Entering the (Postgraduate) Field: Underrepresented Students' Acquisition of Cultural and Social Capital in Graduate School Preparation Programs

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Examining the role of humanities graduate preparation programs in facilitating underrepresented undergraduate students' socialization to the field (social context) of graduate education, this critical multisite case study finds that these programs are crucial to bidirectional anticipatory socialization for graduate education, where one gains new ideas but does not abandon one's background. Additionally, these programs helped in the acquisition of the type of cultural and social capital that are likely to be relevant to disciplinary knowledge, skills, and competencies in graduate education.

Keywords: graduate education, anticipatory socialization, cultural and social capital, field, underrepresented students

Doctoral and professional degree earners are among an elite group in the United States; barely 3.2% of the country has earned this distinction (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). There is significant racial underrepresentation in terms of doctoral degree attainment for Black and Latino students in particular, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college (also called first-generation) or to earn a graduate degree (Gardner & Holley, 2011). Those people who self-identify as White are more than twice as likely to have earned a doctorate as are Black people, and are three times as likely as are people who self-identity

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as Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).[1] Racial disparities are particularly grave in some disciplines. Within the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines, only 3–5% of all doctoral degree earners identified as Black or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). A growing body of scholarship investigates ways to increase racial diversity in the STEM disciplines (Hurtado, Newman, Tran, & Chang, 2010; Perna et al., 2009). There is similar underrepresentation in other disciplines, even though there is little work highlighting this disparity. In the humanities disciplines (e.g., English), of all doctoral degrees earned in 2008, Black people earned 4.6% of degrees, Asian Americans earned 4.6%, and Latinos earned 5.5% (Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2008).[2] To understand these trends, some scholarship examines either access to graduate school or success in doctoral programs specifically for Students of Color (Adler & Adler, 2005; Daniel, 2007; Ellis, 2001; Gardner, 2008a).[3] Given the clear evidence of racial disparities in doctoral degree attainment, there remains work to be done.

Researchers who are interested in graduate education have emphasized socialization, or doctoral students' understanding of the norms and expectations of their new role, as a way to foster the preparation of graduate students for faculty positions (Austin, 2002; Ellis, 2001; Gardner, 2007, 2009; Taylor & Antony, 2000). An underlying assumption of the socialization process is that doctoral students must transform themselves into scholars, adapting to the existing norms of the academic discipline and program (Gardner, 2008a, 2008b). For historically underrepresented people (People of Color, low socioeconomic status (SES), or first-generation students), this unilateral socialization process may suggest the need to leave behind previous identities or communities—something that can have negative consequences on persistence in academic programs (Antony, 2002; Gardner, 2008a, 2008b; Tierney, 1997; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Winkle-Wagner, 2009).

Socialization in education is often linked to the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1979/1984), defined as the skills, knowledge, or abilities that might be rewarded in a particular social setting. Cultural capital acquisition, as a form of socialization, has not been as widely applied to graduate education or socialization into graduate school (but see, DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Mullen, Goyette, & Soares, 2003). The lack of application to graduate education is curious because students who are aspiring toward or enrolled in graduate programs are exemplars of upward social mobility and may offer important insights into how people might disrupt social reproduction. The few studies on cultural capital at the graduate level suggest that family background began to play a smaller role in cultural capital acquisition as students moved into

advanced-degree programs (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Mullen et al., 2003). Building on this evidence, we asked: How do aspiring underrepresented graduate students, those undergraduate students who hope to gain access to graduate programs, further acquire cultural and social capital as they progress toward graduate school, particularly if cultural and social capital that was acquired from family (*see also* Yosso, 2005) [4] might not be as relevant or available?

This critical qualitative case study sought to understand how underrepresented students' participation in graduate school preparation programs contributed to their socialization into the English discipline. Data included interviews and observations with faculty and underrepresented undergraduate students who are aspiring toward graduate school. We employed Bourdieu's full social reproduction theory, something that is not usually done in educational research, aside from a few important exceptions (Horvat, 2001; McDonough, 1994; Perna, 2000; Tierney, 1999; Walpole, 2003). Cultural capital typically is used in absence of other related concepts such as social capital (e.g., social relationships), habitus (a set of dispositions), and *field* (social context that gives cultural and social capital their value)[5] (Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Musoba & Baez, 2009; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). The problem with using only selected concepts from social reproduction theory is that important nuances about social structures and the process of reproducing inequities are missed (Horvat, 2001; Winkle-Wagner, 2010).

Our findings, which highlight the underutilized concept of *field* or social context (Bourdieu, 1979/1984; Musoba & Baez, 2009; Winkle-Wagner, 2010) showed that: (1) summer institutes played a critical role in the acquisition of cultural and social capital by introducing aspiring graduate students to professional norms and scholarly role models; and (2) cultural and social capital acquisition was a form of *bidirectional socialization* where prospective doctoral students were socialized into the scholarly role while simultaneously learning how to incorporate their identities into their experiences which could change the *field* (social context) of their academic discipline.

Review of Literature

There is growing scholarly interest in doctoral education (Golde, 2005; Lovitts, 2001) and differences between academic disciplines (Gardner, 2007; Golde & Walker, 2006). We reviewed research on student socialization at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and graduate education access to understand how underrepresented students might earn a graduate degree.

Access to Graduate Education

There are serious roadblocks to graduate school for underrepresented students (Brazziel & Brazziel, 2001; Daniel, 2007; Davis, 2007, 2008; Dodson, Montgomery, & Brown, 2009; Howard-Hamilton, Morelon-Quainoo, Winkle-Wagner, Johnson, & Santiague, 2009). For undergraduate students who aspire to become graduate students and faculty members, most of the research centers on mentoring programs (Crawford, Suarez-Balcazar, Riech, Figert, & Nyden, 1996; Davis, 2007) or on undergraduate research experiences as preparation for graduate education (Hathaway, Nagda, & Gregerman, 2002; Hippel, Lerner, Gregerman, Nagda, & Jonides, 1998; Jones, Barlow, & Villarejo, 2010). There is also empirical evidence that summer bridge programs are beneficial for underrepresented students (Kezar, 2000), although this research primarily focuses on access to *undergraduate* programs, bridging between high school and college. Additional research is needed on how summer programs might influence socialization for students aspiring to graduate education (bridging college to graduate school).

Multiple factors influence students' likelihood of enrolling in graduate programs such as whether they attended a four-year institution for their bachelor's degree (Mullen et al., 2003; Walpole, 2003); the quality and selectivity of students' undergraduate institutions; and high undergraduate GPAs (Schapiro, O'Malley, & Litten, 1991; Zhang, 2005). For those students who aspire toward graduate education, there are some empirical questions as to whether Black students in particular are equally supported (financially, academically, emotionally) as compared to their White peers (Daniel, 2007; Davis, 2007, 2008; Dodson et al., 2009; Ethington & Smart, 1986; Johnson, Kuykendall & Winkle-Wagner, 2009). In one study, Students of Color in STEM disciplines who were considered eligible for graduate study (e.g., high GPA, test scores) did not enroll because their undergraduate advisors were not as proactive in informing them about graduate schools as they were with White students (Brazziel & Brazziel, 2001). For those underrepresented students who do enroll, some have trouble fitting into program norms (Gardner, 2008a; Gay, 2004). Underrepresented scholars and students may experience racial and gender micro-aggressions and this could be why some students have trouble belonging in their programs (Gay, 2004; Herzig, 2004; Solórzano, 1998).

Socialization

There is an established body of research on graduate student socialization (Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2007, 2009; Rosen & Bates, 1967;

Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Weidman & Stein, 2003). Socialization is an ongoing process whereby students develop an understanding of the norms and expectations of their new roles as scholars and part of an academic discipline (Austin, 2002; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Gardner, 2007). "Anticipatory socialization," typically begins upon graduate program enrollment (Austin 2002; Gardner, 2009; McCoy, 2007). The academic discipline provides a particular context that drives the research questions, methodologies, publication styles, and collegiality to which students are socialized (Austin, 2002; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Gardner, 2007; Golde & Walker, 2006).

Graduate school socialization is primarily dependent on the faculty advisor and graduate student colleagues (Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2007; Sallee, 2011). Faculty mentors are key in fostering student success, even if mentors are not of the same racial/ethnic background (Barker, 2007; Barnes, 2009; Daniel, 2007; Margolis & Romero, 1998; Milner, Husband, & Jackson, 2002; Patton & Harper, 2003). Numerous scholars acknowledge that mentoring should be culturally sensitive (e.g., having sensitivity for students' backgrounds) regardless of the mentors' backgrounds (Barker, 2007; Brown, Davis, & McClendon, 1999; Hinton, Howard-Hamilton, & Grim, 2009; Milner et al., 2002).

There are a few other important influences on graduate school socialization such as family relationships (Austin, 2002; Barnes, 2009; Gardner, 2008a, 2008b; Gardner & Holly, 2001) and involvement in professional associations, graduate student councils, or departmental organizations (Barnes, 2009; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Milner, 2004; Milner et al., 2002; Winkle-Wagner, Johnson, Morelon-Quainoo, & Santiague, 2010). While there is strong evidence of the importance of deliberate socialization efforts for underrepresented students (Adler & Adler, 2005; Ovink & Veazey, 2011), research indicates that they do not receive equal socialization opportunities (through faculty interactions, funding, etc.) in graduate school as compared to their White peers (Daniel, 2007; Davis, 2007, 2008; Dodson et al., 2009; Howard-Hamilton et al., 2009; Johnson-Bailey, 2004).

While there is some work suggesting that the socialization process does not have to be unidirectional, or that those being socialized can also influence the organizations to which they are being socialized (Antony, 2002; McCoy, 2007; Tierney, 1997; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Trowler & Knight, 2000), most of the socialization research assumes a one-way process whereby people are brought into the discipline's norms. This one-way process can be particularly detrimental to underrepresented students (Antony, 2002). To better understand differences between one-way and two-way socialization processes, we used

Bourdieu's (1979/1984) social reproduction theory because it emphasizes the study of power and how social inequities are reproduced (or disrupted) across generations.

Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu(1979/1984) was theoretically concerned with the way that privilege and statuses were reproduced or disrupted across generations, and why some groups appeared to have advantages within social institutions such as schools. While Bourdieu's theory has been criticized for lacking attention toward agency (King, 2000), he did allow room for considerations of change (Bourdieu, 1979/1984, 1988). Bourdieu (2000) maintained:

> [The theory] reflects the different positions people have in society, for example, whether they are brought up in a middle-class environment or in a working-class suburb. It is part of how society produces itself. But there is also change. Conflict is built into society. People can find that their expectations and ways of living are suddenly out of step with the new social position they find themselves in. . . . Then the question of social agency and political intervention becomes very important. (p. 19)

Consistent with a growing number of scholars who have started to explore agency within Bourdieu's framework (Horvat, 2001; Horvat & Davis, 2011; Lee & Kramer, 2013; St. John, Hu, & Fisher, 2011; Winkle-Wagner, St. John, & Bowman, 2012), we used social reproduction theory as a way to understand the potential for upward mobility.

Our use of Bourdieu's theory was appropriate for several reasons. The participants were underrepresented undergraduate students who were aspiring toward graduate school, but they had not yet arrived at this status. Similarly, in Bourdieu's (1979/1984) path-breaking work *Distinction,* he was particularly concerned with the "petit bourgeois," French middle class individuals who had the potential to alter their class status and experience upward social mobility. The participants were also representative of historically marginalized groups and were uniquely able to offer insight into the process of altering class status, a process that Bourdieu was interested in understanding.

Bourdieu's full theory of social reproduction includes the concepts of *field,* cultural capital, social capital, and habitus and is particularly useful for the study of social inequalities (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). The concept of *field* refers to social settings such as an educational institution (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). The *field* is integral to all of Bourdieu's other concepts because it is the setting that gives value to particular forms of

knowledge, skills, abilities, or social networks. In many studies using Bourdieu's concepts, the social context of *field* is unexplored (Horvat, 2001; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Those who do focus on the concept of *field* in Bourdieu's theory suggest that *fields* are unstable and can shift based on who is in them (Emirbayer, 1997; Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Emirbayer & Williams, 2005; Swartz, 2003). Within the *field,* people compete for what practices are valued within it (Horvat, 2001). As new populations enter a *field,* the social context can change. We defined the *field* as graduate programs in English, and we were particularly interested in how the *field* could be a shifting space that might change when underrepresented students enter it.

The theoretical concept of cultural capital can be defined as culturally relevant knowledge (e.g., knowing particular authors or terms), skills (e.g., being able to engage in doctoral settings), or abilities (e.g., writing) that serve as a form of currency in particular social settings (*fields*) such as education (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). Cultural capital can be acquired in two ways: through one's social origin (i.e., family) and through education (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). While educational researchers have often operationalized or defined cultural capital as primarily relevant to high status cultural knowledge, skills, or competences (Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Winkle-Wagner, 2010), for Bourdieu (1979/1984), cultural capital is dependent on the *field* to give the concept its meaning and value. In other words, some knowledge, skills, competences, or abilities might be valued more highly than others in an educational setting or *field* such as a college campus (Carter, 2003). We defined cultural capital as knowledge, skills, abilities, or competences that are relevant for doctoral programs, particularly those in the humanities disciplines. Some cultural resources that underrepresented students possess (e.g., the ability to work with nondominant groups) may be assets for them in graduate programs if they know how to *activate* these cultural and social resources in ways that will be recognized by the institution (e.g., a bilingual student could help with a research project on bilingual education).

Prior cultural capital research has linked it to students' family backgrounds, typically measured through parental educational attainment, occupation, and income-levels (Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Operationalizing cultural capital as a concept that is only connected to background factors with a focus on elite status can result in deficiency thinking relative to underrepresented groups; an assumption that some students are *lacking* the necessary cultural capital to succeed in education (Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Winkle-Wagner, 2010; Yosso, 2005).

Bourdieu's (1979/1984) notion of habitus is a set of dispositions, influencing the alternatives that one sees as available. Habitus is concerned with the way that one evaluates one's position/status/place within a particular setting and then feels enabled to act in particular ways because of it. We were interested in habitus as the actions or alternatives that participants viewed as available and whether participants identified an increase in the number of alternatives that they considered as options (McCoy & Winkle-Wagner, 2015).

Bourdieu's (1979/1984) social capital is related to social obligations, responsibilities, and relationships. These relationships can be used as a form of currency (capital) in social settings as a way to achieve greater status in a particular setting. We were primarily concerned with social capital as the formal and informal social relationships that occurred within the humanities summer institutes and the potential that these relationships had for personal gains.

There have been a few studies connecting Bourdieu's concepts of cultural and social capital, habitus, and graduate school access. DiMaggio and Mohr (1985) found a modest correlation between the acquisition of cultural capital (which they defined as high status cultural symbols) and graduate school attendance. In an analysis of a national dataset, Mullen and colleagues (2003) found that parents' educational levels had much less of an impact on graduate school enrollment. Building on this finding, we were particularly interested in cultural capital that is acquired from sources outside the family.

We employed Bourdieu's full theory as a way to examine the connection between empirical work and social theory (Bourdieu, 1979/1984; Winkle-Wagner, 2010), and to allow for a deeper consideration of the larger social inequalities that may influence the participants' access to doctoral programs. In particular, we focused on the concept of *field* and how this might shape the way that cultural and social capital are manifested.

Methodology

Through this critical multisite case study project, we examined the role of two humanities summer institutes in facilitating graduate school socialization for underrepresented undergraduate students with graduate school aspirations. Socialization is important to study because it could potentially help students to gain access to graduate programs and to be successful in those programs. The following research question guided this project: How do underrepresented undergraduate students and faculty within graduate school preparation

programs describe the graduate school socialization processes that occur within these programs?

We combined a critical qualitative approach (Carspecken, 1996) with a multisite (two research sites) case study methodology (Flyvberg, 2006). A qualitative approach was well suited for this project because we aimed to better understand prospective graduate students' subjective experiences and how the students made meaning of their experiences (Carspecken, 1996). Our focus was on an exploration of the ways that underrepresented students viewed the accessibility of doctoral programs.

We used a critical qualitative approach, meaning that our theoretical perspective connects to the philosophical tradition of critical theory, which centers on understanding the historical and contemporary oppression and inequities that particular groups of people have experienced (Pasque, Carducci, Kuntz, & Gildersleeve, 2012). Critical research uses the background of critical theory to offer insight into the research process and data interpretation (Carspecken, 1996; Pasque et al., 2012). The critical approach influenced the research questions we asked, the way we engaged with participants during data collection (e.g., we attempted to create situations where participants would feel equal to us), and our data analysis approach. Given that the participants were underrepresented in humanities disciplines, a critical approach was important in highlighting the voices of historically silenced populations.

Case study methods were useful in this project because we focused on the unit of analysis (Merriam, 2009): groups of underrepresented undergraduate students who aspired toward graduate education and participated in summer institutes. Case studies are bounded by space or time (Merriam, 2009). Our study was spatially bounded because each institute was housed at a higher education institution in the Mid-Atlantic or New England regions. The project was temporally bounded in that we spent the same amount of time at our site visits and in post-institute data collection. Similar to other case study approaches (Flyvberg, 2006), we focused on the participants' perspectives within the two institutes, rather than on an assessment of the institutes' effectiveness or structures.

The Research Sites

The sites for this project included two summer institutes that focused on underrepresented students' preparation for humanities graduate education. The institutes included the New England Summer Institute (NESI) and the Mid-Atlantic Summer Institute (MASI). We selected

these institutes because they were the most similar of the humanities institutes that participate in a national consortium. Both NESI and MASI focused on preparation of underrepresented students (Students of Color, first-generation, or low-income) for graduate programs in English Literature. Each institute offered participants a stipend, housing, a series of courses, workshops, and mentoring activities (e.g., visits from established humanities scholars, travel to archives, meetings with humanities faculty from the host institutions).

The daily schedules within both institutes were similar. Both institutes required the participants to attend a 2–3 hour class daily, taught by established, tenure-line humanities faculty. The institutes presented workshops on topics such as: what it is like to be Faculty of Color, work-life issues, how to apply to graduate school, curriculum vita development, research agenda creation, and the tenure process. In addition to the workshops, the students were provided time to conduct their own research projects. At NESI, students met with a writing specialist to help them improve their writing. In both institutes, there were structured social activities, ways for students to spend more informal time with faculty (e.g., lunches).

New England Summer Institute (NESI)

Funded by a grant from the Carnegie Foundation, NESI was an eight-week program with an English literature focus. NESI was created and was administered by senior humanities faculty at an elite, private, liberal arts college in the New England region. The NESI director, a White female English faculty member at the host institution, stated that one of the institute's purposes was to help build the participants' confidence. Students apply for the competitive program at their undergraduate academic advisor's recommendation. NESI staff also widely publicized the opportunity to English literature programs and through the Modern Languages Association (MLA). Eleven students enrolled in NESI and 9 participated in the study.

Mid-Atlantic Summer Institute (MASI)

MASI was a four-week program for undergraduates, administered by a large Mid-Atlantic research university. MASI provided tuition, a stipend, and housing (food is not provided). Similar to NESI, students applied for the program at their undergraduate advisor's recommendation. The MASI Director was a Black female who has a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and had a full-time administrative position at the host institution. She described MASI's purpose, which also had an English literature focus, as helping to recruit Students of Color to the institution

and exposing them to the humanities disciplines. Six students enrolled in MASI and they all participated in the study.

Participants

We purposefully selected participants who met specific criteria for inclusion in the study (Merriam, 2009). Criteria for participation included: self-identifying as a member of a historically underrepresented group (Person of Color, low SES, or first-generation) and/or involvement in the summer institutes. We focused on the 15 female student participants (Table 1). Most of the participants were Students of Color (13 of the 15 students). The 2 White women participants were first-generation and low SES students. We interviewed 9 NESI students and all 6 MASI students. When relevant, we included data from the 16 faculty and staff (7 from NESI, 9 from MASI) affiliated with the institutes (Tables 1 & 2).

TABLE 1
Student Demographics

Institute	New England Summer Institute (NESI)	Mid-Atlantic Summer Institute (MASI)
Gender	9 Women	6 Women
Year in College	9 Seniors	2 Juniors 4 Seniors
Race/Ethnicity	5 Black 3 Asian American 1 Multiracial	3 Black 2 White 1 Asian American
First-Generation Status	2 Students	5 Students
Age Range	20−25	20−22
Total Students	9	6

TABLE 2
Faculty/Staff Demographics

Institute	New England Summer Institute (NESI)	Mid-Atlantic Summer Institute (MASI)
Gender	4 Women 3 Men	6 Women 3 Men
Race/Ethnicity	5 White 1 Black 1 Multiracial	5 White 3 Black 1 Unknown
First-Generation Status	3	2
Total Faculty/Staff	7	9

Data Collection

We collected multiple forms of data: semistructured interviews, observations, document analysis, and post-institute questionnaires (Merriam, 2009). We conducted individual, face-to-face semistructured interviews lasting 60–90 minutes. The interview questions covered topics such as: experiences in the institutes and specific skills or social networks that students were developing that would relate to graduate education. In addition, we were participant-observers (Merriam, 2009), observing the participants during their interactions with institute faculty, in seminars, with guest speakers, and during their leisure/study periods. During these observations, we took detailed field notes (Carspecken, 1996) used in our analysis. We also analyzed documents, reviewing brochures, websites, and course syllabi (Merriam, 2009) to develop an enhanced understanding of the institutes' purposes. We distributed the post-institute questionnaires via email two weeks after the institutes concluded and asked the participants about their experiences and whether their expectations of the institute experience had been met.

Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews and questionnaires verbatim, we conducted three levels of data analysis: low-level, high-level, and social reproduction theory coding. Consistent with a qualitative approach (Carspecken, 1996; Merriam, 2009), we conducted all data analysis in an inductive manner, allowing the findings to emerge from the participants' perspectives. We each analyzed the transcripts and questionnaires separately and then compared the analysis until we reached consensus.

First, we coded the transcripts and questionnaires with a low-level code, a 2–3 word heuristic statement (Carspecken, 1996; Merriam, 2009). These codes were based on the words used by participants. Low-level codes were closely aligned to the transcripts/questionnaires and the explicit statements within it. Second, we coded with high-level codes that captured the implicit or subtle meanings within the participants' statements (Carspecken, 1996). We linked these high-level codes to multiple low-level codes to ensure their accuracy. High-level codes allowed us to consider some of the participants' nonverbal behaviors and the vocal intonation used. Finally, we coded the transcripts for instances where participants referenced Bourdieu's social reproduction theory concepts: *field* (social setting, English discipline, summer institutes); cultural capital (knowledge, skills, or competencies related to humanities graduate study); habitus (possible actions that participants

viewed as available); or social capital (informal/formal social relationships within the institutes). Finally, we placed all codes into a separate document and then grouped them into themes and subthemes. We then checked these larger categories against the transcripts and questionnaires as a way to compare the smaller codes to the larger statements and meanings within the participants' statements.

Trustworthiness

We employed multiple methods for developing trustworthiness: member checks, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and triangulation (Carspecken, 1996). We sent the transcripts to the participants and asked them for their feedback and critique so that we could ensure they felt accurately represented by the data (member checks). Our peer debriefing (Merriam, 2009) was linked to the way we analyzed data as a research dyad where we each analyzed the transcripts separately prior to providing feedback to one another and then dialoguing about the analysis to reach consensus. We also compared the findings within the codes, themes, and subthemes to the larger data pool and conducted negative case analysis (Carspecken, 1996), examining those findings that did not seem to relate well to the larger findings to better understand why they did not fit the larger body of data. Finally, we triangulated (Merriam, 2009) the study through multiple methods of data collection and analysis.

Entering the Field of Graduate Education: Findings

The emergent findings related to the *field* or discipline-specific anticipatory socialization process for doctoral education and for eventual faculty roles. This anticipatory socialization related primarily to skills, knowledge, and behaviors that participants deemed necessary for graduate study in English, and it occurred before the students enrolled in graduate programs. There were two emergent themes related to this anticipatory socialization: (1) Opening Up My World**:** Participants described the institutes as providing exposure to new knowledge, skills, and academic preparation associated with being a graduate student (cultural capital that would likely be rewarded in graduate school). This theme also pointed to a potential shift in participants' views of their abilities and opportunities (a shift in habitus); and (2) Engaging with Scholars of Color: This theme referred primarily to the development of a social network of Scholars of Color, both in the form of peer and mentoring relationships, and as social capital.

Opening up My World

Prospective doctoral students perceived that the institutes offered them exposure to graduate school norms and to their academic discipline. Theresa, a first-generation MASI student who self-identified as Asian American, noted:

> I chose the English literature major basically because of personal interest. I didn't think of building a career out of it . . . I felt like the English literature major was useless to me. It was only useful for personal development and not for anything else. So doing this institute . . . I've realized that there is something that I can do with the English major that is not just a dead end role, which is what most people think . . . The program has opened up my world more.

Theresa was likely referring to the career workshops offered during the institute, where students were exposed to careers in English and had the chance to speak with scholars. Not only had the institute offered Theresa an opportunity to pursue career options for her major, she also suggested that it might be transformational for her in the comment that the institute had "opened up my world more." Theresa implied that the institute offered her exposure to careers in English that now seem available to her after attending the institute. By using the term "world," Theresa indicated that this was a significant experience for her. She inferred that her habitus may not have previously included the possibility of graduate education and a career in academia.

Some participants asserted that the institutes offered an opportunity to begin developing practices that would help them become successful in advanced-degree programs. Julissa, a Filipina student who participated in NESI, remarked:

> The idea of grad school was a little bit intimidating and kind of this abstract really distant idea when I was in school, just in terms of the structure of the institutions. A portion of our classes every day is devoted to telling us about applications to grad school, types of grad schools, types of programs, and that makes the process much less threatening. Also, just the fact that we're being introduced to all this theory, it feels like a head start. I guess it made me less cynical and less intimidated and it just made me feel much more prepared for grad school . . . or for a future in English.

Julissa highlighted how the graduate school application process seemed more accessible to her after participating in the institute. She articulated how the summer institute provided her an introduction to theories she

might use in her graduate program, describing this as a "head start." The exposure to the application process and to discipline-related theory is an example of how the participants described the acquisition of cultural capital.

Cecily, an Asian American woman who was a NESI student, added another way in which the institutes offered relevant skill development for success in graduate programs:

> There was this assignment where I didn't do so well and I had a talk with my professor here and I realized that I didn't really know the difference between an undergrad type of writing and a graduate type of writing. So I got really excited because this is something new that I can learn and I guess that was my excitement moment where I realized that I could learn this new type of writing and to appreciate my argument.

Not only did the summer institutes offer exposure and practice with theory as Julissa described, but the institutes provided an opportunity to practice and to learn the style of writing that students would need in English graduate programs. The skill of understanding how to write at the graduate level can be connected with the culturally relevant skills associated with cultural capital. Students can use these skills for rewards (building rapport with faculty, grades, developing their research) in their graduate coursework.

Annette, a first-generation White woman who was a MASI student, concluded, "I definitely understand what it takes to get in and do well in graduate school for English . . ." Annette's comment about her experience in the program alluded to the cultural capital she gained, an understanding of what it takes for success in graduate school. In an informal conversation over dinner (outside of the formal interview), Annette indicated that she did intend to apply for doctoral programs and that she hoped to be a professor. She suggested that due to her first-generation student status, she had not considered this as a viable option before the institute, a possible shift in her habitus.

In addition to practice in writing and applying theory, the summer institutes, particularly the NESI institute, focused on the long-term goal of preparing students to become faculty. As Nicole, a Black woman who was a NESI student stated, "We learned how to apply to grad schools, what kind of work we could possibly be doing as grad students, how our relationships as grad students would change, and a multitude of other helpful tidbits about becoming a professor." The summer institutes did more than academically prepare the participants for graduate education. The institutes also prepared them for careers as English faculty by

helping the participants gain the knowledge and skills (cultural capital) necessary for success.

Gina, a White female English faculty member, who helped establish NESI and served as an institute administrator, summarized the institute's goal:

> We want to give them a leg up on the work we do in graduate school, the classroom curriculum stuff, the confidence, the critical vocabulary so that they won't be daunted when they get to grad school by people from hotshot schools throwing around a bunch of terms . . . I don't want them intimidated . . . I want them to have confidence, I want them to have those skills. And I want them to know . . . that the programs that they're going into are not set up for everybody's needs. They're set up intellectually, in a way they can handle intellectually. But emotionally, culturally, they may not have what they need. And I need the students to be able to find that for themselves. So there's a level of independence and "go-get-it-ness" that I want them to be able to get, to take with them from here. I want them to feel *entitled!*

Gina reasoned that building skills, an understanding of the discipline, relationships, and confidence were crucial to entering the discipline. In her estimation, the institutes offered the opportunity to foster this kind of "entitlement" and confidence so that students can be successful in graduate programs, even if the programs are not entirely set up for their needs. This is an important way in which the *bidirectional* socialization process was fostered in the institutes. Students were encouraged to develop their skills and abilities while also asserting their own identities in academia. This is evidence of how students were socialized to change the *field.*

After the institute, the students had a chance to reflect on their experiences and how it had influenced their preparation for graduate programs in a written, open-ended questionnaire. Rosmend, a first-generation multiracial woman involved in NESI, reflected, "I left [the institute] having been given the confidence that I could be an educator." Rosmend's habitus may have shifted where being an academic seemed available to her after participating in NESI. Jessica, a Black woman also involved in NESI, corroborated this, "Now I am capable of approaching literature in new and exciting ways of which I was previously unaware. I can definitely see myself studying, learning, and teaching in the years to come." Similar to Rosmend, Jessica's point contended that her habitus might have shifted where she had acquired the cultural capital that is valued in graduate school (ways of approaching the literature) and she could see herself becoming a professor. Finally, Loraine, a first-generation, Black female MASI student recalled, "The program

was awesome and it has been a life-changing experience. Participating in this program caused me to dig deep and realize my capabilities." Loraine's discussion of capabilities connected with the kind of cultural capital that is valued in an English graduate program. According to her comments, the institutes did meet the intended goal of building confidence, providing students a chance to build cultural capital relevant for graduate education, and to realize their capabilities more generally.

Engaging with Scholars of Color

One of the ways that the academic preparation and socialization for graduate programs occurred was through the relationships fostered in the institutes. Lelah, a Black/Creole woman who was a NESI student shared:

> I am almost always the only Person of Color in my English classes, so being among other Students of Color who have the same goals, though not necessarily the same background was very different for me. I learned so much from my group, both inside and outside of the classroom and I feel as if they changed me forever, in a good way, of course.

Lelah maintained that she learned a lot from her peers, referencing the acquisition of peer social capital that could be useful to her and her colleagues in the long-term as she becomes a graduate student. Similar to Lelah, most participants in both programs remarked that they were often the only underrepresented students in their English classes at their home institutions. Peers seemed to be transformative for the participants, as Lelah said they "changed [her] forever." She upheld that peer relationships offered a chance to be with people who have similar goals, to learn from them, as role models for her own goals.

Cecily also asserted the importance of relationships with other underrepresented students:

> We'll get up early and just read together. Before a test or something, we'll all get together . . . And explain it to each other . . . or hash out different aspects of our reading so that when we put it together we have an answer for several different angles of the reading. We can make connections, that when put together provide a really workable map of theories that are out there which I would say are the hardest things for us to grasp. Having that kind of support [or] friendship has always been really precious to me. It's just English majors who are all obsessed and neurotic in the same ways that you're obsessive and neurotic and it's just really great . . . When you have fun . . . work doesn't seem so much like work. So I really like that.

Cecily signaled a sense of belonging. While it was obvious that she had fostered friendships in the institute, Cecily also indicated that these relationships helped her to learn in the program, and potentially beyond, as future colleagues after they enrolled in graduate programs. These relationships were particularly important within the institutes because, as Lelah explained, many of the participants did not have peers at their undergraduate institutions who had similar goals. This exemplified how the peers may serve as a form of social capital that is valued in their *field*.

In addition to peer relationships that were fostered by the institutes, many participants stressed the importance of developing relationships with scholars in English, particularly Scholars of Color. Jayelle, a NESI staff member who was a Ph.D. candidate in English, exclaimed, "It's been really wonderful. At [my institution] I don't get opportunities to engage with Scholars of Color or underrepresented scholars who are in fields similar to mine . . ." For her, it was an unusual, but very welcome experience to develop relationships with Scholars of Color. Jayelle continued, describing her relationship with her mentor from the institute:

> [My mentor is] intimidatingly brilliant. What I say of her is that she's very demanding and very generous, and I think that that's the best way for me to put it in that I can't fall off. She won't accept anything subpar from me.

The involvement of Jayelle's mentor, who was also a Scholar of Color, helped her to stay motivated, work harder, and to do well. This typified a form of social capital for Jayelle that helped her to realize her potential.

Julissa concurred that relationships with Scholars of Color were critical:

> The speakers that come here are really helpful. I mean they break down their profession in terms of their focuses and interests along with their personal, career, and academic development. So it's nice to hear real life examples. . . . practical ways of actually establishing a profession in English.

Julissa reinforced the importance of having positive role models who were Scholars of Color as she began to envision herself as a scholar. Additionally, relationships with established scholars in the English discipline will likely be an important resource for these students as they apply for and enroll in graduate programs.

Lee, a multiracial male, first-generation student who is currently a Ph.D. student in English literature and who was also a NESI staff

member, recalled the way that his confidence changed during the summer institute:

> I remember very specific places, where it was about a sort of, a recasting of who I was according to this person . . . whether it was in the form of a letter of recommendation that the teacher gave to me to pass along. I remember my first reaction being like, what? Who is this—who is this—who is this person that you're writing about? I would like to meet this [person]. So that first initial jarring—that's what you see in me? Like this is the potential and the next move sort of being like owning it . . . now there's pressure in a productive way. Now I have to go walk and talk as this wonderful person or this strong, this competent, the smart person that you cast me as.

Lee's institute mentor helped change the way he saw himself. He was more confident in his own abilities because of the mentor. Social capital facilitated the development of Lee's confidence, and who he saw as a member of the *field.* He maintained, both during the interview and over lunch that he had gained more confidence at the institute than he had in other experiences. Lee's example also suggested a shift in his habitus or what actions he sees as viable.

Many participants remarked on the opportunity to ask scholars about their professional and personal experiences as vitally important in preparation for graduate education. The fostering of a social relationship, both with peers and scholars in the *field,* was one of the ways that students in the summer institutes began to realize their potential.

Discussion

The humanities summer institutes offered a way for underrepresented students to acquire the cultural and social capital that they (and institute faculty) believed would be useful in graduate programs. These institutes provided a form of two-way socialization for graduate school where students were socialized into disciplinary norms and also given the tools to *change* their disciplines by bringing their backgrounds with them, potentially altering the *field.*

Family backgrounds are often argued to be the primary acquisition point for cultural and social capital (often operationalized as parental income, occupation, educational attainment, prior involvement in cultural activities, or social relationships) (Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Musoba & Baez, 2009; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). However, family background plays less of a role as students move toward advanced degree programs, implying a greater role for educational institutions in cultural and social capital acquisition (DiMaggio

& Mohr, 1985; Mullen et al., 2003). By using Bourdieu's (1979/1984) concept of *field,* we were able to uncover discipline-specific elements of cultural capital, demonstrating how cultural and social capital could be acquired through graduate preparation programs.

According to our findings, the process of becoming upwardly mobile was deeply linked to acquiring social and cultural capital that could be relevant within the *field* of English. Many researchers (e.g., DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Mullen et al., 2003) have used a static, deterministic notion of social reproduction concepts (cultural/social capital, *field*); where those who begin with high status perpetuate that status. Similar to others (Bourdieu, 2000; Emirbayer, 1997; Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Emirbayer & Williams, 2005; Swartz, 2003), we applied social reproduction concepts in a way that illustrated how social contexts (*fields*) can be spaces of conflict and change; and as the *field* shifts, this can change the kind of cultural and social capital valued within it. This allowed us to illustrate how underrepresented students were socialized to change the *field* by their presence in it.

Cultural capital was acquired through the learning of particular authors, jargon, vocabulary, or learning the writing style for literary criticism. The institutes' instructors, faculty in English doctoral programs, maintained that the syllabi, vocabulary, and readings were similar to what they would teach at the doctoral level. This graduate school practice, along with the development of skills, knowledge, and competencies, is an example of cultural capital acquisition. This was also an indication that students received valuable academic preparation during these institutes. These *field*-specific skills, rules, and norms would likely be rewarded in graduate programs.

Social capital was also *field*-specific, linked to relationships with Scholars of Color in English (for prior research on the importance of peer and faculty relationships, see Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009; Taylor & Antony, 2000). The development of this social network was an example of the contested space of *field*. The *field* could shift based on who has membership within it. The participants created a large network of well-known and aspiring scholars in English who could provide a *field*-specific social capital network to support the aspiring graduate students in their applications, enrollment, and progression through graduate programs. By aligning with successful Scholars of Color in particular, the aspiring graduate students began to recognize the *field* as a place that could include them. The peer social network offered the participants peers in their discipline to whom they can turn for support during their graduate education, even if they do not attend the same institutions. The senior Scholars' of Color social network in the discipline provided

potential future faculty mentors to the participants. Both the peer and faculty relationships could become collaborative relationships once the institutes' participants begin writing and publishing.

The students implied that the institutes altered their habitus through the acquisition of cultural capital, social capital, and exposure to the *field*. The institutes attempted to make graduate education a viable opportunity for the underrepresented students. For example, the social capital that participants described seemed to alter the way they viewed their abilities (e.g., Jayelle, Lee). They began to see themselves as scholars. These findings indicate a potential shift in habitus, where students viewed themselves differently while also identifying more opportunities as available (*see also* Bourdieu, 2000; Carter, 2003; Horvat & Davis, 2011).

The institutes offered an empowering model for cultural and social capital acquisition and the creation of habitus, one that propels away from prior deficiency models that assume underrepresented students are lacking in their backgrounds (*see also* Carter, 2003; Winkle-Wagner, 2010; Yosso, 2005). The findings highlighted a bidirectional socialization process whereby students were being socialized to influence organizations (Antony, 2002; Tierney 1997; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Students noted that they did *not* perceive they should alter significant aspects of themselves to become doctoral students or professors. This was likely due to deliberate choices made within both institutes: Scholars of Color authored most of the readings and institute speakers were Scholars of Color who had found ways to incorporate their identities into their scholarship. The institutes focused on teaching students ways to exist within their respective disciplines and their future academic departments *as themselves*. The students were encouraged to *create* spaces for themselves in the discipline and in their doctoral programs rather than abandoning their pasts, or their identities, to fit the existing *field* or the social context of academia more generally. There was an emphasis within the institutes, as noted by students and faculty/staff, on giving back to one's community, on not separating their identities (i.e., race, gender) from academic work. This also has the power to change the *field* of the English discipline, making it more inclusive to new populations.

There are a few important practical implications from these findings. Graduate school preparation programs can and should offer socialization that allows for underrepresented students' backgrounds to be valued and incorporated into the students' academic work and into the discipline more generally. These findings make an important case for culturally sensitive mentoring (Barker, 2007; Milner et al., 2002) where

mentors and advisors embrace students' backgrounds. It is also important that faculty and administrators in humanities disciplines are aware of the identity development processes for historically underrepresented populations (see Jones & Abes, 2013). Awareness and understanding of historically underrepresented students' identity development could lead to initiatives that create more inclusive disciplinary cultures (Museus & Jayakumar, 2012). Cultural and social capital that will be relevant in graduate programs can be learned *before* students enroll in their programs and this has the potential to improve students' admission chances and their persistence in their programs. Finally, in this data, the peers that students encountered were vital to their cultural and social capital acquisition, and as a group, the underrepresented students could change the *field,* meaning that peer mentoring could be an important part of socialization.

Future research should identify other ways that the *field* can change as new populations of scholars enter it because this data primarily pointed to the way that underrepresented students were *socialized* to change the *field* (not whether the *field* actually changed). Understanding this bidirectional socialization could be key to recruiting and retaining underrepresented students into doctoral programs. Longitudinal studies, tracking students from undergraduate through graduate education, would be enlightening in this regard. Additionally, future work could examine differences between academic disciplines to understand to what extent the particular discipline shapes the *field* and bidirectional socialization processes.

Conclusion

This study of underrepresented students' experiences in humanities summer institutes found that for underrepresented students, these experiences provided a way to enter the *field* of English graduate programs. The institutes offered a form of bidirectional socialization that was facilitated through *field*-specific social and cultural capital acquisition. Through fostering knowledge of the *field* of English and academia, and by developing students' skills, competencies, and knowledge of what it means to be a graduate student in the humanities, students were able to acquire both the cultural and social capital that they and institute faculty asserted could help them to succeed in doctoral programs. Importantly, the participants were not simply taught how to mold themselves to fit graduate school. They were encouraged to create a space for themselves in the academy. Underrepresented students were socialized to make the *field* fit them.

Notes

[1.]Racial representation has been achieved in educational attainment levels once the percentage of degree earners at a specific level mirrors the percentage of people within that racial group.

[2.]While Asian populations are represented in terms of doctoral degree attainment in some disciplines, in the humanities, Asian students are barely maintaining representation compared to the total percentage of Asians in the U.S. population.

[3] We capitalize Students of Color, People of Color, Communities of Color, and Scholars of Color as a way to legitimate these groups and the unique experiences that they often encounter in higher education as compared to White people. Terms such as "White" or "Black" are often capitalized for similar reasons. We are choosing to capitalize terms like "Students of Color" in our writing to reaffirm the voice, experience, and history of exclusion of students and faculty who are represented by these phrases.

[4] Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth was a way to understand the many assets that an individual can acquire from one's family, above and beyond high status cultural capital. Consistent with Bourdieu (1979/1984), we maintain that everyone possesses cultural capital, and it is partially acquired from the family. In some settings (e.g., graduate school), particular types of cultural capital will be valued over others.

[5] We italicized the theoretical notion of *field* (social context) to differentiate the term from the word "field" as an academic discipline.

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