were expected to react more positively than US-born Black students to those cultural norms that will lead to their success in this country (Bourdieu, 1986).

Instead, the theoretical implications of this study is that the lines can not be drawn around positive or negative orientations of one group to another but of mutual conditions

they both face that make them similar depending on other possible intersections such as class, neighbourhood composition, etc. The racial discrimination faced by both groups (Waters, 2001) may even be compounded, for foreign-born Blacks experience discrimination for their accents and other indicators of their foreign status (Ogbu 1998) which could make foreign-born Blacks just as easily adopt an understanding that the historical barriers in America are difficult to overcome. Foreign-born Blacks face the same dire conditions that US-born Blacks do (Waters, 2001) which continues to make the concentration of poverty great for them as well. In this way, considerations such as financial assistance and low tuition may be equally important to foreign-born Blacks as they are to US-born Black students. It may also be worthwhile for future research to know the income or class background that the foreign-born Black students possessed in their home countries and not only that which they have here in America in order to detect any differences between the two groups.

Equally, US-born Black students may have every bit of interest in cultural capital items such as the ability to get a good job by attendance as foreign-born Blacks do but may not see examples of such successful people in their lives depending upon their neighborhood composition. Foreign-born Black students may also not see these examples as a result of their neighborhood composition. Both the US-born and foreign-born Black students have similar median incomes, and despite the relationship between an interaction variable of immigrant status and income upon the indices being not significant, it may be an issue of neighborhood composition whereby both foreign-born and US-born Blacks in this sample live in similar neighborhoods and see few examples of success equally.

Moreover, there may be an issue of selection, considering the sample in this study are all students entering college, whereas Ogbu's (1998) theory was about Black students generally without age-appropriateness. This may be a probable factor in the non-significant results of this study. It could be possible that his theory still holds weight when in relation to elementary or high school students, a time when foreign-born Black students may still have certain perceptions different from US-born Black students until they become more acclimated to a certain lifestyle imposed upon Black people, riddled with discrimination and prejudice. There are also important considerations to make about immigration issues related to student visas for college, different from younger grades, and what that means for the differences between these groups. Further research should explore potential changes over time between these groups and the complexities of entering college with a student visa different from being accustomed to American life and culture at the level of college entry.

Some methodological considerations are also in order. In this study, the results leaned heavily towards a 95% group of US-born Black students compared to a 5% group of foreign-born Black students. Going forward, a stratified sample of these groups specifically to attain comparable numbers to the population is important to generate most representative data. However, this is an issue common to utilizing secondary data. This data is used in the interest of limited time and resources.

Methodological issues, such as the measurement of immigrant status, may be a primary limitation of this study. The citizenship variable was used because it was available. However, the best measure would determine those citizens that were previously non-citizens, because they are equally foreign-born as current non-citizens. Another

important distinction would be first-, second-, and third-generation foreign-born Blacks, which can not be garnered in a citizen versus non-citizen variable. Moreover, the difference between countries of origin may also be an important consideration, before immigrant status is completely ruled out. Further analysis would establish these distinctions in teasing out the reasons for the underrepresentation of US-born Black students.

In order to learn about why US-born Black students are underrepresented in the Black college population at the most prestigious universities, it may be important to shift focus from the students to the institutions that accept them. Perhaps these institutions preference foreign-born Black students because they tend to go for certain fields in which Black students are underrepresented in more often than US-born Black students do. Or, it may be that these college admissions officers see bringing in both Black and foreign students as a means to diversifying their minority student population. Reasoning abound, future attention to this ideological shift could prove necessary to understanding this phenomenon.

Nevertheless, an extension of this research would be a focus on foreign-born and US-born Black who attend prestigious universities versus those who do not. Because the crux of the matter is disproportionate representation of foreign-born Black students in prestigious universities, it will be important to note the differences in US-born and foreign-born Black students at these particular universities, comparing them to those who do not attend such universities.

The non-hypothesized findings are worthy to note. Unlike other control variables, number of applications had a significant relationship with both the cultural capital and

fixed characteristics indices. Students are encouraged to apply to several schools if they can afford it because the more schools a student applies to, the more chances they have to succeed in getting a good offer. However, this expectation of students is colored by the student's resources or lack thereof. Therefore, in order to have multiple numbers of applications, a student has to be comfortable financially. And since cultural capital is a development of cultural possessions indicative of a higher class (Bourdieu 1986), it makes sense that number of applications would be positively related to cultural capital. On the other hand, the lack of financial resources may cause a student to send less number of applications. These financial circumstances of a student would make them more likely thus to see fixed characteristics such as low tuition and financial assistance as important in their college choices.

Mother's education was found to be significant only for fixed characteristics. Surprisingly, father's education did not have an impact, thus the issue of gender is important to consider. The relationship between mother's education and fixed characteristics was negative, meaning that students whose mothers had less education had a higher likelihood to choose fixed characteristics. Because mother's education was not found to be significant also in its relationship to the cultural capital index, it can neither be said that more mother's education leads to higher interest in cultural capital items nor can it be said that less mother's education makes one adverse to cultural capital items. Thus the fixed characteristics' relationship with mother's education is unique and independent, unlike the number of applications variable. Because this is a gendered issue, this relationship may exist because single mothers tend to be less educated and more impoverished than married mothers (Lareau, 2003). The need for low tuition and financial assistance may be an important consideration for a student with a single mother

in dire straits.

Another non-hypothesized finding was the positive relationship between income and the cultural capital index. Again, like mother's education, the relationship between income and the two indices is not opposite. As Bourdieu (1986) suggested, cultural capital may be translated into economic capital. This study provides empirical evidence for a demonstrated link between cultural capital and economic capital. An analysis combining these concepts may demonstrate that Black students with greater cultural capital possess greater economic capital and therefore a new survey may be in order on a wide variety of cultural capital indicators. In more ways than one, the findings in this research may not prove the combination of Ogbu's theory and Bourdieu's cultural capital concept for the particular phenomenon at hand but Bourdieu's connections between his cultural capital and economic capital concepts can illuminate the non-hypothesized findings.

This study is important because it adds to the literature on minority education particularly surrounding the disproportionate representation of US-born and foreign-born Black students at prestigious universities. Prior research has shown that US-born and foreign-born Black students do not differ in their academic performance before and after entry to college (Charles et al., 2007), while this study shows that these groups also do not differ in their college choice priorities. It is important to understand why US-born Blacks are underrepresented in the Black college student population in prestigious universities in order to ensure adequate representation of Black American students in our top schools. There might be other reasons to explain the underrepresentation of US-born Black students in the Black college population. Future research can improve upon measures, sample, and potentially shifting the focus from students' decision-making to

the decisions of college admission officers.

REFERENCES

- Bankston, III, C., and Calder, S. J. (1996). Majority African American Schools and Social Justice: The Influence of De Facto Segregation on Academic Achievement. *Social Forces*, 75, 535-555.
- Bennett, P.R., and Lutz, A. (2009). How African American Is the Net Black Advantage? Differences in College Attendance Among Immigrant Blacks, Native Blacks, and Whites. *Sociology of Education*, 82, 70.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). "The Forms of Capital". Pp. 241-258 in Richardson, J.G. (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). "Cultural reproduction and social reproduction." Pp. 487-511 in Karabel, J. and A. H. Halsey (Ed.), *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York, NY: Oxford.
- Brewer, Dominic J., Eric R. Eide, and Ehrenberg, R.C. (1999). "Does It Pay to Attend a Private Elite College? Cross-Cohort Evidence on the Effects of College Type on Earnings." *Journal of Human Resources* 34:104-23.
- Charles, C., Massey, D., Mooney, M., and Torres, K. (2007). Black Immigrants and Black Natives Attending Selective Colleges and Universities in the United States. *American Journal of Education*, 113, 243-271.
- Cheng, S., and Starks, B. (2002). Racial Differences in the Effects of Significant Others on Student' Educational Expectations. *Sociology of Education*, 75, 306-327.
- Constantine, Jill M. 1995. "The Effects of Attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities on Future Wages of Black Students." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 48:531-46.
- Crosnoe, R., Cavanagh, S., and Elder, Jr., G. H. (2003). Adolescent Friendships as Academic Resources: The Intersection of Friendship, Race, and School Disadvantage. *Sociological Perspectives*, 46, 331-352.
- Fuligni, A. J. (1997). The Academic Achievement of Adolescents From Immigrant Families: The Roles of Family Background, Attitudes, and Behavior. *Child Development*, 68, 351-363.
- Hao, L., and Bonstead, B. (1998). Parent-Child Differences in Educational Expectations and the Academic Achievement of Immigrant and Native Students. *Sociology of Education*, 71, 175-198.
- Higher Education Research Institute. 2011. Accessed on <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/index.php>.

- Johnson, S. (1992). Extra-School Factors in Achievement, Attainment, and Aspiration Among Junior and Senior High School-Age African-American Youth. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 61, 99-119.
- Kalmijn, M. (1996). The Socioeconomic Assimilation of Caribbean American Blacks. *Social Forces*, 74, 911-930.
- Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Logan, J. (2003). *America's Newcomers*. Albany, NY: University at Albany.
- Murphy, D. (1986). Educational Disadvantage: Associated Factors, Current Interventions, and Implications. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 55, 495-507.
- Obiakor, F. E., Obi, Sunday O., and Grant, P. (2000). Foreign-Born African American Males: Turning Barriers to Opportunities. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Thought*, 569, 135-148.
- Ogbu, J. U., and Simons, H. D. (1998). Voluntary and Involuntary Minorities: a Cultural Ecological Theory of School Performances with Some Implications for Education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 29, 155-188.
- Osborne, J. (1999). Unraveling Underachievement among African American Boys from an Identification with Academics Perspective. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 68, 555-565.
- Roscigno, V. (2000). Family/School Inequality and African-American/Hispanic Achievement. *Social Problems*, 47, 266-290.
- Solomon, Lewis C, and Wachtel, P. (1975). "The Effects on Income of College Attended." *Sociology of Education* 48:75-90.
- Steele, C. (1997). A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance. *American Psychologist*, 52, 613-629.
- Waters, M. (2001). *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.