Understanding the Relationships and Experiences that Contribute to African Americans' Decision to Enroll In Doctoral Education

By

Carmen Michele McCallum

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Education)
in the University of Michigan
2012

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Deborah Faye Carter, Chair
Emeritus Professor, Patricia Gurin
Professor Phillip J. Bowman
Associate Professor, Carla O'Connor

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my father:

Ainsworth Lancelot McCallum

Who always made me believe anything was possible.

Acknowledgements

I would not have been able to complete this project without the guidance and support of many people:

To my family: Ainsworth Lancelot McCallum, my father, thank you for showing me how generous, loving, and carrying a person can be. Your love for life inspired me to be the "best that I can be." It is because of your unconditional love that I stand today as Dr. Carmen Michele McCallum! They would not allow me to put your name on my degree as we once discussed (smile).

Joann McCallum, my mother, thank you for being a wonderful and caring mother. Thank you for always being supportive of me and making me do my homework! I will always cherish the years I lived at home while completing my degree. So many people ask, "how can three women live in one house?" The answer is always the same: we can because we love each other! Thanks you for allowing me to move in and tolerating my mood swings as I walked the path towards the PhD. I could not have done it without you.

Kristina Genene McCallum, you have been my rock and foundation. Thank you for always encouraging me, outwardly expressing how proud you are of me, and for making sure I did not miss a Chene Park concert! It is almost impossible to imagine a fun time in my life without you being in it. I love you and will never forget when I didn't believe in myself you believed in me.

Melvin Dwayne Reyes, my brother, thank you for encouraging and supporting me along the journey. It has always been obvious how proud you are of me, although I think you really proved it at my open house. I still can't believe how much food we prepared. Thanks for always being there and of course, thank you for always being willing to cut a groove on the dance floor. It was the best stress relief!

Tammy Reyes, my sister-in-law, thank you for marrying my brother and making him happy! Your quiet support has always been noted. I would not have made it through my defense without your encouraging smile and words of prayer.

Nia Washington, lovingly known as my little cousin, thank you for being such a great little cousin. Thank you for all the times you came into my room and said "It will be ok! You can do it!" Thanks also for turning out my lights, moving the books off my bed, and always saying good night. I love you!

To the rest of my family, thank you, thank you, thank you! You all have always been supportive and encouraging. Thank you for the continuous phone calls, the free hot meals, extra hugs, and words of encouragement. To Melvin Acuff and Pamela Williams, I am not sure what has made me the happiest, finishing the degree or being able to tell both of you I finished! I love you all.

To my committee members: Deborah Faye Carter, from the day I walked into CSHPE you have been supportive of me and my goals. I would have never made it through the program without you. Your willingness to let me explore ideas, make mistakes, and learn from "the process" has been priceless. I am so proud to say that I was a part of Cartergoup! Many are called but the chosen are few. I will miss you and my time with the group dearly. Thank you for the memories.

Phillip Bowman, thank you for every conversation. Although I was not one of your regular advisees you took the time to encourage and mentor me. In times of confusion you always helped me to see the path and you always gave it to me straight! Thank you.

Carla O'Connor, thank you for coming on board. Your knowledge and insight helped me push my dissertation to the next level. Your understanding of theory was extremely valuable and I thank you.

Patricia Gurin, my mentor and my friend. I am speechless. The support and encouragement you have provided me over the years means more to me than words can say. When I had doubts, you convinced me to believe. Than k you!

To my academic parents: Liese Hull and Harry McLaughlin, from the moment I stated I wanted to pursue the PhD. you have been supportive. Liese, I cannot count how many pages you have edited without ever complaining. Harry, I hope you have not kept track of how many practice presentations I made you sit through. I have no doubt that you both love me enormously. It makes me happy to know that I have made you proud.

To my friends: thank you for the advice, the dinners, the laughter and support. I am very blessed to have an abundance of friends who have supported me along this journey. Marquetta Rogers, Noni Greene-Stokes, and Kellee Miller have been with me since elementary school. Thank you for always inquiring about the degree yet taking me out so I would not have to think about it. Where would I be without you! Lajuan Gibson, you came along during my Master program. We always pushed each other to achieve. You continued to push me as I completed the requirements for the PhD. I am eternally grateful for your friendship and support. What would Dr. Moxley think of us now?

My cohort: Malissa Lee, Elizabeth Hudson, Anat Letov, Pelema Morrice, Kelley Belin, Shelley Strickland, Nancy Allee , Anna Kroth, Woo-Jeong. How could we ever forget 795. We have shared some really good times together. Your continuous support has been priceless. Shelley, Liz, Woo-Jeong, and Malissa thank you for buying into the idea of having an accountability group. I think it worked!

Angela Locks, my mentor, my sister, my friends, thank you for all the times you answered the phone when I was in a panic and reminded me that "it's all part of the journey". Thanks for all the meals you coked and all the times you flew back to Michigan to be supportive. Most importantly, thank you for sharing what it is like to be a new faculty member. I was taking notes!

Gloryvee Fonseca-Borlin, thank you for always making me laugh and making me feel like I am smarter than I am (smile). I will always remember our all-nighter in the computer lab. If walls could talk! Please always remember we are in this together. I could not have done it without you.

To my SistaFriends: you know who you are. I will forever be grateful for your support.

To my church family: the love and support I experienced has been unprecedented. You always provided me a safe to place to simple be me. My faith has grown over the last six years because of your love and support. You always reminded me that what is meant for me is for me…it's that simple. Thank you for always supporting me. Pastor Dr. John E. Duckworth. I am still amazed at all you do. Thank you for all the shout outs and for letting me spend time with D3!

To all of the coffee shops where I have spent hours writing: thank you for the free WiFi, the hot tea, and the comfy chairs. This dissertation would not be completed with you.

To all of you who shared your story so that I could complete my degree. Thank you!

To others, (faculty, staff, family, and friends) who somehow contributed to this project, please know that I am eternally grateful. Thank you!

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Appendices

ABSTRACT

African Americans have made great advancements in postsecondary education. Over the last thirty years, enrollment and degree attainment has increased over 65% at undergraduate and graduate degree levels (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Yet despite these gains, African Americans continue to severely trail behind other racial and ethnic groups at critical places in the postsecondary educational pipeline. Regardless of academic ability, social, economic, and cultural barriers frequently prevent African Americans from enrolling and succeeding in college at the rate of their racially diverse peers. Consequently, many high-achieving African American students do not transition into doctoral education. The statistics on doctoral degree attainment speaks volume to this phenomenon. Out of the 60, 616 doctorates awarded during the 2006-2007 academic year only 3,727 were earned by African Americans (NCES, 2008).

African Americans are not earning the doctorate at the rate of their peers, but perhaps more importantly, researchers have neglected to learn from those who have successfully navigated the educational pipeline and enrolled in doctoral programs. The doctoral literature is replete with studies that identify why African Americans are not enrolling but few scholars' research how students overcome barriers to succeed. Studies which focus specifically on African American's doctoral decision processes are almost nonexistent. Hence, we have very little knowledge of how and why African Americans pursue the doctorate. This study uses a social capital framework to explore the factors that influence African Americans to enroll in doctoral education. Using a strength base-approach this qualitative study utilizes semi-structured interviews to explore the role of

family relationships, college experiences, and community values in the decision to enroll in doctoral education.

Findings revealed that African Americans levy resources from family members, faculty, and their community in order to persist towards doctoral education. Resources participants' received were both intangible (e.g. encouragement) and tangible (e.g. assistant with personal statements). Male and female participants varied in the type of resources they were provided and needed. Additionally, narratives confirmed that African Americans desire to earn their PhD as a means to earn credentials that would qualify them to become leaders in the African American community.

Chapter I

Introduction

African Americans have made great advancements in postsecondary education. Over the last thirty years, enrollment and degree attainment has increased over 65% at undergraduate and graduate degree levels (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). In 1976 barely 111,000 African Americans were participating in higher education, but by 2007 participation exceeded 2.4 million and projections indicate that enrollment and degree attainment will continue to increase well into the 21st century (NCES, 2008). Yet despite these gains, African Americans continue to severely trail behind other racial and ethnic groups at critical places in the postsecondary educational pipeline (Antony & Taylor, 2001; Copper, 2009). Consequently, many high-achieving African American students do not transition into doctoral education.

According to the United States Census, African Americans comprised over 12% of the United States population in 2007 yet held less than 6% of the nation's conferred doctorates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). In other words, African Americans held doctorates at half the level that would have allowed for racial parity with Whites and other racial groups. In comparison, Whites held over 79% of the doctorates during that same year but only comprised roughly 60% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). More specifically, a total of 60,616 doctorates were awarded during the 2006-2007 academic year. Over 26,000 were awarded to minorities but only 3,727 were earned by African Americans. Ironically, more doctoral degrees were earned by African

Americans during that school year than any other year in the United States history, but the numbers continue to remain inadequate.

During the past ten years, the increase in African American doctorates is reflective of the momentous gains of African American females. From 1990 to 2007, the number of doctorates earned by African American females increased 74%. Furthermore, during the 2006-2007 school year over 1,000 more females than males earned a doctorate (NCES, 2008). This is surprising as African American males had out-paced African American females in doctoral degree attainment for several decades. Prior to the 1990s, African American males were 60% more likely to obtain a doctorate than African American females (NCES, 2008). But by the beginning of the 21st century African American males only accounted for 38% of the doctorates conferred to African Americans (NCES, 2008). More strikingly, only 147 more doctorates were awarded to African American males in 2003 than in 1977 (NCES, 2008).

The reasons for the gender shift in enrollment and attainment has yet to be thoroughly explored in the doctoral enrollment literature. Therefore, it remains unclear whether the factors that influence African American males to pursue or not to pursue the doctorate are different than the factors that influence African American females. No other racial or ethnic group has such a large gender gap in doctoral degree attainment (NCES, 2008). This phenomenon justifies the need to explore gender differences amongst those who choose to pursue the doctorate.

Another concern is the lack of variation in disciplines among African American doctorates which has consequences for our workforce and college environments. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2008), 60% of all doctorates

earned by African Americans are in the field of education and less than 3% are typically earned in science, technology or math fields. The imbalance results in a disproportionate amount of highly educated African Americans in the field of education and rarely any in fields which President Obama refers to as "technologies of our future:" fields that are essential for our prosperity, security, health, environment, and quality of life (http://www.justice.gov/ag/speeches/2009). This is problematic as diverse work environments promote creative ideas, perspectives and insights that typically are not present in homogeneous environments (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Although some scholars have found diverse work environments to be adverse to productivity (Jehn, Chadwick, &Thatcher, 1997; Pelled, 1996) others have found diversity exposes traditional homogeneous work environments to new ideas, networks, and resources that would otherwise be out of sight or unavailable (Polzer, Milton, Swann, 2002; Wanous & Youtz, 1986). In fact, Foeman & Pressley (1987) suggest that ""…within the context of the black culture are skills and attributes which are consistent and useful in . . . organizations (p.294)." Therefore the lack of highly educated African Americans in various academic fields is a topic warranting further research. Their absence limits our ability to 'think outside of the box' in order to solve society's most complex problems.

Likewise, the insufficient number of African Americans doctoral recipients in various disciplines limits representation in college classrooms. This can be detrimental to African American students who may be considering pursuing doctoral education. Research indicates that having a faculty member of the same race (Leon, Dougherty, Maitland, 1997) and in the same discipline (Lee, 1999) is crucial to persisting to graduate education. Faculty members who are aligned with students culturally and ethnically tend

to be the most effective in nurturing African Americans along the journey to the doctorate (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Ellis, 2001; Smith & Davidson, 1992; Taylor & Antony, 2000). In general, the lack of disciplinary diversity has multiple consequences. To address these concerns higher education organizations have begun conversations regarding diversity issues within graduate education.

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) have created special interest groups within their organizations to acknowledge the unique experiences of graduate students at various different educational levels. However, their programs are focused on graduate school persistence rather than recruitment and enrollment. "Though a large number of programs (and organizations) bolster opportunities for minority students, there is no significant coalition…that shares strategies and information or that… attempts to coordinate efforts so that the overall national effort [to increase doctoral enrollment] could become coherent" (Weisbuch, 2005, p.3). Therefore, this study specifically seeks to explore what relationships and experiences influence African Americans to enroll in doctoral degree programs.

Statement of the Problem

While it is true that African Americans are not overwhelmingly pursuing graduate education, perhaps more importantly, researchers have neglected to learn from those who have successfully navigated the educational pipeline and enrolled in doctoral programs. Educational aspirations, the application and admission processes, completion, and attrition concerns have been studied (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Golde, 2005; Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2001; Malaney, 1987; Olson & King, 1985; Poock, 1999, 2000; Stoecker,

1991). However, researchers agree that a comprehensive theoretical framework that encompasses the multiple factors that influence a student's enrollment decision in doctoral education is not currently in the graduate education literature (Gardner, 2009; Malaney, 1987; Olson, & King, 1985; Poock, 1999; 2000; Stoecker, 1991). Studies focusing on African American's doctoral decisions are almost nonexistent. Researchers who have examined enrollment decisions have primarily focused on the social, cultural, and political barriers that prevent minority students from enrolling in doctoral education rather than the strategies utilized by those who have enrolled. Therefore, very little is known about African Americans who have overcome obstacles to enroll in doctoral programs.

Millet (2003) suggests that our knowledge on this topic is limited because most scholars who explore graduate enrollment use quantitative methods and national data sets that do not adequately represent the students who are currently pursuing graduate education. In most studies researchers do not distinguish between graduate and professional programs such as masters, law, or doctoral, making it extremely difficult to understand the nuances within each group of students (e.g. Issac, Malaney, & Karras 1992; Malaney & Issac 1988; Millett, 2003; Schapiro, O'Malley, & Litten 1991). Such research may lead to institutional interventions which may help produce more individuals pursuing the doctorate.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), the American Council of Education (ACE), and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), the three largest organizations that collect national data on graduate students, currently do not provide disaggregated enrollment data by degree, race, or gender. Masters and doctoral students

are combined and reported as "graduate student enrollment" due to the difficulty of discerning master students from doctoral students in various programs ("Trends in Graduate Enrollment," 2006). This poses a major problem for scholars who want to specifically focus on doctoral education. For example, in 2004 CSG reported over 1.5 million students were enrolled in graduate education but further investigation revealed less than 20% were enrolled in doctoral programs ("Trends in Graduate Enrollment," 2006). Unknowingly, scholars are making sweeping claims about graduate students that may not be accurate for those pursuing various degrees. Consequently, our collective understanding of many dimensions of doctoral education is limited ("Trends in Graduate Enrollment," 2006).

Significance of the Problem

Scholars have examined social experiences, campus climate, persistence, retention, mentoring and the role of parents and faculty at the undergraduate level (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Hurtado & Carter; 1997; Hurtado, Carter & Spuler, 1996; Locks, Hurtado, Bowman, Oseguera, 2008; Longerbeam, Sedlacek & Alatorre, 2004; Laird & Niskode'-Dossett, 2010) but few have attempted to connect those experiences to the decision to pursue graduate education (Achor & Morales, 1990; King & Chepyator-Thomson, 1996; Napier, 1995; Schwartz, Bower, Rice & Washington; 2003). Consequently, we have very little knowledge of why African Americans pursue the doctorate.

Furthermore, we are educating more foreign born students than U.S. citizens in doctoral programs. In 2003, nearly five times as many citizens of other nations (some 14,300) earned U.S. doctorates compared to U.S. citizens who were African American

(Weisbuch, 2005). According to Weisbuch (2005), "educating the world's students while neglecting significant groups of the national population is a vast inequality at the highest academic level" (p.8). Our country will not thrive if we continue to exclude minority students from doctoral education. Their exclusion has amounted to an "educational debt" that must be repaid if society wants to address embedded issues of structural inequality (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Ladson-Billings (2006) argues that society is educationally indebted to African Americans for years of historical, economic, political, and immoral policies and decisions that have created society's "educational debt". The debt began to accrue during the period of enslavement and continues to grow as access to quality education remains a concern for African Americans (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009**).** According to Ladson-Billings and economist Robert Havemen, society's "educational debt" is the sum of "foregone resources that we could have (should have) been investing in (primarily) low income [students], which deficit leads to a variety of social problems (e.g. crime, low productivity, low wages, and low labor force participation)..." especially in African American communities (Haveman, 2006 as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2006**).** Because resources have been withheld deliberately and intentionally it is society's obligation to deliberately and intentionally invoke aggressive measures to erode the negative intergenerational effects of inadequate schooling. As the nation's demographics change and our population becomes more diverse, we must tap into the resources that we have here on American soil in order to be successful. To be competitive in a global market, we must encourage persons from a range of backgrounds and experiences, including those

who have had limited access historically, to pursue doctoral education (de los Santos, Jr. & de los Santos, 2003).

Our nation's competitive survival depends on our ability to diversify at the doctoral level. Those who earn the doctorate are able to "expand boundaries of knowledge, motivate, teach generations of students, and exercise leadership in the professions, business, government, and society" (Nettles, 1990, p.495). The cure for cancer, economic reform, and a deeper understanding of our cultural differences all rest in our future doctoral recipients. In order to fully capitalize on the nation's intellectual resources, we must produce a diverse group of leaders in a variety of fields who are able to tackle complex problems and anticipate myriad social, educational, economic, technological, and political challenges. In order to expand the boundaries of knowledge, improve communities, and create leaders that will be motivated and prepared to interact in heterogeneous environments it is necessary to invite all American citizens into the fabric of doctoral education.

Purpose of the Study

This study uses qualitative methods to explore what relationships and experiences influence African Americans to enroll in doctoral education. Specifically, this study seeks to increase our understanding of the doctoral decision process. Moving beyond aspirations, this study identifies the role of family relationships, college experiences, and community values of African Americans who have chosen to enroll in doctoral education.

This study also adds to a particularly sparse graduate school literature. The literature is replete with studies that use deficit models to blame individuals for the

educational barriers that prevent students from achieving their educational goals (e.g. Bailey & Moore, 2004; Cujet, 1997; De Sousa, 2001; Jones, 2001). Unlike previous studies, this study uses a strength-based theoretical approach to examine the relationships and experiences that influence African American students to enroll in doctoral programs, paying particular attention to race, gender and cultural values in the decision making process.

Furthermore, this study strives to inform effective and diverse recruitment and retention strategies in doctoral education. Currently "…it is simply unclear what works best, or what does not work, in recruiting and retaining doctoral students of color (Weisbuch, 2005 p.3)." A recent report released by the Commission on the Future of Graduate Education in the United States, *The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States,* credits undergraduate institutions with creating and implementing recruitment and retention strategies geared towards increasing graduate school enrollment (Wendler, et al., 2010). However, the report argues institutions must do more than merely launch standardized strategies and initiatives aimed at increasing graduate school aspirations (Wendler, et al., 2010). To increase enrollment institutions must make conscious efforts to understand the challenges that face diverse populations as they make enrollment decisions (Wendler, et al., 2010). Thus, this study aims to provide empirical knowledge of the challenges that African Americans encounter when making enrollment decisions as well as highlight the resources which facilitate success. Upon reading it faculty, administrators, and staff should have a deeper understanding of what works and what does not work for African Americans. It is my hope that recruitment and retention strategies embedded in the findings will improve enrollment and retention

strategies which may increase the number of African Americans enrolling in doctoral education.

Research Questions

The following questions ascertain what relationships and experiences contribute to the decision to enroll in doctoral education for African Americans:

1. How does individual background like class, gender, family, peer, and community relationships influence the decision to enroll in doctoral education?

2. How does the decision process differ for men and women? Are influential relationships and experiences different?

3. In relationships deemed influential, what elements of social capital do African Americans identify as essential? What other characteristics do students emphasize?

4. In deciding to enroll in doctoral education, what supports and obstacles do students identify?

Organization of the Dissertation

In chapter two, relevant literature on the decision to pursue the doctorate will be discussed; the theory which will frame the study will be defined; and a new conceptual model will be presented. Chapter three will detail the intended methods including site selection, participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis technique. Chapters three, four and five highlights the role of family, faculty, and the African American community in the decision process. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings and discusses the implications of the study.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Chapter two is a review and synthesis of relevant empirical literature related to the decision to enroll in doctoral education. The review is focused on doctoral education as well as graduate education as studies specifically focusing on the decision to enroll in doctoral programs are extremely limited. Likewise, because studies focusing on African Americans are sparse, this review will cover all empirical studies that explore the decision to pursue doctoral or graduate education.

Methods of the Literature Search

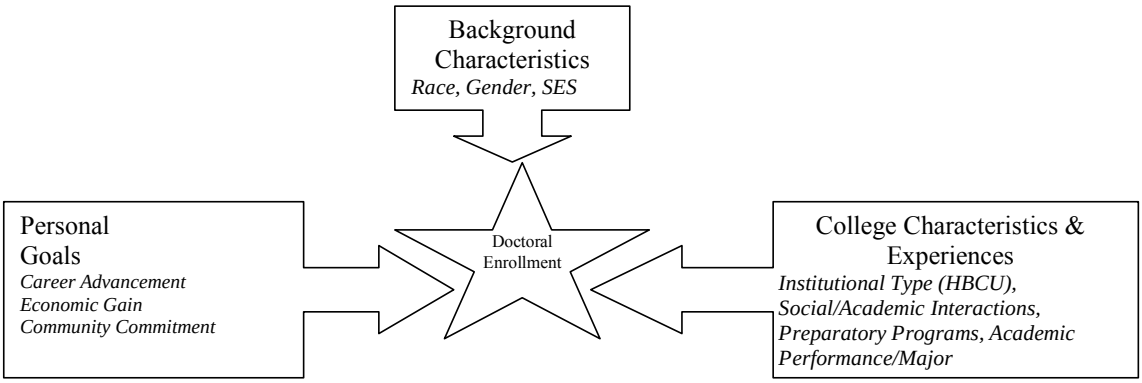
To conduct the review, multiple information sources, including books, dissertations, internet sources, professional journals, and periodicals, were used. These sources were accessed through the library's online catalog and databases, such as Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), First Search, ProQuest, Web of Science, Dissertations Abstracts, Psych Info, and Social Science Abstracts. The searches were performed in these databases using a variety of terms relevant to the topic: doctoral students, doctoral degrees, graduate students, enrollment, enrollment influences, graduate study, African Americans, minority groups, decision making, etc. No specific delimiting time frame was used due to the limited amount of research conducted on the topic. As previously indicated, studies exclusively focusing on masters or professional degree programs were not included in this review. Studies which combine Masters, professional, and doctoral students will be reviewed. The identified factors will be discussed in this chapter as well as factors specifically influential to African Americans' pursuit of the doctorate.

The chapter will begin by identifying factors influential to the decision to pursue the doctoral education. Next, factors specifically identified as influential to African Americans will be highlighted. After reviewing all of the factors, critiques and limitations to the current body of literature will be discussed. This will be followed by the theory which will frame this study. The theory will be defined. To conclude, the theoretical underpinnings of the theory and relevant findings in the doctoral enrollment literature will be assimilated to create a new conceptual model that will aid in understanding the influences that contribute to the decision to pursue the doctorate for African Americans.

Factors Affecting the Decision to Enroll in Doctoral Education

The factors that influence the decision to pursue doctoral education can be bracketed into three distinct categories: Background Characteristics, College Characteristics/Experiences and Personal Goals. This section will discuss those identified factors (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Summary of Variables Influencing the Decision to Enroll in Doctoral Education



Background Variables

Race

Race is associated with the doctoral decision. Although inadequately addressed in the literature, scholars have found statistically significant differences in graduate school aspirations and attendance among various racial and ethnic groups (Millett, 2003; Weiler, 1994). Weiler (1994) found minority students are more likely than White students to expect to attend a post-baccalaureate program after considering undergraduate debt. Similarly, Millett (2003), whose study focused on doctoral applications and enrollment processes, concluded the odds of African American students applying to graduate or professional school are 1.8 times higher than those of White students with similar backgrounds. Together, their finding supports the notion that race is associated with the decision to pursue and enroll in doctoral education. Different racial and ethnic groups bring different background, educational, and career experiences with them when they embark upon postsecondary education (Barrera, 1997; Cabera, Nora, Terenzini, & Pascarella, 1999; Carter, 2002). It seems reasonable that these experiences will influence their doctoral decision.

In contrast, others have found race to be insignificant when examining post-graduation aspirations and plans (Conley, 2001; Heller, 2001; Issac et al., 1992; Walpole, 2003). In a study exploring capital for college, Conley (2001) found the odds of African Americans transitioning into graduate education was not significantly different from the odds of other racial groups when various background variables were controlled. Heller (2001), Issac, Malaney and Karras (1992) and Walpole (2003) all had similar findings. In

their quantitative studies race was found insignificant after controlling for various background variables (e.g. age, income, etc).

In response to the debate, Pascarella, Wolniak, Pierson, and Flowers (2004) argue the confusion regarding the influential nature of race rests with researchers' methodological decisions. The theories and empirical models being used to explore the decision to pursue the doctorate are too generic to decipher the influence of race on graduate school plans. To address the issue, Pascarella et al. examined the role of race in the development of graduate degree aspirations and plans among African American, Hispanic, and White students at the end of their third year of college. Following Carter's (2002) comprehensive synthesis of college student's degree aspirations, Pascarella et al. used data from the National Study of Student Learning—a three year longitudinal data set from 19 diverse four years colleges—to explore racial differences in the way undergraduate experiences shape graduate school plans.

The parallel logistic regression analyses confirmed that race is influential to the decision to pursue graduate education. Results indicated that the odds of African American and Hispanic students planning to earn a graduate degree were more than twice as high as their White counterparts. Findings also indicated significant overall differences in the patterns of influencing variables based on race. For example, a combined sample of Black and Hispanic students compared to White students revealed credit hours, study time, exposure to arts and humanities, etc. were not significant to graduate school aspirations or plans. But when the model was disaggregated by race, researchers found previously insignificant variables (credit hours, work responsibility, etc.) became significant for African Americans. The aggregated sample masked the effect of

influencing variables for African American students. This finding supports Pascarella et al. (2004) position that conceptual and methodological choices are critical to understanding the influence of race. Race is associated with the decision to pursue the doctorate (Kim & Eyermann, 2006; Pascarella, et al. 2004; Weiler, 1994).

Gender

There is evidence to suggest that men and women approach making the decision differently (Hearn, 1987; Nettles & Millett, 2006). During college women tend to make the decision to pursue graduate education on a continuum: continuously evaluating on a year-by-year basis if an advanced degree is necessary in order to achieve personal and professional career goals (Hearn, 1987). Men, on the other hand, tend to make their decision based on a single event which occurs during their freshmen year (Hearn, 1987). Post-graduation women tend to take into account lifestyle issues such as child care, household responsibilities, and relationships with significant others (Johnson-Bailey, 1998). However, it is not clear how men make their graduate school decisions post-bachelor degree attainment. Thus, Hearn (1987) calls for researchers to pay closer attention to gender differences in post-college educational plans and degree attainment.

Socio-Economic Status

While race and gender appear to be associated with the decision, the role of a student's socio-economic status (SES) is not easily discerned. Potential graduate students have experienced college and have gained a sense of independence—a possible indirect effect of an undergraduate education. This independence frequently clouds the connection between their decision to pursue graduate education and SES; thus, it is not surprising that scholars report conflicting results. Several indicate that SES—parents' income and education—influences graduate school attendance (Baird, 1977b; Crane,

1969; Fox, 1992; Stolzenberg, 1994; Zhang, 2005) while others maintain the effects of SES disappear at the graduate level (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Grandy, 1992; Kallio, 1995; Mare, 1980; Stolzenberg 1994). To address this discrepancy, Stolzenberg (1994) analyzed causal models which compared a composite of SES with its distinct components. Results suggested that the connection between SES and graduate degree aspirations found in other studies have been misinterpreted (Stolzenberg, 1994). According to Stolzenberg, educational aspirations only function as a conduit through which parental background effects on graduate education is transmitted. Thus, there is not a direct connection between SES and graduate school aspiration (Mare, 1980; Stolzenberg, 1994).

On the other hand, Mullen, Goyette and Soares (2003) examined the effects of parent's education specifically on enrollment in doctoral programs. They concluded that parent's education does influence one's likelihood of enrolling in doctoral education (Mullen, Goyette & Soares, 2003). Students from highly educated families are more likely to enroll in doctoral programs than students whose parents have less education—some college or high school diploma (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Karraker, 1992; Mullen et al., 2003). Mullen et al. (2003) also confirms the need to examine the components of SES and graduate degree levels separately. The influence of parents' education on enrollment was specific to doctoral programs (Mullen et al, 2003). Parents' education did not influence enrollment in Master's of Business Administration (MBA) or other graduate programs (Mullen et al., 2003). If Mullen et al. (2003) would have only analyzed data that combined master, doctoral, and professional students, and a

composite of SES (rather than its distinct components), the effect of parent's education on doctoral enrollment may not have been found influential.

College Characteristics and Experiences

Institutional Type

The decision to pursue doctoral education is connected to a student's initial decision to pursue college. Students who attend two-year institutions are less likely to enroll in doctoral or first professional programs as compared to students who attend private or public research or liberal arts four-year institutions (Millet, 2003; Mullen et al., 2003) In fact, students are 16 to 18% more likely to enroll in graduate education if they attend private or public, high-quality, selective four-year institutions (Eide, Brewer, & Ehenberg, 1998; Mullen et al., 2003; Walpole, 2003). These findings hold true even after considering SES, race, and gender (Eide et al., 1998). The type, (Eide et al., 1998; Mullen et al., 2003; Walpole, 2003; Zhang, 2005) quality (Zhang, 2005), and selectivity (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Mullen et al., 2003; Schapiro, O'Malley & Litten, 1999; Walpole, 2003) of a student's undergraduate institution influences plans to enroll in graduate education.

Academic & Social Interactions/Preparatory Programs

Academic and social interactions while in college also play a role in the doctoral decision (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Heller, 2001; Mullen et al., 2003; Wallace, 1965). Entering male freshmen who indicated at orientation that they *did not* want to attend graduate school changed their minds mid-year after interacting with upper-level students who were preparing to enter graduate programs (Wallace, 1965). Although Wallace's (1965) study was conducted over thirty years ago it continues to be relevant today as it

specifically connects social interactions with peers to graduate school aspirations: a precursor to enrollment. Tinto (1975) and Ethington & Smart (1986) both found similar findings. The more academically and socially engaged with the college environment a student becomes the more likely the student will advance to graduation, making them eligible for doctoral study. Students become engaged by participating in student organizations (Patton & Bonner II, 2001; Schuh, Triponey, Heim & Nishimura, 1992; Harper, Byars & Jelke, 2005), interacting with faculty (Hathaway, Nagda, Gregerman, 2002; Lammers, 2001; Peppas, 1981), and participating in graduate preparatory programs (Ishiyama & Hopkins, 2003) and undergraduate research projects (Barlow & Villarejo, 2004; Hathaway, et al., 2002; Huss, Randall, Davis, & Hansen, 2002; Ridgewll & Creamer, 2003). All of the aforementioned activities have been associated with graduate school aspirations and plans.

Students who participate in graduate school preparatory programs or undergraduate research projects have more interactions with faculty members than students who do not. Research indicates that the frequency of student faculty interactions positively influences the decision to pursue graduate education (Hathaway et al., 2002; Lammers, 2001; Peppas, 1981). In a recent study, Hathaway et al. (2002) found 81.5% of students who participated in a particular undergraduate research program pursued some form of graduate education. In comparison, only 65% of those who did not participate in some kind of undergraduate research had similar educational goals. Louzada, de Rio, Abell, Peltz, & Persans (2008) had similar findings when focusing on Latino students. Out of 54 participants enrolled in a multiple university undergraduate research program, 20 entered graduate schools and 4 specifically entered doctoral programs.

In contrast, Millett's (2003) study of 1, 982 students who applied or enrolled in graduate study did not find a connection between undergraduate experiences (e.g. satisfaction with the ability of instructors, intellectual life of their undergraduate school, undergraduate curriculum, own intellectual growth) and enrollment in doctoral programs. A logistic regression analysis determined that undergraduate experiences, except for GPA, are not significantly related to the decision to apply or enroll in graduate education when considering background characteristics, undergraduate debt, and selectivity of the institution.

The discrepancy between Millet (2003) and other scholars (Hathaway et al., 2002; Lammers, 2001; Peppas, 1981; Louzada et al., 2008) raises further concerns about choosing appropriate methods and data to investigate issues surrounding doctoral education. Scholars who found participating in preparatory programs influenced graduate school aspirations and enrollment all focused on a single institution or program. In contrast, Millet (2003) utilized a national database containing data from students across the country. The contradiction warrants careful consideration of data and methodological choices and validates the need for further research in this area.

Personal Goals

Career advancement, personal goals, and economic gain have briefly been cited in the literature as influential in the graduate school decision (Anderson & Swazey, 1998; Henry, 1985; Stoecker, 1991). In a large quantitative study, over three-quarters of the respondents, approximately 800, stated that a desire for knowledge in the field and the opportunity to teach at the college level was significantly important in their decision to enroll in graduate education (Anderson & Swazey, 1998). Stoecker (1991) and others confirmed Anderson and Swazey's (1998) findings (Henry, 1985; Malaney, 1987). A

desire to gain knowledge in the field and personal goals influences one's decision to pursue graduate education.

This section has highlighted variables influential to the decision to pursue the doctorate regardless of racial identity. The next section will discuss factors that are specifically influential to African Americans' doctoral decision.

Factors Affecting African Americans' Decision to Enroll in Doctoral Education

Few scholars have explored the factors that influence the decision to enroll in doctoral education for African Americans. Researchers have generally assessed influencing factors across all racial groups without giving special attention to any particular race. Although there are some general factors that researchers agree are influential across race, those who specifically focus on African Americans suggest that some influencing factors are culturally specific. This section will highlight the most salient culturally specific factors in the literature: attending a historically black college or university (HBCU) and community commitment.

Historical Black Colleges and Universities

Attending a more selective institution has been found influential to the doctoral decision for many students but there is little evidence to confirm or refute the claim that attending such institutions influences the doctoral decision for African Americans. The lack of evidence is partially due to the fact that very few African Americans who pursue the doctorate attend highly selective undergraduate institutions as the majority earn their undergraduate degrees from a HBCU—Historically Black College or University (Brazziel, 1983; Contreras, & Gándara, 2006; Perna, 2001; Solorzano, 1995). In fact, between 1980 and 1990,

76% of African American females and 57% of African American males who earned the doctorate received their bachelor degree from an HBCU (Solorzano, 1995). Currently, approximately 27% of freshmen attending HBCUs plan to pursue the doctorate (Perna, 2001). Furthermore, those who attend HBCUs are more likely to pursue the doctorate than African Americans who attend predominantly White selective institutions (Allen, & Jewell, 1991; Brazziel, 1983, Brown & Davis, 2001; Pascerella et al, 2004, Perna, 2001; Solorzano**,** 1995; Wenglinsky, 1996).

The number of African Americans pursuing graduate education from HBCUs is significant given that HBCUs represent only 3% of the nation's colleges and universities (Allen & Jewell, 2002). However, considering the mission of such institutions, it is surprising the percentages are not greater. HBCUs are designed to advocate graduate education, promote leadership within communities, and encourage academic and career success (Williams et al, 2005; Wenglinsky, 1996). As a result, these institutions provide smaller class sizes, accessibility to faculty, and pathways into enriched social networks that assist students with preparing to enter graduate school. The mission of the institutions, experiences and relationships with faculty have proven to positively influence the doctoral decision (Achor & Morales, 1990; Brown & Davis, 2001; King & Chepyator-Thomson, 1996; Perna, 2001). The influential nature of relationships with faculty at HBCUs justifies further exploration of relationships in the decision process of African Americans who enroll in doctoral education.

Community Commitment

It is not surprising that African Americans who pursue the doctorate have a strong desire to give back to their community considering the majority have attended HBCUs. Thus, the decision to enroll in doctoral education is often connected to a mission of "racial uplift" and community commitment (Napier, 1995; Ward, 1997). By educating oneself, African Americans believe they will gain the knowledge and the abilities to help other African Americans in the educational pipeline (Louque, 1999; Schwartz et al., 2003; Williams, et al., 2005). The idea that earning the doctorate is "bigger than me" is considered a primary factor that influences African Americans to enroll and persist in graduate education (Williams, et al. 2005).

Scholars who focus on African American culture suggest that the desire to "give back" and help one another is embedded in the African American culture (Cole & Omari, 2003; Gaines, 1996; Moore, 2003; Stack, 1975, Wolcott, 2001). In order to survive years of racism and discrimination African Americans had to become interdependent in order to survive the harsh realities of a segregated and unequal society. This interdependence has shaped how African American students view higher education (Carson, 2009). Contrary to White students, African American students are more concerned about learning and receiving their degree than specific grades because they believe the knowledge they gain can be given back to the community and the degree symbolizes success (Carson, 2009). In general, African Americans view the world from a collective perspective rather than an independent perspective and that collective perspective influences the doctoral decision.

Additionally, the understanding that the success of one African American is a success for all African Americans has assisted in creating "kin help networks." "Kin help networks" are networks of individuals who are considered family because of their close personal ties but the individuals in the networks are actually not kin—they have no blood ties. Neighbors, teachers, ministers, extended family members, etc. can all be considered part of a students' "kin help network" and those networks plays a large role in educational and career decisions of African Americans (McCollum, 1998; Person & Bieschke, 2001).

In summary, attending an HBCU and the desire to give back to one's community has been highlighted as culturally specific factors which influence African Americans to pursue the doctorate. The next section of this chapter will focus on identified barriers.

Barriers to Enrolling in Doctoral Education for African Americans

> **"**There seem to be systematic biases in doctoral training that deflect some kinds of students from entering doctoral study…" (Golde & Walker, 2006, p.5).

Golde and Walker (2006) adequately summarize why so few African Americans pursue doctoral education. Systematic biases woven into the educational pipeline have made it difficult for African Americans to gain access and persist thru to the doctoral level (Golde & Walker, 2006). This section will highlight the salient barriers that have been identified in the literature.

College Culture

The academic and social culture of higher education institutions can be considered a barrier to doctoral study for African Americans. "Culture shapes attitudes and ways of behaving, structures one's perception of the world, and is shared by most

members of the same group (Rovai, Gallien, & Wighting, 2005, p.360)." It includes the values, customs, symbols, and communication patterns that are consistently reinforced and passed on from one generation to another. Culture provides meaning and purpose, determines what is and is not acceptable and can influence learning and behavior. It is transmitted through cultural codes which can be easily deciphered depending on one's family and educational background (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003).

The culture of higher education institutions is considered a barrier because research indicates that African Americans do not possess the same cultural tools or knowledge as their White peers (Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson, & Mugenda, 2001). As a result, it is extremely difficult for them to interpret the cultural norms which are necessary to navigate the college environment (Haro, 1992; Freeman, 1997). For example, predominantly White institutions typically have highly competitive classrooms where students are expected to aggressively answer questions and debate peers (Rovai, et al, 2005). African Americans tend to find this type of learning environment hostile; therefore, they frequently limit their classroom participation. By limiting participation they are often excluded from informal and formal conversations with their White peers (Thompson & Fretz, 1991). This exclusion makes it difficult to integrate into the college environment which has been deemed necessary for academic success. Only academically successful candidates typically qualify to enroll in doctoral study.

Classroom Environment

African Americans who choose to engage in classroom and peer discussions often encounter different barriers, especially at predominantly White institutions. As one of the few students of color, African Americans are often burdened with being the spokesperson for their race, continuously dispelling stereotypes and defending their right to be present

(Gossett, Cuyjet, & Cockriel, 1996). The hostility and lack of diversity often causes students to feel isolated, helpless, and uncertain of how to negotiate the academic and social systems necessary to successfully persist and earn their degree (Lewis, Ginsberg, Davis, Smith, 2004). As a result, many students drop out making them ineligible for doctoral study.

Faculty and Staff

Negative experiences with administration, faculty, and staff can also deter African Americans from pursuing the doctorate. Brazziel and Brazziel's (2001) exploratory study of minority students who were qualified (GPA, test scores, etc.) but who opted not to pursue the doctorate found that interactions with academic advisors were key to their doctoral decision. Students' stated that one of their primary reasons for not pursuing the degree was the lack of confidence in their ability to be successful by their advisor. Students specified that their advisors did not view them as the "chosen ones," so the rewards and benefits of pursuing the doctorate were not discussed. Many stated they would have pursued the degree if their advisor had indicated it was a realistic option. Despite being qualified, students reported advisors only provided detailed information about doctoral programs to their White peers.

Similarly, advisors and staff at graduate institutions can impede doctoral enrollment. Research indicates that coordinators who believe that students are not qualified based on non-academic criteria often discourage applicants from engaging in the application process (Achor & Morales, 1990; Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Johnson-Bailey's (2004) qualitative study documents incidents of graduate coordinators denying students applications and refusing to return phone calls on their beliefs that the student was "unqualified" or "not graduate school material." Shockingly, one participant thought

she was being provided a tour of the university but shortly realized she was being escorted out of the building after revealing she had children and intended to attend part time. Because of her life circumstances, the coordinator concluded she was obviously "not serious" about pursuing graduate education.

Public Policy

State-wide policies has limited access. For instance, anti-affirmative action policies in California (Proposition 209), Washington (Proposition 2), and Michigan (Proposal 2) have created access barriers at the undergraduate and graduate degree level. Prior to voters passing Proposition 209, Proposition 2, and Proposal 2, colleges and universities were allowed to consider a student's life experiences, background characteristics, motivation, and ambition in the admission process. Additionally, institutions were allowed to give special consideration to minority students for the purposes of correcting historical inequalities from past discrimination practices based on race. The considerations increased the probability that an African American student would be admitted into a rigorous undergraduate or graduate degree program.

After the anti-affirmative action policies were implemented, colleges and universities experienced a significant decline in African American enrollment in all three states (Camera, 2000; Ntiri, 2001, Wildavsky, 1999). Berkeley, the flagship campus of the University California System, reported a 54% decline the two years immediately following the implementation of Proposition 209. Likewise, the University of Washington experienced a 12% decline in African American graduate student enrollment.

The anti-affirmative action policies present significant enrollment barriers to many African Americans as institutions are no longer able to consider race or the

consequences of being a certain race (e.g. low-income impoverished schools) into the admission process. This is especially troubling as traditional means of merit—SAT or GRE—scores, are often inadequate indicators of minority students' academic performance in college or graduate school (Sampson & Boyer, 2001; Sedlacek, 2004). As a result, colleges and universities have admitted fewer African Americans, which may have deterred potential students from applying. African American students are generally attracted to racially diverse institutions that actively demonstrate that their presence on campus is valued (Cabera et al, 1999). States with anti-affirmative action policies communicate to minority students that their presence is not valued. The restrictions combined with feelings of "not belonging" results in institutional barriers for African American students.

Personal Choice

Many external barriers prevent students from pursuing doctoral education but some students strategically make a conscious decision not to pursue the degree for alternative reasons. Brazziel and Brazziel (2001) found students who were made aware of the graduate student life—problems finding employment and lack of financial gain upon graduation—opted to pursue full time employment in lieu of pursuing doctoral education. This finding is particularly important when examining the factors that influence African Americans. Research indicates that African Americans tend to pursue college to secure employment that will illicit an economic gain greater than if they had not attended (Freeman, 2005). If the earning potential with the doctorate is not substantially greater than without it, the degree may not be a practical option for many.

Earning potential should be considered a barrier to pursuing doctoral education for African Americans.

The preceding review of research has shown that culture, interpersonal relationships with faculty and staff, public policies, and personal choice can deter students from pursuing the doctorate. Although it is important to understand these barriers, it is equally important to understand how African Americans, despite all of the personal and institutional challenges, make the decision to enroll in doctoral education. This study will fill in the gap in the literature by highlighting how African Americans make the doctoral decision.

Critique of Doctoral Enrollment Literature

As the above studies have documented, several factors influence the decision to pursue or enroll in doctoral education. Background characteristics, choice of college, relationships with faculty and peers, career goals, and community commitment have all been identified as positively or negatively affecting the doctoral decision. What is less known is the process by which these factors influence the decision? The connection between the *what* and the *how* seems to be unexamined in the doctoral enrollment literature.

As helpful as the aforementioned empirical studies are in identifying influential factors, the methodological approaches used in the majority of the studies do not permit in-depth analyses of the process by which the factors influence the doctoral decision. The majority of the studies reviewed used quantitative methods. Although quantitative methods can be helpful in identifying if relationships exist, the technique does not allow researchers to understand *how* a particular variable affects an outcome. For example, parents' education has been identified as a factor that influences the decision to pursue

the doctorate. However, researchers were unable to quantifiably explain how and why parents' education was influential. As is typical in most of the quantitative analyses in the previous literature review, the effect of parent's education was operationalized using one indicator: the level of education achieved (e.g. Millett, 2003; Mullen et al., 2003; Pascarella, 1984; Stolzenberg, 1994) rather than a multidimensional construct encompassing how the level of parental education can lead to increased parental involvement, which in turn can lead to higher educational aspirations and expectations at a variety of different levels (Perna & Titus, 2005). Because scholars are consistently using quantitative methods, little is known about *how* any particular factor influences doctoral enrollment. While these studies have expanded our knowledge base, the limitation of quantitative studies is that they do not address how specific factor and experiences influence doctoral enrollment.

The literature is also limited in its ability to identify the factors that specifically affect African Americans' doctoral decision. Thorough searches in several electronic databases uncovered less than 25 empirical studies specifically focused on the decision to pursue the doctorate for African Americans. Similarly, no studies were found that explored within group differences. No studies examined the doctoral decision across gender or SES within the African American population. Although the percentage of African Americans that pursue the doctorate is quite small, exploring within group differences may reveal interesting patterns. African American women have just begun to outpace African American men in doctoral enrollment and attainment. A closer examination may reveal what social and cultural factors caused this shift in achievement.

It is for these reasons that scholars need to expand the doctoral enrollment literature. By incorporating qualitative studies scholars may begin to understand the mechanisms by which influencing factors affect doctoral enrollment decisions of African American men and women. It is the goal of this study to begin that process by introducing a conceptual model that encompasses the influential factors identified in the doctoral enrollment literature and also includes how relationships and experiences with individuals and communities facilitates the doctoral decision. The next section will define the theoretical framework that will assist in framing this study.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a tool used by researchers to guide academic inquiry. Also known as a theoretical perspective or conceptual lens, frameworks guide research, determine variables, and provide insight into statistical relationships. When researchers select a framework, they make assumptions about what entities are important, and perhaps, which ones are not.

This study used the theory of social capital as a framework to understand the relationships and experiences that influence African Americans to pursue the doctorate. Recently, scholars have begun to use social reproduction theories to explore relationships in postsecondary academic settings (Aragon & Kose, 2007; Brown & Davis, 2001, Perna, 2004; Walpole, 2003). Likewise, this study will use social capital to provide a language to discuss the process by which the factors identified in the doctoral enrollment literature are influential to the doctoral decision. Social capital will be defined and its applicability to this study will be discussed in the following section.

Social Capital

Scholars agree that social capital is one of the most widely utilized concepts from reproduction theory in the social sciences (Bartee & Brown, 2007; Portes, 1998; Quillian & Redd, 2006). Sociologists, economists, and educators alike have used social capital to explain relationships that elicit social and economic gains. In the realm of higher education, scholars have investigated educational attainment, achievement, decision-making, and occupational plans of college students using social capital as a theoretical framework (Dika & Singh, 2002; Grenfell & James, 1998; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Recently, researchers have begun to use the theory to understand nuances of doctoral education (Perna, 2004). In this study social capital will assist in explaining the relationships that influence students to enroll in doctoral education.

Critics agree that Bourdieu (1977a, 1986), Coleman (1988, 1990), and Putnam (1993, 1995) are the most prominent and influential writers of social capital (e.g. Field, 2003; Portes, 1998). Although all three offer slightly varied perspectives, they agree that social capital is a viable resource embedded in social relations and social structures, which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in purposive action (Lin, 2001). In other words, individuals receive benefits from the relationships they form and those benefits form the essence of social capital. In the following sections Bourdieu's, Coleman's, and Putnam's definitions of social capital will be discussed. Additional definitions of social capital can be found in Appendix A.

Bourdieu's Social Capital

Bourdieu's (1977a, 1986) definition of social capital is considered to be the first systematic contemporary analysis of the theory in scholarly literature (Dika & Singh, 2002; Halpern, 2005; Portes, 1998). His most thorough definition of the term appeared in

his 1986 article, “The Forms of Capital,” where he criticized theorists for examining societal problems strictly through an economic lens. Bourdieu professed that the world contained a number of operating capitals—symbolic, cultural, and social—that were constantly overlooked when attempting to explain inequalities. In order to understand the social world, Bourdieu believed theorists needed to look beyond economic capital to the immaterial assets that individuals obtain by being connected to each other within a particular social group. Bourdieu referred to those immaterial resources or ‘social assets’ as social capital (Bourdieu, 1980). Bourdieu defines social capital as:

> …the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (p.248).

Plainly, social connections that provide valuable resources to individuals within a particular social network are considered to be social capital.

According to Bourdieu (1977a, 1986), social capital networks are exclusionary and specific:

> …different individuals obtain a very unequal return on a more or less equivalent social capital (economic or cultural) according to the extent to which they are able to mobilize by proxy the capital

> of a group (family, old pupils of elite schools, select clubs, nobility, etc" (Bourdieu, 1980, pg.2).

In other words, elite members of society are able to maximize their social capital because they are connected to other elite individuals with valuable resources which can be tapped into by members of their social network. Less elite individuals may have similar connections quantitatively but their network members are unable to provide resources that are valued therefore less elite individuals generally have lower social capital.

Bourdieu (1977b, 1986) noted in order for the networks to maintain its social capital value, individuals had to work at it. Arranged marriages where parents choose the husband or wife of their offspring were considered social networks that provided viable social capital (Bourdieu, 1980). Parents had to actively seek and secure qualified mates. They had to work in order to secure the best possible candidate. In contrast, new social institutions such as dances, cruises, receptions, etc, allow individuals to be less involved and unconnected. It takes little effort to participate in such institutions; therefore, those institutions produce less social capital (Bourdieu, 1980).

Bourdieu (1977a, 1986) continued to use the concept of social capital throughout his work, but he never revisited its theoretical underpinnings or employed it in systematic empirical explorations (Adams & Roncevic, 2003; Field, 2008). According to Field (2008), Bourdieu's examples of social networks illustrates his theory is "ill-suited to deal with more open and loose social relations" of American society (p.21). Due to the limitations, Coleman attempted to expand Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital.

Coleman's Social Capital

Coleman (1988) has been credited with introducing social capital into the field of education (e.g. Field, 2003; Portes, 1998). Drawing on economics, sociology, and the

theoretical underpinnings of rational choice theory; Coleman's definition challenges Bourdieu's (1986) notions that social capital can only be possessed between powerful and wealthy individuals. Coleman's research on poor children in urban school settings found that social capital can exist between and among poor individuals and marginalized communities. Coleman defines social capital as a useful resource available to an actor through his or her social relationships:

> [It] is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors—whether persons or corporate actors—within the structure (p.S98).

Therefore, social capital is a "…set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organization" (Coleman, 1990, p. 300). The resources differ for different people and provide important advantages over those who are outside of the social network. Coleman is deliberate in stating that it exists "within the family, but also outside the family, in the community" (Coleman 1990, p.300). Trust, expectations, obligations, norms and information sharing delineates the mechanisms within relationships that produce social capital (Coleman, 1988).

Coleman's (1988) and Bourdieu's (1986) definitions of social capital are similar in that they both focus on social networks, but several critical differences exist in their conceptualization of the term. First, Coleman expands the notion of social capital to include all actors, individuals and collective, privileged and disadvantaged (Field, 2008). He disagreed with Bourdieu's notion that capital can only exist between individuals rather than between individuals and communities. Coleman considered organizations,

institutions, and societies as potential beneficiaries of social capital. Second, Coleman moved away from Bourdieu's circular reasoning that social capital can only be generated and maintained by social elites. In fact, Coleman argued that a wealth of social capital could offset low levels of other forms of capital providing resources to those who would otherwise be disadvantaged (Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1997). Third, Coleman clearly identified the mechanisms by which social networks provide social capital: trust, expectations, obligations, norms and information sharing. Finally, Coleman believed that the creation of social capital was unintentional while Bourdieu believed that the formation of social capital was intentional and that elites actively sought opportunities to earn more capital. These differences distinguish Coleman from Bourdieu in the scholarly literature.

Putnam's Social Capital

Putnam (1993, 1995) is arguably the most popular theorist of social capital (Field, 2008). Whereas Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) are well known among sociologists and social theorists, Putnam has transcended his field of political science to reach a much larger audience (Field, 2008). His book in which he thoroughly discussed social capital, *Bowling Alone*, received several accolades from the media which propelled him to celebrity status. As a result, Putnam was invited to visit Camp David by President Clinton, and popular magazines such as *People* have featured articles aggrandizing his conceptualization of social capital (Field, 2008). The frenzy caused Americans to obsess over Putnam and his view that social capital was declining in the United States.

Although many citizens were somewhat unaware of what social capital was, the idea that it was declining was horrifying. People imagined themselves "bowling alone," unconnected to their friends and family. However, Putnam's intention was not to

insinuate that a lack of social capital was a lack of close ties to family and friends. Rather, a decline in social capital meant a decline in civic engagement, participation in community leagues, and political organizations. Putnam's conceptualization of social capital was focused on how large groups of individuals compose social organizations which improve society through the relations that are created within the organization (Putnam, 1993).

Unlike Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), Putnam (1993) primarily focused on the loss and gain of social capital among nations, states and communities rather than individuals. His initial definition defined social capital as "features of social organizations, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam 1993, p.167). Field (2008) summarized Putnam's definition as an entity that:

> …contributes to collective action by increasing the potential costs to defectors; fostering robust norms of reciprocity; facilitating flows of information, including information on actors' reputation; embodying the success of past attempts at collaboration; and acting as a template for future cooperation (p.34).

In Putnam's later work, he refined his definition to include persons and the concept of reciprocity which he believed was embedded in the mechanisms of social capital. He states, "…by social capital I mean features of social life—networks norms and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared goals…" (Putnam, 1996, 56)." Trustworthiness and the norms of reciprocity arise from networks and those mechanisms constitute social capital *(*Putnam 1996, 2000*).* Putnam

believed that the norms of reciprocity have value for the people who are involved in the network and for the greater society. This exchange—between reciprocity and society—represents Putnam's essence of social capital.

Levels of Social Capital

Halpern (2005) critically analyzed the social capital literature and determined that all conceptualizations of social capital have three basic components: (1) networks; (2) a cluster of norms, values, and expectancies that are shared by group members; and (3) sanctions—punishment and rewards—that help to maintain the norms and networks. What remained unclear was whether the term should be used to describe intimate personal relationships or large diffuse relationships among communities and nations. Halpern found this to be a large debate among social capital researchers. Lochner, Kawachi, and Kennedy (1999) and others (Knack & Keefer, 1997) sternly argue that social capital should be used to discuss regional and national differences amongst strangers. These scholars believe that the three social capital components described by Halpern are easily identified at the national level. Others (Edward & Foley, 1998; Teachman et al., 1999) argue that social capital is best used to explain relationships between individuals. These scholars suggest that exploring social capital at the individual level is more aligned with the definitions of Bourdieu (1986) and Colemen (1988), thus more in sync with the concept original conceptualization.

After careful consideration, Halpern (2005) concludes that social capital should not be referred to exclusively at the national or individual level. He suggests that it can exist at a variety of different levels simultaneously and therefore should be discussed at the different levels simultaneously. Utilizing his book on social capital, Halpern introduced three new terms into the social capital literature: micro-level, meso-level, and

macro-level social capital. It is within the subtle differences of each level that scholars will be able to "identify functional equivalence" (Halpern, 2005, p.19) and make conceptual distinctions regarding social capital. Micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level social capital networks will be described in the following sections.

Mirco-level Social Capital

Micro-level social capital is embedded in personal relationships (Halpern, 2005). It is the connection that allows individuals to receive benefits by being associated with other individuals or groups. The idea of social capital as a micro-level concept is aligned with Bourdieu's (1986) and aspects of Coleman's (1988) conceptualization. Advocates of viewing social capital at this level (Edwards & Foley, 1998; Portes, 1998) "believe that the greatest theoretical promise of social capital lies at the individual level" (Portes, 1998, p.21). Studies focusing on parent child relationships, educational aspirations, and mentoring tend to view social capital at the micro-level.

Meso-level Social Capital

Meso-level social capital is located in one's community. It is the ideal that one's community contains resources that increases or decreases the possibility of a desired outcome. Coleman (1988) introduced the role of the community into the social capital literature in his famous study of Catholic schools versus public schools. He found that the drop out rate was three times less in the catholic school than in the public school. He attributed this to the strength of the networks that connected parents, children, and the Catholic school together. Parents, children and school officials were bound together in a closed network of shared values, information sharing, and norms. The community environment, where everyone was responsible for each other, facilitated mutually beneficial capital for all those in the community. Studies using social capital to examine

the affect of school size and interscholastic sports are considered to be meso-level social capital studies in education literature.

Macro-level Social Capital

Macro-level social capital exists between states or regions. It involves "working on regional and national differences in trust between strangers, and the relationship between [those] differences and various empirical outcomes" (Halpern, 2006, p.16). Putnam (1993) is mostly noted for using social capital at the macro-level, but Coleman's (1988) functional definition also provides a theoretical framework for exploring such large communities—assuming that the norms in some way facilitated co-operative action. Exploring educational outcomes between states, regions, or countries could be done using a macro-level social capital framework.

Summary of Micro, Meso & Macro Social Capital

In summary, researchers have found social capital to be useful in exploring relationships at all three levels. Social networks or relationships which contain trust, norms, and sanctions produce social capital between individuals, individuals and groups, communities, regions, and nations. The key to finding social capital appears to be finding where someone has a sense of belonging that reflects feelings of attachment towards an individual or community (Pooley, Cohen & Pike 2005). According to Adler & Kwon (2002), individuals can possess social capital at different levels simultaneously; therefore, context matters when investigating social capital.

Types of Social Capital

The quality and types of social capital that exist has been described similarly among social capital theorists (Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Granovetter, 1973, Putnam, 2000; Woolcook, 1998). Granivetter (1973) uses language such as "weak ties" and "strong ties"

to explain the strength of the connections between individuals in a particular network. "Weak ties" are ties or relationships with acquaintances and associates that are extremely useful in "terms of getting information, opportunities and jobs" (Halpern, 2006, p.20). In contrast, "strong ties" are considered to be more intense and typically involves family members or close personal friends. Granivetter suggest that individuals receive different advantages and benefits depending on the strength of their ties within a particular network.

Building upon Granivetter (1973), Putnam (1993) popularized the notion of "weak ties" and 'strong ties' and introduced the language of "bonding" and "bridging" into the social capital literature. Bonding exists between individuals who have some commonality. It tends to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Bonding social capital can be found in ethnic fraternities, church-based reading groups, and alumni associations. Putnam (2000) describes it as "sociological superglue" in maintaining strong in-group loyalty and privileging specific identities (p.22). Bridging social capital tends to bring people together across social divisions. For example, individuals of different genders, age, or racial backgrounds involved in the same network could experience bridging social capital. Bridging social capital provides a "sociological WD-40" (Putnam, 2000, p.22). It brings those who are different together and removes the friction so that individuals may receive benefits from being connected to the network.

Lin (2001) distinguishes further between "bonding," which he refers to as "homophilious," and "bridging" or "heterophilous" by clearly delineating the value one receives based on the strength of the relationship. Homophilious bonding social capital typically represents the strongest connection but tends to have the weakest valuable

byproduct. Heterophilious bridging social capital usually has the weakest connection but provides resources that are generally more valuable than homophilious networks (Lin, 2001; McPherson et al. 2001). The relationship with the weakest link but the most valuable outcome is referred to as "linking social capital" (Woolcook, 2001). Unlike bonding, it is bridging and linking that are characterized by exposure to and development of new ideas, values, and perspectives (Woolcook, 2001).

Although scholars have made distinctions between the types of social capital that exist, others question whether such distinctions are necessary (Halpern, 2005). Putnam's (1993) findings suggest that individuals in networks that contain "bridging social capital" are also in networks that contained "bonding social capital" (personnel communication as cited in Halpern, 2005). This is contrary to what scholars expected. Finding an individual with one type of capital and not the other appears to be highly unlikely (as cited in Halpern, 2005). Halpern argues that this finding suggests that "while the bridging-bonding distinction may be important in some cases,…we don't need to worry quite so much about always measuring both bridging and bonding social capital (p.21)." In most cases. Kawachi, Kim, Coutts, and Subramanian (2004) agree. They worry that making such distinctions further dilutes the validity of social capital. With so many definitions and conceptualizations in the current literature, the theory may not be able to withstand the "conceptual creep" (Kawachi, Kim, Coutts, & Subramanian, 2004). Nonetheless, scholars have begun to make distinctions regarding the quality and quantity of social capital. Further research is necessary to determine if distinctions are meaningful in higher education.

Criticisms of Social Capital

Although the use of social capital has grown exponentially over the last several years, there are a number of critics that caution using the concept in research and theory building (Dika & Singh, 2002; Morrow, 1999; Portes, 1998; Putzel, 1998). Collectively, the critics argue that the concept lacks clarity in its definition and conceptualization. Additionally, critics are concerned that social capital theorists too often de-emphasize or ignore the potential negative effects inherent in social capital. These two main critiques will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Lack of Clarity in Definition and Conceptualization

The concept of social capital is often criticized for being too broad to provide a useful theoretical framework (Portes, 1998; Putzel, 1998). In fact, some critics' question where social capital is a theory at all as its definition and assumptions are often considered too "fuzzy" to be critically tested in rigorous empirical studies (Dika & Singh, 2002). According to Grenfell and James (1998), Bourdieu's (1977a) original conceptualization of social capital was meant to guide empirical studies rather than test causal models, but since its introduction, Coleman (1988) and others have attempted to use social capital as a theory which implies testing causes and effects. Bourdieu's (1977a) lack of empirical work on the concept opened the doors for researchers to interject their interpretation of social capital into research literature, adding and deleting nuances in order to best fit their research needs. As a result, there is no shared understanding of social capital that exists in the academic community. "Even among politicians and scholars who use the term, there is often confusion about 'what social capital' is or how it should be measured" (Halpern, pg.1). Thus, critics argue that the lack of clarity in definition and conceptualization warrants caution around further use of the term in

empirical studies (Lin, Cook & Burt, 2006; Schuller, Baron & Field, 2000). Critics worry that the widely defined concept has become the catch phrase for all social relationships: making it everything and nothing at the same time—devoid of meaning and mechanisms that would justify using social capital as a theoretical framework in future studies (e.g. Portes, 1998; Anheier & Kendall, 2002).

The lack of clarity in definition has also caused confusion among scholars about how social capital should be measured (Schuller et al, 2000). For instance, scholars who base their definition of social capital on Coleman's conceptualization typically use variables within a family unit such as "number of parents in the household," "parents' expectations," or "number of siblings" as proxies for social capital (Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001; Qain & Blair, 1999), while others have chosen broader categories such as "type of school," "student/teacher ratio," or "school climate" (Parcel & Dufer, 2001). This variety in conceptualization can be viewed as negative as it limits the ability of knowledge related to social capital to accumulate. The micro-level variables are often not comparable to the macro-level variables; therefore, each study is often viewed independently.

Furthermore, Dika and Singh (2002) found the variables chosen in studies following Coleman's conceptualization to be "crude and arbitrary." The variables, typically chosen from large national data sets, provide little insight into the dynamics of relationships within a network or the quality of the resources obtained by its members (Stanton-Salazar, 1995). Large national data sets like High School and Beyond and the National Educational Longitudinal Study (data sets frequently used to explore social capital) were not originally designed to measure social capital. Thus, critics argue that

scholars inadvertently measure the byproducts of social capital rather than social capital itself when using such large data bases. The lack of clarity in measures stems from a lack of clarity in definitions, providing further evidence that the concept lacks validity.

Negative Consequences are Often Ignored

Critics of social capital also fear that scholars over-emphasize the positives in social capital without acknowledging its potential negative effects (e.g., DeFillipis, 2001; Edwards & Foley, 1998; Fine, 2001; Morrow, 1999; Portes, 1998; Szreter, 2000; Wall, Ferrazzi, & Schryer, 1998). The rewards and benefits individuals received from being a part of social networks are often discussed, but rarely do scholars focus on or acknowledge individuals who are excluded from such memberships. "This in turn has led many writers to assume, explicitly or implicitly, that social capital is in and of itself a generally good thing" (Field, 2008, p.80). However, if social capital fosters benefits exclusively for its members, it is rational to assume that social capital can also be harmful to individuals outside or excluded from such networks, especially underrepresented populations (Portes, 1998). According to Morrow (1999), social capital has the potential to become part of a 'deficit theory syndrome,' yet another 'thing' or 'resource' that unsuccessful individuals, families, communities, and neighborhoods lack" which contributes to their inherent ability to succeed (Morrow, 1999, p. 760).

In addition to the negative effects social capital may have on underrepresented populations, Portes (1998) summarized three negative consequences embedded in social capital. First, "free-riders" (those who do not contribute to the network) frequently benefit from being part of the network due to no effort of their own. They often impose demands on the more productive members of the network as a means to compensate for their unproductively. The demands often pull productive members away from productive

activities and consequently the entire network suffers. Second, individuals are often forced to conform to the pressures of the group. Gang members commit crimes because they are pressured by the gang or social network. Third, for marginalized populations, networks often keep individuals from succeeding because doing so would be considered going against the group. For example, an individual may decide not to go to college in order to show solidarity with friends who did not get accepted. Portes argues that these three consequences are present within social capital and should be acknowledged by all scholars who choose to use the concept in future research.

In general, critics of social capital are primarily concerned about the lack of clarity in definition and measurements as well as scholars' neglect the potential negative affects of social capital on excluded populations. The concerns presented in this section are valid, but it is unlikely they will abate researchers' enthusiasm for social capital. Despite its faults, the concept calls attention to a social phenomenon that was not previously identified in education literature. If researchers take the necessary precautions and heed the theory's limitations, social capital can have a legitimate place in theory and research. Social capital researchers should clearly define what they mean by social capital, clearly delineate how the concept will be measured, and articulate the negative as well as the positive effects of the theory in any study.

Summary of Social Capital

Social capital is a complex theory that offers researchers the opportunity to explore the significance of relationships in fostering achievements. It focuses on social networks and their ability to cultivate change through the transmission of trust, norms, and regulated behaviors. Although heavily critiqued it is one of the few theories that attempts to describe the intangibles in relationships that foster success. It has been used

across disciplines and recently has been used by scholars to explore graduate school aspirations (Perna, 2004). Social capital offers great promise for conceptualizing the nuances that influence the decision to enroll in doctoral study.

According to Halpern (2006), social capital is multi-leveled. At the micro-level, relationships can exist informally through friendship networks or formally through community organizations. The meso-level encompasses relationships between individuals and communities. At this level it is the community bonds and institutional attributes which create collective understandings that facilitates mutual goals among community members. Lastly, at the macro-level social capital refers to relationships across states, nations or regions. In higher education the relationships between big ten universities adequately represents social capital at the macro-level. Within each level, social capital can exist among homogenous (bonding) or between heterogeneous (bridging) groups and the effects may be positive or negative depending on the perspective of the individual inside or outside the group. Overall, social capital appears to be a useful theoretical tool to explore educational pursuits and attainment.

Conceptual Model

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that influence African Americans to pursue the doctorate, I have created a new conceptual model which integrates doctoral enrollment literature with the theory of social capital. The characteristics of social capital have proven helpful in understanding how the influential factors identified in the literature facilitate the doctoral decision. The new integrated conceptual framework offers a new way of thinking about the doctoral decision by uncovering the “black box” in the doctoral decision process.

In the following sections, a thorough explanation of the model will be provided, illustrating the connections between the doctoral enrollment literature and social capital in the decision to enroll for African Americans. Prior to an explanation of the model, the definition and conceptualization of social capital that will be used in this study will be clearly delineated.

Defining and Conceptualizing Social Capital

Definition

As previously indicated, social capital has been defined and conceptualized in a variety of different ways. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly define and conceptualize the term in empirical studies. For the purposes of this study, social capital will be defined as:

> Social relationships or networks among persons or communities which promote or assist the acquisition of skills, traits, and resources valued among members of the group and outside communities. The networks resources which are tangible and intangible can be levied by group members for personal gain. The networks have trust, norms, values and reciprocity of information as distinct qualities among and between its members (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Loury, 1992; Putnam, 2000; Woolcook, 1998).

Conceptualization

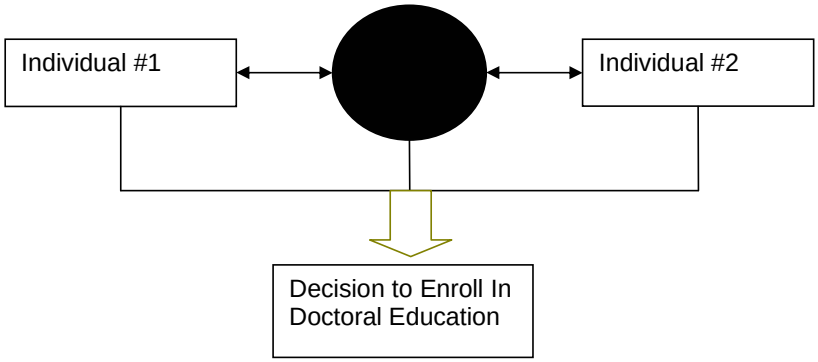
Social capital exists between people and within social interactions; therefore, it can be difficult to measure at any given moment in time. However, scholars have successfully measured characteristics of social capital and have used those characteristics to understand relationship dynamics between individuals and communities. This study

shall juxtapose characteristics of social capital with influential factors found in doctoral enrollment literature to increase our understanding of the relationships and experiences that influence the decisions of African Americans to pursue the doctorate. Trust, norms, values, and reciprocity of information (Coleman, 1988) will be considered the primary characteristics of social capital in this study as these characteristics are tangible resources which can be measured in any given relationship (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). According to Onyx and Bullen (as cited in http://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/Calridge) these characteristics can be expressed through attitudes and expectations; through reported, recorded and observed actions and activities, and by comparing people's interpretations of how things happened or are expected to happen. Chapter three will provide further details about how these characteristics will be measured in this study.

Conceptual Model

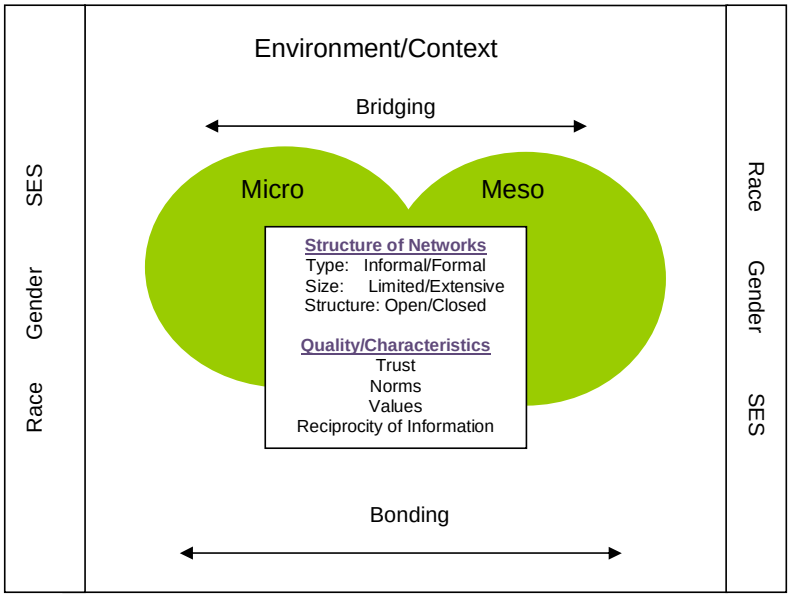
The relationships and experiences students have with their families, peers, and members of various communities influence their decision to pursue the doctorate. However, the doctoral enrollment literature only indicates the constituents in the relationships. It does not provide a clear explanation of how those relationships or networks facilitate the doctoral decision. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Processes by Which Factors Influence the Decision to Enroll in Doctoral Education



For example, we know that students who have parents who have earned a bachelor degree are more likely to pursue the doctorate than those who have parents with lesser degrees (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Karraker, 1992, Mullen et al., 2003) but we do not know the process that translates parents' education into the doctoral enrollment. This study postulates that social capital can assist in understanding those processes. Social capital identifies the mechanisms working between individuals and networks (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Social Processes Integral to the Decision to Enroll in Doctoral Study



The model is framed by background characteristics which are predetermined and unchangeable in a student's life: race, gender, and SES. These variables have been found to be associated with the doctoral decision (Hearn, 1987; Millett, 2003; Nettles & Millett, 2006; Stolzenberg, 1994; Weiler, 1994; Zhang, 2005). Although understudied, it is essential for these variables to be included in any study involving the decision to enroll in doctoral education. Scholars and administrators alike need to understand the role of these factors.

Next, the model is framed by Environment/Context. Collier (1998) posits that a conceptual model which includes social capital should acknowledge the complexity of the social world which includes acknowledging the social environment. The contexts in which relationships are formed and experiences occur are shaped by the environment. For

instance, the relationship a student establishes with a faculty member in the classroom may be quite different from the relationship with that same faculty member in a social setting (e.g. faculty's house). Because context matters, it has been included in the conceptual model.

Inside the environment two levels of social capital are identified: micro and meso. Halpern's conceptualization of social capital has three levels—micro, meso, and macro—but I am only using micro and meso as I am interested in participants' relationships and engagement with their communities rather than institutional or regional differences. The two levels are shown overlapping as students can have multiple relationships at different levels concurrently. At the micro-level, relationships are between individuals. For example, relationships between a student and a parent, peer, faculty member, advisor, mentor, or community member would constitute a relationship at the micro level (Halpern, 2005). Relationships with these constituents have been found influential to the doctoral decision in the doctoral enrollment literature.

Relationships at the meso-level are formed between a student and a group or community. Sometimes relationships with faculty are formed on a one-on-one basis and other times they are formed as part of a community. For example, a faculty member who leads a research team may only interact with students on a communal level. Thus, this study will explore social capital at the meso-level.

On top of the levels, the structure and quality of the networks are identified. As shown, a network can be informal or formal, open or closed, limited or extended. In order for the network to facilitate the doctoral decision the network should contain characteristics of social capital. At any level the networks should have trust amongst it

members. It should provide values, norms, and appropriate sanctions while demonstrating elements of reciprocity regarding information. Relationships and networks with these qualities to be further examined to determine if they are indeed influential to the doctoral decision.

Above and below the structure, quality and levels of social capital are the concepts of bridging and bonding. Bridging refers to relationships between individuals or groups which bring people together across differences. Typically, these types of relationships are formed across social divisions such as race, class, or gender. In contrast, bonding refers to relationships between individuals or groups who have some commonality. They tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Individuals can simultaneously have bridging and bonding relationships and the range of commonality and or differences can range within a group. For instance, an African American woman who belongs to an African American honor society may simultaneously experience bridging and bonding relationships. Bonding will occur with group members because they share the same race yet Bridging may occur across gender.

The model emerged from the doctoral enrollment literature and the theoretical framework discussed in this chapter. Together, the components of the model identify the characteristics and the process by which relationships or networks facilitate the decision to pursue the doctorate.

Chapter III Methodology

Research Approach

I used qualitative methods to investigate the experiences that affect African Americans' decision to enroll in doctoral study. The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide an account of the means by which individual outcomes are achieved, considering both environmental context and participant meaning. It allows researchers to understand and explain the social phenomena of a given inquiry (Stage & Manning, 2003). Qualitative methods are especially appropriate for defining important relationships and identifying new ideas in an area of critical need (Merriman, 1998). "It allows the researcher to get an inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12).

A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because I desired to step beyond the known and enter into the world of the participants. The approach allowed me to become the instrument through which participants' perspectives were interpreted and analyzed. When I began this project I desired to see the world from their perspective and by doing so I was able to make discoveries that contribute to the development of empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The following question and sub-questions will guide this study:

What relationships and experiences contribute to the decision to enroll in doctoral education for African Americans?

1. How does individual background like class, family, peer, and community relationships influence the decision to enroll in doctoral education?

2. How does the decision process differ for men and women? Are influential relationships and experiences different?

3. In relationships deemed influential, what elements of social capital do African Americans identify as essential? What other characteristics do students emphasize?

4. When deciding to enroll in doctoral education, what support and obstacles do students identify?

The phenomenological approach to qualitative research assisted me in understanding the meaning individuals constructed about their decision to pursue the doctorate (Merriam, 1998). The approach uses in-depth interviews to understand commonalities across individuals. Phenomenologists believe that knowledge and truth are embedded in our every day worlds. By using a phenomenological approach I was able to accept participants' personal life experiences as truth and I developed an understanding of their experiences which influence their path to the doctorate. I was the primary instrument utilized to analyze the data therefore it was my responsibility to accurately interpret the essence of African Americans' shared experiences in their decision-making process (Merriman, 1998). In order to achieve that goal I used a variety of methods to ensure trustworthiness and validity which will be further discussed in this chapter.

Pilot Testing

Weiss (1994) suggests a minimum of three or four pilot interviews in order to maximize their benefits, therefore; I piloted my interview protocol with four African Americans (two males, two females) currently enrolled in social science and natural science doctoral programs. I solicited feedback on wording of particular questions, probing techniques, length and complexity of the interview. I asked participants to comment on overarching concepts, assumptions, embedded in the protocol and my nonverbal communication throughout the interview. These interviews allowed me to

become comfortable with the protocol, test my assumptions and further understand meaning behind the experiences individuals encounter on the journey to the doctorate. The pilot interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed as in the full study but were not included in the final data analysis.

Sampling

I utilized criterion and network sampling in order to select participants. The criterion sampling approach required all participants within a specific group to meet specific characteristics of that group in order to participate. In this study, the criterion was race and enrollment in a doctoral program as a pre-candidate. I chose to only interview pre-candidates because I believed they would be closer to their enrollment decision than PhD candidates. The sampling techniques provided information-rich interviews as I engaged with participants and solicited additional interviewees through networking (Merriman, 1998**).**

The networking approach enables the researcher to solicit participants through referrals from existing interviewees. This technique gives the researcher additional creditability due to the nature of the referral. In addition to participants' referrals, program coordinators were solicited to recommend students who might serve as good informants. Participants and program coordinators were contacted via email. The email defined the purpose of the study, general goals, and possible application of the results (see Appendix B).

Data Collection

I solicited participants from a Predominantly White and a Historically Black Institution. The Predominantly White Institution is a large public flagship university with over 39,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled. The Historically Black

Institution is a private institution. It hosts approximately 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The institutions differ in size and mission yet they both are among the top institutions in the United States to award the doctorate to African Americans (Borden, 2009). Results from my pilot study indicated that I would not be able to recruit enough participants from a single institution. The vast amount of African American doctoral students at both institutions made them ideal for recruiting students for this study.

I chose to select two institutions because no single institution enrolled enough African American doctoral students to produce sufficient data for analysis. Representatives from each school were contacted in order to gain access to African American graduate student organizations. Emails were sent to students through organizations' listservs (see Appendix C). Participants were also asked to suggest other potential participants. All who agreed to participate were sent a demographic survey via an online survey company, Survey Monkey, to collect background information and to determine if they were eligible for the study (see Appendix D).

I chose to use semi-structured interviews because they were deemed an appropriate interviewing method to elicit detailed descriptions in participants' own words adding value to the overall process (Merriman, 1998; Weiss 1994). Interviews lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes. The time frame allowed enough time for participants to discuss issues in depth (Stage & Manning, 2003). Questions were constructed to elicit information about participants' relationships and experiences that lead to their decision to enroll in doctoral study. Experiences with family members, peers, community, and college organizations were discussed. Attempts to ask clarifying questions were made only after participants finished their narrative, synchronizing their

voice with the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). After each interview I took notes in a journal to record my thoughts and observations of the participants. My journal notes were incorporated into the analysis of the data. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

The interview protocol (see Appendix E) was structured to obtain information about the relationship and experiences that African Americans encounter which facilitate their decision to enroll in doctoral study. Grounded in the literature reviewed and the theory of social capital, the first section retrieved general participant information. Section two focused on why the students decided to enroll in doctoral study and the support systems that allowed success in achieving that goal. Section two was open in order to allow participants to guide the conversation as deemed appropriate. The remainder of the protocol provided a framework in which respondents expressed their ideas about particular relationships and experiences deemed influential to the doctoral decision. Background characteristics (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Kim & Eyermann, 2006; Millett, 2003; Mullen et al., 2003; Pascarella, et al. 2004), family relationships (Baird, 1977b; Crane, 1969; Fox, 1992; Mullen et al., 2003; Nettles & Millett, 1999; Stolzenberg, 1994; Zhang, 2005), college experiences (Allen, & Jewell, 1991; Brazziel, 1983, Brown & Davis, 2001; Pascerella et al., 2004, Perna, 2004; Solorzano**,** 1995; Wenglinsky, 1996), community involvement (Louque, 1999; Napier, 1995; Schwartz et al., 2003; Ward, 1997; Williams, et al., 2005) and post-baccalaureate experiences (Kallio, 1995) were explored via the protocol.

Participants

When I designed the project my initial goal was to conduct 30 to 40 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with an even number of male and female African American

doctoral students in order to explore and explain the factors that influence them to enroll in doctoral study. I was not able to obtain equal representation across gender but I was able to successfully conduct interviews with twenty-six female and fifteen male currently enrolled doctoral students. In total, forty-one individuals were interviewed.

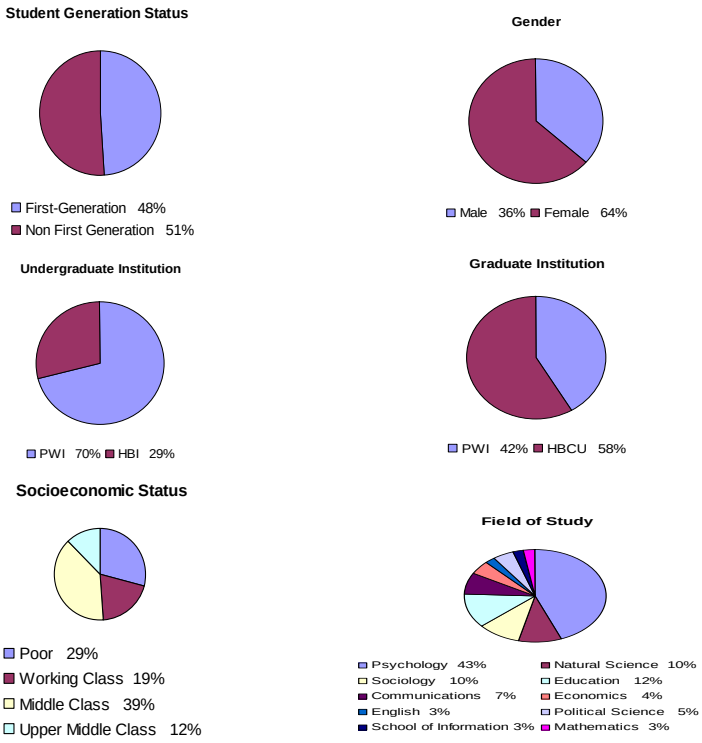
Almost half of the participants (48%) were first-generation college students. The majority (70%) attended a PWI for undergraduate study while less than half (41 %) enrolled in a PWI for their doctorate. About half of the participants (46%) earned their Masters degree however some earned their degree while simultaneously pursuing their doctorate. Participants' fields of study varied but the majority (39%) were pursuing a degree in psychology

Participants' self-reported their socioeconomic status (SES) in a demographic survey. Discrepancies were found between self-reports and transcription narratives. Therefore I determined participants' SES based on my analysis of their transcripts[1]. Participants were considered poor if they reported their family struggled financially and received government financial assistance. Working class participants' families struggled financially but these participants expressed that they mostly had what they needed to survive (food, clothing, and shelter). Their mother or father worked regularly but struggled to pay the bills. These participants indicated life was often hard and they had very little luxuries. Middle class participants reported living a "comfortable life." They were often unaware of their SES because their parents' "did not discuss finances with children." These participants attended resourceful high schools and often referred to their middle class status as an advantage in their narratives. Upper-middle class participants'

[1] The term lower middle class was used by participants but was not used in assessment. The term did not differentiate enough from working or middle class therefore lower middle class participants' were considered working or middle class.

parents had prestigious jobs (doctor's lawyers, government officials, etc). They lived in safe and resourceful neighborhoods. In their narratives they often discussed summer vacations were aware that they were upper middle class because they had opportunities that their peers could not afford. Thus, the majority of participants were middle class (39%) while the remaining were classified as poor (29%), working class (19%), or upper middle class (12%). A summary of participants' background information be found in Figure 4. Detailed information about participants can be found in Appendix F.

Figure 4: Participants' Background Characteristics



Participants self-defined themselves as African American. They were selected to participate in the study based on their race and enrollment as a doctoral pre-candidate at one of the two selected institutions. Students pursuing professional degrees (law, social work, business, etc.) were excluded from the study as their experiences may be different from those enrolling in PhD programs (Mullen, et al., 2003). Participants were U.S. citizens, as I was interested in the experiences students had within the United States that influence their decision to enroll in doctoral study. Students from other countries may have a different understanding of race and how it shapes experiences for minority students in America. All participants were provided a pseudonym

Validity

Role of Researcher

The relationship between the researcher and the subject under investigation is a critical threat to internal validity (Merriman, 1998; Russell & Kovacs, 2003). The relationship requires independent consideration. As the instrument through which data analysis flows, qualitative investigators are encouraged to confront their subjectivity through reflectivity—articulation and clarification of assumptions, experiences, and orientation that may influence the study (Merriman, 1998).

I am aware and acknowledge the subjectivity noted in my identity as an African American. I understand that my presence may alter the information provided by participants due to visible cues and characteristics they may identify (Russell & Kovacs, 2003) but I also acknowledge the value of being an insider in the community I have chosen to study. Several scholars (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Maxwell, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) have stated "recognizing [ ] personal ties to the study you want to conduct can provide you with a valuable source of insight, theory, and data about the

phenomena you are studying" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 35). Maxwell (2005) refers to this as experiential knowledge and states that it is the most important yet most neglected concept in qualitative studies. Strauss concurs:

> These experiential data should not be ignored because of the usual canons governing research (which regard personal experiences and data as likely to bias the research), for these canons lead to the squashing of valuable experiential data. We say, rather, "Mine your experience, there is potential gold there!" (1987, p. 11 as quoted in Maxwell p. 38).

Therefore, I acknowledge that my identity and subjectivity has the potential to bias the study, but I argue that various ascribed characteristics (e.g. race, gender) mediate the design and interpretation of all research endeavors, and as such, my study is no different. Nonetheless, I took steps to amplify trustworthiness and minimize my own inherent biases and assumptions so that alternative viewpoints and disconfirming evidence were recognized and given equal consideration and voice in the analysis and reporting of the results.

Trustworthiness

I used two strategies to provide trustworthiness and support the validity of my findings: peer debriefing, and disconfirming evidence (Creswell, 2003; Merriman, 1998). I solicited two colleagues to serve as peer debriefers—a male and a female, both people of color (Creswell, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four purposes of peer debriefing: (1) to encourage the researcher to probe for bias and deeper understanding, (2) to support the researcher as they test emerging hypotheses in a risk-free environment, (3) to offer the researcher the opportunity to develop and test upcoming steps in the

research design and (4) to provide an environment where the researcher is able to express frustration and gain encouragement from a peer. Keeping these tasks in mind, I followed the best-practice methods encouraged by Barber and Walczak (2009). I thoroughly oriented the peer debriefers to the research and data. I provided materials to them prior to meetings so that they could be well prepared to analyze the data and discuss emerging themes. I analyzed at least 25% of the data in conjunction with the peer debriefers. All meetings occurred regularly and in person. The best-practice methods facilitated a successful working relationship between me and the peer debriefers. Further details about how I worked with the peer debriefers can be found in the Treatment of Data Analysis section.

Additionally, I looked for and presented disconfirming information (Patton, 2002). The interview protocol was designed with probes to illicit information that may be counter to my original hypotheses. When disconfirming information was found during data analysis it was presented in order to add credibility for the reader (Creswell, 2003).

Treatment of Data and Analysis

Data analysis began during transcription of the interviews. I personally transcribed 25% and the remainder was transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. As I transcribed I kept reflective memos on the relationships and experiences that students deemed influential to their doctoral decision.

After all transcripts were transcribed I coded six transcripts looking for emerging themes. This process was similar to grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) in that identified thematic themes that were strongly linked to the data rather than specifically looking for themes that related to the theoretical framework or the research questions. This open coding process generated a large list of themes (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

Many of the themes were related to the research questions and tenants of social capital but many were not. Therefore, I decided to switch from an inductive analytical strategy to a deductive strategy; focusing on themes related to the research questions and theory in hopes that the analysis would allow me to give a more detail analysis of how social capital works for African American students. I than recoded the six transcripts focusing on themes that answered the research questions and aligned with the theoretical framework.

Next, I met with two peer debriefers to discuss how we would look for themes and connections to the theory and conceptual model. We discussed the purpose of the study, the interview protocol, and the theory of social capital. Separately, the two peer debriefers coded six transcripts looking for thematic themes.

I then met with the debriefing team to discuss similarities and differences amongst our codes. In these meetings we used matrices and a schematic display to help see patterns and develop further thematic groups (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also compared the thematic codes to the reflective memos taken during transcription. The majority my codes and the peer debriefers' codes were aligned. Outliers were discussed to determine if they should be included as an emerging code. Once determined if codes should be included or deleted, the peer debriefers and I coded an additional four transcripts to ensure we were had a comparable understanding of the themes. Next, all relevant codes and transcripts were entered and recorded into NVIVO and coded with the thematic codes.

Then, I began looking for subthemes within the larger categories that helped explain how the larger theme became operationalized in participants' decision. This latent

thematic analysis allowed me to identify underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualizations, and ideologies of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once I created subthemes, I took representative quotes of the subthemes to the debriefers. Upon agreeing the quotes accurately represented the subthemes, I recoded all of the transcripts in NVIVO with the subthemes. I then used NVIVO to run demographic-specific (SES, gender, undergraduate institution, graduate institution, first generation status, etc) matrices within the subthemes to further discern patterns within the data relevant to my research questions. When there was a disproportion of one demographic represented in a subtheme it was noted. I then re-read the transcripts within that subtheme to look for additional patterns being conscious of participants' demographics.

Next, I revisited the memos written after each interview to look for additional themes. Those memos tended to focus on students outward expressions—smiles, frowns, etc.—observed during the interview. Lastly, I re-read all transcripts looking for disconfirming evidence.

Research Ethics

The highest ethical standards were maintained in this study. Prior to conducting any interviews, approval was sought from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at all institutions involved in this study. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, that participation was entirely voluntary, and that they could withdraw at anytime. All participants signed a consent form (see Appendix G & H) indicating that their participation in the study would be audio recoded. At anytime during the interview participants were aware they could have requested taping to stop and the recorder would have been turned off immediately.

All data were kept completely confidential. The research sites will not be identified in any publication that is subsequently written from these data. No individual or combination of characteristics that may identify participants will be reported. In any written analysis, pseudonyms will be used to differentiate participants.

Limitations

Limitations are inherent in all research studies. Because this study is qualitative in nature and focused more on depth than breadth, it is limited by its design. This study examines the experiences of a particular group of African American doctoral students within specific types of institutional settings and is not necessarily generalizable to the populations at large. Although the goal of qualitative research is not to seek generalizability of findings (Merriman, 1998) some may consider this to be a limitation of the study. The value of this methodology is its ability to provide in-depth information on these particular doctoral students should be relevant to other African American doctoral students with similar experiences in similar settings.

The study also required participants to be retrospective. Participants were required to use their memory to recall past experiences which influenced their decision to pursue the doctorate. Because they used memory to reconstruct original complex experiences, including their perceptions of those experiences, that can be considered a limitation to the study. Consequently, participants' recollections of past experiences may not accurately reflect the actual experiences they had. The quality of the data will be limited to participants' ability to be retrospective regarding their experiences leading to the doctorate.

Finally, this study cannot account for every experience that may influence the participants' decision to pursue the doctorate. Because I have constructed the study to test

my assumptions and utilized a deductive analytical approach which focused on my research questions and theoretical framework other environmental or contextual influences may not have been identified or discussed in the findings of this study. Despite the limitations, the distinct experiences identified in this study as influential to the doctoral journey have implications for future research and policy development.

Chapter IV

Family Relationships

Participants in this study were clear about who contributed to their decision to enroll in doctoral study. Although some participants were more than three years removed from the actual decision, they had no problems recalling which relationships were influential during their decision process. As suspected, participants indicated that family, faculty, peers, and work colleagues impacted their enrollment decision. However, the high level of influence family members had on the process was surprising. Based on existing literature I assumed the most influential relationships would be the relationships participants developed while pursuing their bachelor degree but repeatedly participants stated that the most influential relationships were the relationships they formed with family members.

The influence of family on the enrollment decision is rarely discussed in the doctoral literature. In fact, scholars have argued that the undergraduate experience in addition to years working in one's field almost erases the impact of family on the enrollment decision (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Grandy, 1992; Kallio, 1995; Mare, 1980; Stolzenberg 1994). Contrastingly, participants in this study indicated that family members contributed the most to their decision. In fact, many participants indicated that without family support they would not have made the decision to pursue the degree. Therefore, this chapter specifically focuses on the ways family members contribute to and support the decision to enroll in doctoral study for African Americans.

Participants' definition of their nuclear family was broad, including parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, and individuals considered family members but not related by

marriage or blood (fictive family). Individuals considered family but not related by blood included, but were not limited to, peers, community members, and close friends of the participants' nuclear family. Because participants discussed the support they received from various family members fluidly throughout the chapter the term family will be used unless otherwise specified.

The chapter focuses on how family members contribute to participants' doctoral decision from inception of the idea to enrollment. Interestingly, applying to Ph.D. programs did not necessarily indicate that a participant had made a firm decision to enroll. Rather, application indicated that the participant was seriously considering enrollment. Therefore, the type of support participants sought from family members varied depending on where they were in the decision process. Some participants made the decision to enroll in doctoral study prior to enrolling in college. Others made the decision during their undergraduate years but whether the decision was made during adolescence or during a participant's college years or beyond family members played a significant role.

Not surprisingly, the type of support received varied by socio-economic status. All participants were taught educational values and received support from family members but the values and type of support that was most aligned with the decision to enroll in doctoral study typically came from family members who had earned at least a bachelor's degree. The differences between lower and upper-middle class families and males and females in this study will be highlighted in this section.

Finally, it is important to note that the decision to enroll in doctoral study is not an isolated decision. It is an accumulation of multiple educational decisions made

throughout one's lifetime. From elementary school through college and beyond participants have made decisions in collaboration with family members that allowed them to be academically successful thus making them eligible for doctoral study. This chapter will highlight how family members contributed to those decisions by instilling an appreciation for education in participants and supporting their educational decisions during the various stages of the doctoral enrollment decision process.

Educational Values

Valuing Education

Participants indicated their family contributed to their decision to enroll in doctoral study by valuing education and stressing its importance to the trajectory of their lives at a young age. Participants indicated that they were unaware of how their childhood lessons would impact their academic and career goals at the time the lessons were being taught. However, upon reflection, participants acknowledged that it was their family's value and appreciation for education that developed a desire within participants to excel at all academic levels. Throughout the interviews participants discussed how embracing those values allowed them to achieve academically. Without those lessons, participants stated they would not have had the desire to graduate from high school or college thus making them ineligible for doctoral study.

Participants discussed receiving messages like: "go as far as you can…," "…college is not the end," "always be the best…," and "…education is your future..." Reminiscing on her childhood, Fawn discussed how her parents were involved in her schooling during her high school and undergraduate years. It was their constant concern that created an understanding for Fawn that education is important and anything but

academic success was unacceptable. Fawn laughed at the thought of bringing home bad grades and described how her parents always pushed education. She said,

> …my mom would not have tolerated it. She was always on us about our grades when we were at home. Undergrad…she still pushed… it was 'did you do your homework, do you have any projects,' it was always about school. She would not take any low grades, no, that is not coming through her house…she was very into us going to school and doing well.

Kyle and several others recalled getting similar messages about the importance of school during their childhood years. Kyle remarked how the messages about the importance of education continued as he progressed through college.

> In the third grade [my father] asked me 'what are you going to do with your life'…later, my dad told me 'this is what you need to do to graduate from high school' when I got to high school it was more of an emphasis on 'you're going to college. Its not an option. We've put money toward [your education] that we could have put towards bills…you're going to be the first in the family, you're going to college'... It was clear education was important.

The notion that education is important was present in all of the participants' families. Kelley stated for her the messages about the value of education also started at a young age but her parents barely discussed high school. Kelley said they went straight to "drilling in the notion that I was going to college…" Kelley mocked her father to illustrate her point. Shaking her finger she said,

> …'you're just going to go to college', (laughter) that really wasn't a question. It wasn't like you could think about it and then decide what you wanted to do.

> Always from the time I was a very small child I have known that you just have to go to college. I didn't really know anything else.

The idea that college is necessary and important was a value held by all participants. Beyond high school, all participants indicated that their families sent a very strong message that education and higher education was important and necessary. Participants' believed their families held this value because of education's potential to improve ones' SES. Participants indicated that their families believed that education directly correlates with quality of life: the more education you have the better life you will be able to create for yourself and your future family. Gabe's description of how his parents connected education to social mobility typifies the responses of the majority of participants. Gabe stated his parents would frequently say, "If you don't want to work hard get an education. If you do not want to do manual labor get an education…If you want to make something of your life get an education." To reinforce their words, Gabe's parents would assign him manual labor chores and explain that if he didn't "go as far as [he could]" in school than he would be stuck doing manual labor jobs for the rest of his life! Throughout the interview Gabe repeatedly discussed how his parents taught him to value education by forcing him to work low paying manual labor jobs.

> I didn't want to do manual labor...it was hard and didn't pay well… so [my parents] always had me cutting grass, raking leaves and doing construction work…I had to work on roofs and I hate that kind of stuff and they said 'if you don't want to do this, you need to go to school' …it was always 'if you don't want to do this you need to go to school, if you [do not go to school] the job you

get will be manual labor'….that was their way to show me that I need to go to school…the importance of higher education.

Although other participants' families did not require their student to do manual labor the sentiment was the same: education is the key to having a better job and a better life. Gabe's mother earned a high school diploma and had very limited employment opportunities. Gabe's father, on the other hand, earned a bachelor's degree in business and his employment opportunities were lucrative and multiple. The difference in Gabe's parents' employment opportunities was often pointed out as evidence of why pursuing higher education was so important.

A couple of participants did indicate that their parents valued education for knowledge sake but the majority directly connected the sentiments about education to its ability to maintain or advance one's SES. Regardless of the reason, families in this study valued education and imparted those values to their students which motivated them to pursue higher education.

Graduate School Expectation

All participants indicated that because their families valued education they received messages about the importance of education during their formative years. However, nearly a quarter of participants indicated that their families were not satisfied with them simply earning a bachelor's degree. These participants stated that their parents expected them to pursue graduate education. The expectation to attend graduate school was found to be class and gender specific. It was only described by females from middle and upper middle class families where at least one parent had earned a graduate degree. Males and participants identifying as poor or working class indicated that their families

were supportive of their educational goals but none indicated that earning a graduate degree was a family expectation. For example, Krissy, who identifies as upper-middle class, indicated that her father did not care what type of graduate degree she earned as long as she earned one.

> It was the expectation…it was stated from the beginning that I was going to get a Ph.D., or a MD, or a JD, a doctor of something (laughter) and that I shouldn't stop until I get there... It is really interesting to think about it now because a lot of kids will get pushed to graduate from high school …or college but [I was told] you have to go beyond that and you can't just stop there…

Krissy's mother graduated college and her father had earned a graduate degree. Donna and other middle to upper-middle class participants described similar family dynamics. Donna shared,

> I come from a family that has been educated since forever... My grandmother was the first Black woman to receive a Ph.D. in [field]… my mother, when she was fifty, went back and got a Master's degree… I remember as a kid my Dad, I was probably in 7th grade, went and got an MBA…so for this family there isn't pressure. Its not 'if' or "when" it's "you will!"…It's what we do….

Donna, Krissy and other participants remember receiving messages about the importance of graduate education during their adolescent years but several others stated that the push for graduate school came once they enrolled in college. It was then that participants began to hear messages that a bachelor's degree was not enough. It was not clear why some families began sending messages about graduate school later than other families,

but what was clear was participants understood that earning a graduate degree was a family expectation. Achieving anything less academically would have been considered underachieving amongst family members. Regardless of April's dream of owning a magazine and becoming an editor upon graduating from college, her family was determined that she should earn a graduate degree.

> …once I got to college that's when they started to push me, probably my sophomore year was when they started to probe me about, ok, what are you going to do next and they had had a conversation [among themselves and] decided that I should go to law school…I knew that it was kind of expected for me to go on to more [education], I mean if I had graduated to go on to become an editor, everyone would have been like why didn't you go to grad school, it was always kind of expected of me to go high [in education] you know because they want you to do better than they did so, that's one of the things I thought about [when making my decision to enroll], my family's expectation of me.

April was slightly resistant to going to graduate school but other participants indicated they were happy their families pushed them because they were enjoying being in graduate school.

Most found it strange that their families had such high expectations. Participants often compared the expectation that they would earn a graduate degree to the educational expectation they perceived White parents had for their students. To most participants, having graduate school expectations was not the norm in African American communities.

Alexa explains,

> …a lot of the differences between White children and Black children is that White children, when they graduate high school, it's 'oh where are you gong to college'…after college what's next… with Black children it's 'what are you going to do after high school.' [For Black children] there is not that level of assumed 'you are going to college.' But my parents, that was not an option. You are going to college. It was the same way afterwards. My mother was like 'you are going to at least get a Master's and a doctor would be nice…get the doctorate.'

Alexa and others discussed the differences in educational achievement they noticed between themselves and peers in their community. Peers who were told that they only needed to graduate high school only graduated from high school and did not pursue any additional degrees. Peers who had parents that were insistent that they attend college went to college. This awareness made participants especially appreciative of their parents' graduate school expectation.

Family Support

The Cheerleading Team

Some participants entered college with pursuing the doctorate in mind but the majority began to ponder the idea during their undergraduate years. As participants pondered they sought support and encouragement from family members. Participants and family members discussed whether or not participants believed they were academically prepared, how pursuing the degree could affect their ability to fulfill family obligations, and most of all they discussed concerns they had about embarking upon a career path that

was unclear. Participants agreed family members gave them confidence in doubtful moments during the decision process. Knowing family members supported them made it possible for them to move forward in their journey to the doctorate. Makayla explained,

> I really value [my family's] advice and I really need their support…I'd ask for their advice and support for any major decision that I make. Having them back me was really important to me… I think that it's really important [for your family] to support you when you are going through this process because it can be very daunting and challenging so it's good to have people backing you and saying you can do it and being there for you…

I refer to this type of support as 'consulting your cheerleading team'. The purpose of a cheerleading team is to motivate team members to excel. This is typically done during sports events. In order to motivate a team to score a goal, make a touch down, or beat the other team cheerleaders yell "you can do it," "you are unstoppable," "way to go," etc. and those words provide motivation. All participants stated they needed that type of support and encouragement from their families during the decision process. Cayden's mom told him to, "… 'go for whatever you want.' And she knew that I could accomplish it no matter what because she has faith in me." Kelley's dad said, "Anything you want to do you can do it…" Similarly, April's aunt said "go head, and go for it, you'll do great!"

For example, Deborah recalled a time where she felt completely overwhelmed and was leaning towards deciding not to pursue the degree. She stated that with all the activities she was involved in it seemed impossible to carve out the time to research and apply to doctoral programs. Deborah credits the support and encouragement she received

from her family for changing her mind and making the decision to enroll in doctoral study. Deborah's comments typify the comments of participants who had doubtful moments but changed their mind after receiving encouragement from family members.

> At [my undergraduate institution] I felt overwhelmed with all the stuff that I was doing… conducting research…going to school, being a mentor. and all these other extracurricular activities, I was always bogged down, but when I called my family [and talked about enrolling] they would always tell me 'you can do it, and if you feel stressed, take a minute, but you can do it! And what doesn't kill you will only make you stronger', so I felt like whenever I felt like I couldn't do it, they would always tell me 'yes you can'.

All participants who sought this type of support received it from some member of their family. Sometimes the support came from a parent and other times it was received from an extended or fictive family member. Participants credited all family members with encouraging their decision as well as providing them with various types of support.

Instrumental Support

The majority of participants received support from family members that was general in nature. Meaning, family members provided encouragement but they did not offer concrete advice on how to successfully apply and enroll in doctoral study. However, a quarter of participants did receive concrete advice and instrumental support towards their enrollment decision. House (1981) defines instrumental support as spending time together and/or providing individuals with material wealth. Malecki and Demaray (2003) expanded House's definition to include task oriented help, material and behavioral assistance, and tangible support. Malecki and Demaray's (2003) expanded definition best explains the type of tangible support participants received in the midst of their enrollment

decision.

The type of instrumental support provided varied by the educational attainment of the family member providing the support. The more education a family member had the more aligned the support and advice was with the decision process. Family members who earned a bachelor degree or less typically provided more material and behavioral assistance (financial support, housing, etc.) while family members who earned an advanced degree offered more tangible support (editing personal statements, advice about faculty, etc.) directly aligned with the enrollment process.

Ebony and several others stated that the most useful support and advice came from relatives who earned or were currently enrolled in doctoral study. Ebony discussed how her parents did not go college therefore they were unable to tell her how one successfully applies and enrolls in a doctoral program. Ebony's parents were extremely supportive of her educational goals and frequently offered financial support but they were unable to provide the tangible advice she needed to earn admission into her doctoral program. Ebony's cousin, who was currently in a doctoral program, was able to share tacit knowledge and advice. Ebony explains,

> I just had different questions [my parents could not answer] about, this is before I looked at applications, so I didn't know about the essays or things like that. [My cousin] talked about the essays and said that some essays are different lengths. She talked about how to edit an essay to fit another school's application. That it could be a shorter amount of words that you had to use…so she gave me her personal statement and she was able to get a personal statement from her friend

who was in psychology and send it to me so that I was able to read what he wrote to a school.

Ebony's cousin was able to provide her with tangible advice that directly aligned with applying to Ph.D. programs. Ben and several other participants had similar experiences. Family members of Ben who had not earned a college degree provided support and offered advice but it was his uncle's advice, a professor at a research one institution, that he cherished the most.

> My uncle was really good at helping me think about types of schools to apply to and what to look for, like warning signs. And when you're considering departments [he told me] to talk to people.

The advice Ben and other participants received from family members who had earned a graduate degree was similar. Their advice seemly aligned with the concrete tasks necessary to successfully apply and enroll in doctoral programs.

The type of support received is generally connected to the giver's degree attainment however two participants, Aaron and Laura, discussed receiving tangible instrumental support from their parents who had not graduated from college. Aaron and Laura both reported that their parents helped them with personal statements, obtained program information from internet resources, offered career advice, and assisted with preparing for doctoral program interviews. The lack of experience in college and familiarity with graduate education did not prevent Aaron and Laura's parents from effectively contributing to their students' enrollment decision although they had not earned a college degree. Aaron commented, "My mom would always say, 'I may not

have gone to college but I have a Ph.D. in common sense." Aaron found his mom's conventional wisdom helpful as he came closer to making his final decision.

Similarly to Aaron, Laura's mother barely completed high school. But when Laura told her she was considering applying to Ph.D. programs she did everything she could to help her daughter reach her academic goals. Laura's mother was more than a cheerleader. Rather, she became an integral part of Laura's support team by providing support in sync with the decision process. For example, when Laura did not know something about the admission process her mother would assist her by researching the topic and inevitably discovering the answer before Laura. Laura stated her mom was supportive in all the ways she could be of her enrolling in a doctoral program.

> She would give me books [about how to apply]. When it came down to it, I was just like, I need this kind of information [and she would get it] and my mother was supportive in so many ways... She would read my personal statements, she would review them. I would shoot ideas off of her and talk through some of the stuff I was thinking about and she would listen, I mean my mom is a lay person…but she can hang with the best of them…at this point she may know more than me about the decision process…

Similar to the theme Graduate School Expectation, the theme Instrumental Support is primarily associated with level of degree attainment. Family members with less education were able to offer more material and behavior based support while family members with advance degrees offered more specific advice about programs of study, application materials, etc. Although the type of instrumental support varied all agreed that they were appreciative of and valued all of the instrumental support they received.

Unsupportive Family Members

All participants indicated they had some type of family support that contributed to their doctoral enrollment decision. Several participants also shared that they had family members that were not supportive of their decision. More specifically, seven participants indicated they did not have support from some of their extended family members and eight indicated they did not initially have the support of their parents. The majority of the participants that discussed unsupportive family members identified as poor or working class.

Participants were concerned about having unsupportive family members but they were more concerned about not having the support of their parents than they were about not having the support of extended family[2] members. If an extended family member was unsupportive participants made little effort to earn their support. This probably occurred because participants who did not have extended family members' support had supportive parents. Although disappointed, participants maintained that the support from their parents was enough to motivate them to persist in the decision process. On the other hand, participants who had unsupportive parents described going to great lengths to persuade their parents to support them in the decision process even if they had supportive extended family members. In discussing their parents, Cassandra and several others said, "I value their opinion. I think they are intelligent and have wisdom so if I didn't have their support I would feel like I was making a wrong decision." Therefore, when participants did not have the support of their parents they actively sought support.

[2] Extended family refers to uncle, aunts, grandparents, fictive family members, etc.

The majority of participants who attempted to gain parental support for their enrollment decision were successful. Only one participant, Caleb, stated that he was unable to earn parental support yet still made the decision to enroll in doctoral study. The other participants stated that without parental support they would not have made the decision to enroll in a doctoral program. More of Caleb's story and how he made the decision to enroll without parental support will be discussed later in this section.

Parents tended to be unsupportive because they did not understand what it meant to earn a Ph.D. None of the unsupportive parents attended college so it appeared that they were unclear how investing another four to six years in college would financially or otherwise benefit their child or their family. Participants reported their families expected them to return home and contribute to the family. The additional time away from home to complete the degree meant a prolonged amount of time before the family could benefit from the participant earning their bachelor's degree thus placing economic strain on the family. Additionally, parents were concerned how more time in school would affect securing employment in an unstable job market.

In order to address these concerns and earn parents' support participants educated their parents about the degree and the benefits they would gain upon graduation (financial, prestige, etc.) Reflecting on conversations with her mother, Bianca explained how initially her mother chastised her for considering pursuing "yet another degree." Bianca comes from a single parent household and has two younger siblings living at home. Her mother's expectation was that upon receiving her bachelor's degree she would return home to contribute to the family by looking after her younger siblings. During her

interview Bianca discussed her mother's resistance and the strategies she used to gain her support.

> She just really didn't understand it [pursuing the degree], but it's just about conversation, educating her, and showing her different websites. It was weird. Her initial reaction would be defensive like 'you're just being selfish, I don't understand [why you want this degree]', so her initial reaction because of ignorance, the act of not knowing what it is, was a little hesitant. It's not that she didn't support me, she just didn't understand. After a conversation of explaining, she was supportive…completely.

Dawn and other participants experienced similar resistance from their parents. Interestingly, Dawn was not surprised by the resistance. It was not until her second year in college that she became aware of what it meant to earn a Ph.D. therefore she did not expect her parents, who did not attend college, to understand immediately. But having parental support was important so she made efforts to educate her parents which eventually earned their support. Dawn explained,

> Well at first it was like…again, they heard of it [the doctorate], like I said I heard of it, but it was clear that there wasn't a true understanding of what that was and what that means, and how long [it takes] so a lot of it in the forefront was educating them on what it is and what I am about to do and the importance of it and then after that, it was very supportive. It was like 'oh that is cool.' Even before I was graduating undergrad I would hear them tell neighbors [I was going for the Ph.D.]. So they were really excited about it.

Similarly, David's mother was hesitant about him pursuing the degree. Being from a blue-collar family, David's mother expected him to immediately pursue employment upon graduation and could not conceive of why he would postpone working. As a first-generation college student David's mother constantly reminded him that he was setting an example for the entire family. His success and failures were shared and she was afraid that his decision to not gain employment immediately upon graduation would be viewed as a failure by family and friends. David combated his mothers' fears by explaining how the degree would permit him to obtain more prestigious positions otherwise unavailable to him with a bachelor's degree. On several occasions David stated that his immediate family consisted of only him and his mother so it was important to have her support. After hearing about all of the opportunities that would be available to David his mother became excited and supportive of his enrollment decision.

> I told her I am pursuing it because it could lead me to further opportunities to be successful in life. I also told her that it was very important to me to pursue this for what I want to study. It really clicked for her when I told her that I would become a Doctor with this degree. I didn't say I could pretty much do whatever I want but I told her that I could go into multiple types of jobs. If I wanted to work at a University and be a professor I could do that. If I wanted to become a Dean at another school, this Ph.D. will allow me to do that. Once I connected and described what the credential actually meant for her, in terms of how it connects to a particular work and how the degree connects to work—my family is all about work hard at whatever you do—then she was like 'oh! That is

> great!' so once I was able to connect the credential to work, that is when she became extremely supportive.

Previously it was mentioned that one participant, Caleb, attempted to earn his parents support but failed. Caleb's mother and father both died from AIDS when Caleb was very young. He was raised by his aunt and uncle on his mother side of the family who he refers to as mom and dad. He described their relationship as "bumpy" stating they never really saw "eye to eye on important topics."

Caleb's parents did not support his decision to pursue the doctorate because they expected him to become an athletic superstar. Caleb was a scholarship athlete in college and his family had dreams of him being recruited into the National Basketball Association (NBA). His recruitment would have provided the family the financial uplift they needed to get out of poverty. When Caleb told his parents he was considering pursuing a Ph.D. and quitting basketball during his junior year of college his parents were not pleased. He described often being ridiculed for his decision. Yet despite the negativity, Caleb decided to enroll in a Ph.D. program. He discussed how he used their negativity to fuel his passion to succeed. Caleb shared why he chose his Ph.D. over his basketball career and how the lack of support from his family members was not a factor in his decision.

> …so I didn't want to waste those years [in the NBA] …I kept considering [getting the doctorate] and I knew the NBA was out of the window although my family were still trying to promote that 'play, play, play.' They didn't even see the vision when I told them I was pursuing my education right away [instead of after the

> NBA]. Only my grandfather did. My parents, my cousins they didn't see it. They all had me associated with being a good athlete. But my grandfather believed in me. He really tried to nurture the educational capacity that I had and really was the one who kept pushing it and pushing it[getting the Ph.D.]…then more or less it started to become more comfortable [the idea of getting the Ph.D.]. I started to gain more confidence [that I could successfully enroll in a Ph.D. program]

Caleb stated his grandfather believing in him was enough for him to make the decision to enroll in doctoral study despite his parents' resistance. Caleb's grandfather, who Caleb did not meet until his senior year in high school, introduced him to faculty and currently enrolled doctoral students. His grandfather showed him he could have a different life; an academic life where he could be prosperous without playing basketball. Those interactions allowed him to envision himself in an academic career. For Caleb, having the support of his grandfather was enough for him to make a positive decision about enrolling in doctoral study.

From these examples, it is clear that participants value parental support. In families where parents were not supportive participants actively sought parental support and frequently remarked that without parental support they most likely would not have pursued the degree. Participants were also concerned about the support of extended family members but if they had the support of their parents they were comfortable in making an affirmative decision to enroll in doctoral study. In addition to discussing unsupportive extended family members participants discussed supportive extended family members who were able to contribute to their decision to enroll in doctoral study by modeling the lifestyle of someone who has earned their Ph.D.

Role Models Paved the Way

Participants indicated that they were motivated to enroll in doctoral study by witnessing the success of family members who had earned a graduate degree. More than half of the participants had an extended family member who earned some type of graduate degree (MBA, MSW, M.S., etc.). More specifically, five participants indicated that someone in their extended family earned a Masters degree and twenty participants knew someone who earned a doctorate (professional or research). Only one participant had a parent who had earned a Ph.D. Participants indicated that their relationships with these individuals influenced their academic path. Being from similar backgrounds, participants saw these family members as evidence that someone from their racial, cultural, and financial background could earn the Ph.D. Participants like Stacey remarked,

> I have a distant cousin who has the Ph.D. so I knew [earning the degree] was something that was possible. He was a lawyer but he went back for his Ph.D.…so he was kind of, I would say, inspirational…I knew I could go to school and be Black and proud and earn that degree.

In a similar way, John recalled how he was inspired by a cousin who earned his Ph.D. When John's cousin left for graduate school John was in elementary. By the time John graduated from high school his cousin had earned his Ph.D. John commented on how seeing his cousin gain admission to graduate school and earn the degree was inspirational. John said,

> I have a cousin…he has his Ph.D. in Psychology. I remember when we were young…I remember him being in church and the pastor called him up saying 'oh [cousin] is going away to school to get his Ph.D.' I had to have been 11 or 12 and

> I was like 'oh wow.'… he encouraged me. Yeah, my cousin always said '…I want you to do well and I want you to go out [and get the Ph.D.]…' now I am in a Ph.D. program.

Family members who earned their Ph.D. were considered role models because they demonstrated that the degree could be earned, they were willing to mentor participants on how to successfully navigate the academic pipeline, and generally they were respected within the family. Ebony and several others discussed why they viewed their relatives as role models. Ebony said,

> They are good mentors. They are people I could look up to… I feel like I want to be like them because they are successful… I feel like they are respected from other members of my family or just people in general…being able to go to them or look up to them makes our relationship better…whenever I have a problem or [need] advice about anything we talk…she gave me encouragement that I could do whatever I wanted to do and she said I would be a professional person…

Relatives who had earned their Ph.D.s were also viewed as role models because they embodied the lessons that participants' families expressed about the value of education. They were living examples of how education can change one's SES. All participants who had relatives who earned the Ph.D. considered those relatives to be in a higher SES than their immediate family[3]. This sentiment was expressed by participants who identified as poor as well as those who identified as middle or upper-middle class. In fact, one participant, Anthony, who identified as upper-middle class, said, "…man them folks are rich, they live the good life." Several other participants made similar comments—associating the degree with social mobility and financial security. Seeing the

[3] Immediate family refers to individuals who live with the participant (mother, father, brother, sister, etc.).

connections motivated participants to be successful in school and to consider enrolling in doctoral study. For example, Laura was raised in a low-income single parent household. Her mother typically worked two minimum wage jobs but Laura still had to help financially support her three younger siblings during her high school years. Laura's family's financial earnings made it difficult for her mom to afford government subsidizes rent, so Laura knew at a very young age that she needed to find a way out of her impoverish situation. As she witnessed her aunt earn advanced degrees, and the social mobility that was associated with each degree, Laura began to believe when her mother told her the way out of poverty would be through education.

> Very early on my aunt was very influential on me because she has two Master's degrees. And I remember her going to school…she was doing her undergrad and then she just went straight into doing her graduate school education, and then she started moving around. She moved from the South Bronx to the North Bronx, and then she move to Mount Vernon..I'm like wait..she's literally moving on up! I'm like wait a minute...I want to move on up too… so very early on I knew, I saw, I understood the ramifications of what it meant to be able to get a better job and make more money because you have an education. So I learned the value of an education very early on, particularly what it means to have a graduate degree. I mean my aunt was living in a house, that was something I never knew…it came to a point where I was like wait…I could actually do this…I need a graduate degree..

Although Laura's aunt earned Master's Degrees rather than a doctorate, Laura made a connection between earning advanced degrees and bettering her lifestyle.

Similar to Laura, Caleb grew up in a low-income household. His immediate

family was estranged from his extended family for many years. In his senior year of high school Caleb met his biological grandfather who became involved in his life. It was at that time Caleb began to associate graduate education with quality of life. Although he did not see his grandfather earn his degrees he did witness the fruits of his labor. Caleb's grandfather was the first person Caleb was aware of that earned a doctorate and his grandfather lived a very different lifestyle than his immediate family. Caleb attributes his motivation to pursue and enroll in doctoral study directly to the relationship he developed with his grandfather.

> …the first thing I noticed when I went into his house [was] he has his own library and I've never seen something like that. Growing up we had a little bookshelf with a few books but this was his study…this whole thing was built with bookshelves and it's filled with books so that was like, 'wow.'…I would have to say…just observing my grandfather, being with him, and seeing such things like his library, talking to him and then that positive reinforcement that he did …'you're bright…'… it was that kind of support system [that motivated me].

Contrastingly, Joyce did not grow up poor. Her mother was a practicing nurse and her father worked at a local plant. Joyce stated she did not want for many things growing up. But even with Joyce's SES she was still impressed by the lifestyle of her uncle and aunt who both had graduate degrees (Master's and Ph.D. respectively). She directly attributed their wealth and success to their academic achievements. Joyce's aunt and uncle often talked with her about the importance of graduate education. Those conversations and witnessing her uncle and aunt's lifestyle helped Joyce make the connections between her family's teachings about the value of education, quality of life,

and graduate education. Joyce shared,

> He works the heart and lung machines when people are doing surgery, his wife has a Ph.D. in nursing so when we visited there when I was a kid I was like 'oh my God.' I didn't grow up poor but I didn't grow up rich—middle class probably lower-middle class. When we visited up there I saw how huge his house was and I was like 'oh my God, it's huge.' He spent time with [me and my sibling] discussing education and I could see the fruit of his labor.

The desire for social mobility and role models helped propel participants toward graduate education. Family members who had earned the degree provided proof that obtaining the degree and living a comfortable lifestyle was possible. Being able to connect the degree to social mobility was a major factor in participants deciding to enroll in doctoral study.

Discussion

Family relationships emerged as the most salient influence to African Americans considering the decision to enroll in doctoral education. While quantitative studies have offered some insight into these relationships (Baird, 1977b; Fox, 1992; Stolzenberg, 1994; Mullen et al., 2003; Zhang, 2005) findings from this qualitative study provides a deeper understanding of *how* these relationships contribute to African Americans' doctoral enrollment decision.

The chapter begins by expanding the definition of family in the doctoral enrollment literature. Scholars have typically operationalized family as mother and father but this study reveals that African American doctoral students conceptualize family more

broadly. Throughout the study participants used the term family to describe how their parents as well as uncles, aunts, cousins, and fictive family members contributed to their enrollment decision.

The discussion of extended and fictive family members as part of participants' immediate family was not surprising as African Americans tend to consider extended family members part of their immediate family (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). However, the inclusion of these family members in the discussion of how African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral programs expands how we should think about the social networks accessible to African Americans pondering the doctoral enrollment decision. Because the majority of African American enrolled in doctoral programs are first-generation students (Gardner & Holly, 2011) we often assume they do not have access to networks with information about graduate education like their White counterparts. But findings from this study suggest that they may have access to those networks via their extended and fictive family members. Over half of the participants indicated that they knew someone who had earned their Ph.D. It may be the role of educators to help African American students recognize the capital in these relationships that can help them in their journey to the doctorate. Further research is needed to fully understand how African Americans utilize their families' social networks**.**

Although participants tended to speak about their nuclear family in broad terms findings suggest there is a hierarchy in family relationships. Participants were more concerned with having support from their parents than their extended family members. Participants who did not have support from their extended family did not attempt to earn their support although these participants did indicate that they had support from their

parents. On the other hand, participants without support from their parents went to great lengths to persuade their parents to be supportive even if they had support from extended family members. As administrators begin to examine strategies for recruiting African American students into doctoral study it will be important to remember that family members are important and supportive relationships with parents are of utmost important when making the decision to enroll in doctoral study.

Family members contributed to participants' enrollment decision as early as adolescence and they continued to contribute by offering support until the final decision was made. Early on, family members contributed by instilling an appreciation for education into participants during their adolescent years. Later in the enrollment decision they contributed by cheering and encouraging participants in the midst of their doctoral enrollment decision. Often participants indicated that it was their family 'cheering them on' during the decision process that encouraged them to advance towards doctoral education.

Surprisingly, only female participants from middle to upper-middle class families whose parents had earned a graduate degree reported their families expected them to enroll in graduate education. No males (regardless of class) or lower class participants indicated that their parents expected them to earn a graduate degree. Yet, over half of the participants indicated they knew someone who had earned their Ph.D. It is unclear why males and individuals from lower class families are not engaging in conversations about graduate education until later in life. These same participants often discussed viewing those who earned their Ph.D. as role models for their life journey. Perhaps, males and females of different socioeconomics status are being socialized differently around higher

education. Further research should examine the time in which an individual begins engaging the social capital among relatives to facilitate doctoral enrollment.

Overall, participants received general support (valuing education, cheerleading) as well as instrumental support towards their pursuit of the doctorate. Family members read personal statements, gave advice about programs, and offered financial support to students considering pursing the doctorate. Typically, the type of instrumental support received varied by the education level of the person providing the support. The more education a person had the more aligned the support was with the decision process although two participants were able to receive instrumental support aligned with the final stages of the decision process from parents who had not earned a college degrees. It is not clear why these parents were able to support their student in ways that other parents of low-income participants were not able too. Therefore further research in this area is necessary to unpack this phenomenon.

In summary, family relationships are important to the decision to enroll in doctoral education for African Americans. Without family support participants indicated that they would not have made the decision to enroll in doctoral study. As administrators investigate new and creative ways to recruit African American students it will be imperative that they consider the role of family members. Helping students address family concerns may be the key to expanding African American doctoral enrollment.

Chapter V

Faculty Relationships

Over the last thirty years Pascarella's (1980) and Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) seminal literature reviews have respectively demonstrated the importance of student-faculty interactions inside and outside the classroom. They suggest student-faculty interactions influences many student outcomes including, but not limited to, students' career plans, educational aspirations, college persistence, educational attitudes and values, as well as educational attainment (Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). More recently scholars have begun to challenge these findings arguing that the outcome of student-faculty interactions is dependent upon context (Kim & Sax, 2009; Pascarella, 2006). Student-faculty interactions for some students may result in different outcomes for other students based on race (Kim 2006; Lundberg & Schreiner 2004), gender, (Colbeck, Cabrera, & Terenzini, 2001; Kezar & Moriarty 2000; Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005), or other distinguishing factors. Because of this recent development I found it important to examine whether faculty contributed to the decision of African Americans to enroll in doctoral study. And if they did contribute, I was interested in conceptualizing what faculty contributions look like for African American students.

Findings from this study suggest faculty do contribute to the decision to enroll in doctoral study for African Americans in a variety of ways. The nuances of those ways will be discussed throughout this chapter. Interestingly, participants tended to view faculty contributions through a personalized lens. Meaning, the encouragement and support they received to enroll in doctoral study was thought to be uniquely provided to them based on the relationship they developed with the faculty member. Although some

participants discussed unsupportive faculty members, the majority articulated positive student-faculty interactions and credited faculty for suggesting that they consider doctoral education. This chapter will review the support faculty provided to participants and discuss the characteristics found in supportive student-faculty relationships that participants valued.

Making the Recommendation

Faculty Suggestion

The relationships participants developed with faculty contributed to their decision to enroll in doctoral study. Although some participants indicated they entered college knowing they would pursue the degree several stated they did not begin considering the degree until a faculty member made the suggestion that they should consider post-graduate studies. Earning the Ph.D. was not something many participants considered a career option because they were unaware of the careers associated with the degree. Several participants considered enrolling in medical or law schools because they were familiar with those fields of study and knew those professions were respected in their communities. But many were unfamiliar with opportunities associated with earning the degree so the possibility of earning the Ph.D. was never something they considered. Ebony explained,

> I didn't know what a Ph.D. program was until I talked about it with my advisor and did the summer programs…probably that initial meeting I had with the adviser who told me all the information[about what it meant to be a Ph.D. student]—that really made it [the Ph.D.] attractive. [After he explained it] I was just like oh, I can do that.

Ebony had extended family members who had earned their Ph.D.s but as an adolescent she never really knew what it meant when family members would brag "[cousin name] earned her Ph.D." Thus, Ebony did not begin using her cousin to obtain graduate school information until after a faculty member suggested that she should consider pursuing doctoral study. Faculty suggesting to Ebony and others that they should pursue their Ph.D. made it possible for participants to explore career options that they were otherwise unaware existed.

Participants considered the suggestion to enroll in doctoral study "mind-blowing" because they had never considered pursuing the degree or voiced interest in pursuing the degree to faculty. Yet, faculty thought enough of their potential to make the suggestion. Makayla, for example, was not considering pursuing the degree but faculty members were adamant that she consider it. Makayla said,

> I was not considering the degree…I was generally talking to a couple professors and everyone said 'go straight for the Ph.D., don't worry about the Masters, Ph.D., go straight to the Ph.D., go straight to the Ph.D.'. That is really what sparked my interest…from there I was like, ok, I am going to do this!

Makayla and several others who attended historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) during their undergraduate years commented that their schools prided themselves on getting students into graduate school therefore it should not have been surprising to them that faculty would suggestion that they pursue their Ph.D. Yet, Makayla and several others stated they were surprised that faculty would make the suggestion to them. Without the suggestion, Makayla stated, "I would be working right now…I would have never considered enrolling."

The majority of participants who indicated they began considering pursuing the doctorate upon faculty suggestion received that suggestion during their undergraduate years. But a few participants, like David, stated that it was not until he enrolled in his Master's programs that faculty suggested that he should pursue the doctorate. David shared that he struggled in college and was very proud to be pursuing his Master's in Social Work (MSW). He was hoping to become a counselor and help other students who were academically challenged enroll in college but his faculty mentor had bigger goals for his academic career. After years of conducting research with his faculty mentor David stated that he began considering the degree because his mentor believed in him. David remarked,

> First of all, I never even thought I'd ever pursue a Ph.D.…Towards the end of my Master's program, the last semester, I wasn't even considering going for a doctorate until my mentor in the School of Social Work put it in my ear and we began talking about it in my last semester as a Master's student. I decided to stay on and work for him as a research assistant so throughout the years we kind of went back and forth about whether or not to pursue [the degree]. He really wanted me to pursue it because he felt that I had the potential…so I was like, let's see what happens…

Having faculty members suggest pursuing a Ph.D. was significant to participants' enrollment decision. It placed the option of them pursuing the degree on their radar. Yet, despite faculty suggesting they should consider doctoral study participants indicated that they still had a lot of self doubt about being able to successfully apply and enroll. In order

to move from aspirations to taking concrete steps towards applying and enrolling in doctoral study participants indicated they needed expert validation.

Expert Validation: Moving From Aspirations to Reality

Expert validation occurs when a participant transitions from having aspirations to enroll in a doctoral program to believing that enrollment is a realistic goal after receiving validation from a faculty member familiar with their academic abilities and research skills. Several participants indicated they had aspirations to pursue their Ph.D. after faculty members suggested that it might be a viable career option. However, simply receiving the suggestion was not enough for participants to actively begin pursuing the degree. Participants stated they needed a faculty member to make the suggestion in connection with their academic skills in order for them to believe that pursuing and obtaining the degree could be a reality. For example, participants stated hearing "go straight for the Ph.D." was not enough. They needed to hear "my thoughts and my opinions and my thinking about these topics mattered…I have great insight and that if I really wanted to I could go to graduate school." Because participants often received the suggestion to pursue the degree from faculty who were also their academic advisors participants were often unsure if the faculty member was making the suggestion based on their personal relationship with the participant or their knowledge of their academic abilities. Receiving the suggestion from faculty with knowledge of their academic skills and research capabilities validated for participants they had the skills necessary to be successful in a doctoral program. Upon receiving expert validation participants began seriously pondering obtaining the degree because they began to believe enrolling and obtaining the degree was possible.

Comments from Michele, Elva and Bianca typify reports made by participants regarding expert validation. Michele said,

> I knew I wanted my Ph.D. but that could have almost been pillow talk a little bit, like 'yeah I am going to go for it *someday*' but it wasn't until I met with [two professors] that day that I knew this can be real and this could happen. I knew that I had somebody that believed in me and I think I needed that… [them] telling me that [they] was impressed with me as a student and as a professional. That meant a lot…I was like 'oh my God, he actually thought I was something', my work is good. That meant a lot.

Michele continued to discuss how having faculty who were familiar with her work and research capabilities recommend that she pursue the Ph.D. motivated her to study for the GRE and apply to doctoral programs.

Elva was also able to pinpoint the moment she made the decision to enroll in doctoral study. She was considering pursuing the degree but she had many doubts about being successful in the application process. Once faculty, knowledgeable of her academic and research skills, validated that she could successfully gain admission she began moving forward in her decision process. Elva stated having faculty knowledgeable of her capabilities suggest she should enroll alleviated her self-doubt and she became confident that earning the Ph.D. was a realistic career goal.

> …it was the day that my thesis adviser told me to get a Ph.D. I was kind of back and forth on it but I felt like she had been in the game for so long and she's been on admission committees...and [she had experience with Ph.D. students]…[She] was like 'you need to go and do this' not 'well maybe you should think about it.'

> She said it with so much conviction like 'you really got to go, you really got to go.' I think that's the day I was like ok I am going to go but before then, no, it was just a thought.

Bianca worked as a research assistant and took several classes with the same faculty member over several years as an undergraduate student. She stated that this particular faculty member was very critical of her work. Yet, she embraced the criticism because she trusted that the faculty member was being critical in order to make her a better student. Bianca became confident in her ability to gain admission into doctoral programs because of the longtime relationship she had with a faculty member who was critical of her work but believed in her ability to be a successful candidate.

> In terms of telling me whether I can do it or not…she just knew from my work in her classes and with the research, she thought [obtaining the degree] was definitely something I would be capable of, she was my mentor and I did work with her on several projects—she was just telling me how much I grew from the time she met me until now and she definitely thinks this is something I am capable of doing and she really encouraged me to not let those thoughts [of self doubt] consume me and to press forward.

Expert validation gave participants the confidence they needed to move forward in the doctoral enrollment decision process. Interestingly, the desire for this type of validation is gender specific. Only female participants discussed needing expert validation. If faculty suggested to a female participant that she should pursue her Ph.D. she would not move forward in the decision process unless the faculty who made the recommendation was aware of her academic and research capabilities. On the other hand,

if a faculty member made the suggestion to a male participant, regardless of the faculty member's knowledge, he would move forward in the decision process without needing further validation. It is not clear why males did not need the same validation. It could be related to previous experiences in the pipeline to higher education for African American males. Nonetheless, there was a clear distinction in how males and females filtered faulty suggestions about pursuing doctoral study.

Overall, male and female participants both discussed having significant relationships with faculty and through those relationships participants gained self-confidence and were able to move forward in the decision process and prepare to be admissible candidates.

Faculty Support

Preparing Successful Candidates

Across disciplines doctoral programs have unique requirements and therefore have different criteria for enrollment. However, there are some basic requirements admissions committees typically require upon admitting a candidate into doctoral study. For example, previous coursework in the field, research experience, and competitive standardized test scores are typically required for admission (Nettles & Millet, 2006). In order to ensure participants met these requirements faculty provided them with opportunities to engage in activities geared toward their personal and professional development. Participants stated they were afforded these opportunities because faculty had a "vested interest" in developing them to be competitive candidates. Faculty demonstrated their "vested interest" by allowing participants to work on research projects, connecting them with faculty inside and outside of their home institution, assisting participants with application materials, and making suggestions about what

graduate institutions would best fit participant's academic and social needs. In the following section I will use participants' narratives to further describe how faculty illustrated to participants they had a "vested interest" in their future education.

Participants were offered opportunities to participate on research projects with faculty members in summer research programs as well as during the academic year. Often the suggestion was followed by aggressive recruiting by faculty to get students to participate on their or other faculty members' research teams because faculty understood the importance of having research experiences in the admission process. For example, Fawn shared even before she was certain that she wanted to pursue the Ph.D. her faculty advisor was encouraging her to get research experience. Fawn explained her advisor convinced her that the skills obtained conducting research would be beneficial to her even if she decided not to enroll in doctoral study so Fawn decided to take a chance and enroll in a summer research project even though she was unsure of her future. Once Fawn made the decision to pursue her Ph.D., she was grateful for her advisor's persistence. The institution where she conducted research her junior year in college was the institution that admitted her to their doctoral program. Fawn explained,

> My psychology teacher… would always tell us that 'you guys need to apply to research programs. If any of you are even considering going to grad school, you need to be applying to research programs. It wasn't a thought like 'I am definitely going to grad school.' That wasn't a thought at that point, my junior year in college, but I thought I might as well try [research]... The [summer research program about] animal behavior seemed more closer…to my neuroscience interest [so I conducted research there]. That is how I ended up going to

[institution] for my Ph.D. That was my connection…

Fawn's research experience provided her opportunity to network with faculty outside her institution. The connections she made assisted in securing her enrollment in her doctoral program. Others, like Keisha, also benefited from skills developed while conducting research. Keisha discussed the research skills she learned and concluded that those skills prepared her for doctoral study.

> So he showed us writing, and rewriting papers. Lit reviews, data analysis and all of that…I think with my adviser, my mentor, I got a lot of good research experience... I got a lot of publications and presentations. I was definitely doing things my friends were not…we had to design a study from inception to completion. So I had to make the IRB, find my questions, develop my survey, and pilot it, implement it. I literally did a whole research project in a semester…I said 'ok, he's invested in me and he clearly knows what he's doing so I will work with him'…I think he can prepare me [for doctoral study].

In addition to giving participants the opportunity to develop their research skills faculty assisted participants with connecting those skills to the needs of faculty in their personal statements.

Receiving assistance with personal statements and other application materials was common among participants. Faculty members proofread personal statements, suggested courses to take, wrote recommendation letters, provided information about graduate school faculty, and encouraged students to "to get on the ball" and complete their application. Ebony remembered that a particular faculty member was always "checking up on me, a little bit, and making sure that I was getting progress and encouraging me in

those ways to finish my applications." Jackie referred to what Ebony mentioned as "helping with the mechanics of getting into graduate school." David agreed,

> [My faculty advisor] told me 'when you start applying for grad schools these are the things you need to be doing as far as your personal statements, you need to look at the professors and what type of research they are doing in that department, you don't want to just apply to any school for anything,' so his advice really helped [me complete my application]…

Later in the interview David specified the advice he received,

> …he also gave me insider information in terms of this particular program. This is what faculty are looking for in essays; this is how the dynamic usually goes on the admissions committees. So these are some things you can write in your essay that can hopefully get you admitted to the program. So he was able to give me insider information in terms of the application process.

The phrase "insider's information" was used by several participants to describe information received from faculty about graduate schools and graduate school faculty that was only available to participants because of the relationships they established with faculty. Faculty members are privy to knowledge unavailable to the others because of their association with faculty in their given field. Laura explained,

> My faculty advisor vetted the people I was going to work with here. She knew them very well, she explained to me very clearly the benefits of working with them. At [other institutions I was considering] she did the same. I told her bout one particular person I was thinking about working with and she was like 'don't

> do it girl that person is crazy!' So having her signing off on things made me feel comfortable; knowing I was in good hands.

Bianca agreed,

> What I wanted to know was the stats—the success of the program and the statistics behind the students in terms of their grades…retention; that is what she provided for me. Talking to faculty…, and talking about what kind of [graduate school] programs I should apply to based on my interest, asking about what kind of programs are grad student friendly, and just kind of getting the insider's view of different departments. Particularly because a lot of them [faculty at my school] got Ph.D.'s at schools I was thinking of applying to, and so programs don't change that much overtime. So I talked to them about that to get an insiders' scoop.

Having "insiders' information" was deemed necessary by participants to become successful candidates. Without it Kelley and several others stated they would not have known "much more goes into your application than grades and your personal statement." To illustrate, Kelley discussed a conversation she had with her faculty advisor about getting into her ideal program. He strongly encouraged her to make personal connections at the school which she would not have known to do without having "insider's information."

> …he said 'although schools are looking for certain things, if there is a school you really want, make an interview, go to the school, even if you have to fly to do it and make your personal appearance and let them know you as a person' he always told me…and he said "if they get to know you on a personal level it makes a large

difference versus all of these facts and figures that you are getting on paper'.

Kelley found the advice she received to be true. After her first semester her current advisor told her that she was really pulling for her during the admission process to come to their school. Partly because of her research interest but mostly, and most importantly, because she liked her.

In summary, faculty contributed to participations' decision to enroll in doctoral study in multiple ways. Faculty suggested to participants they should pursue the degree, they offered Expert Validation, and prepared students in various ways to be viable applicants. Unfortunately not all faculty were supportive of participants' decision to pursue and enroll in doctoral study. Participants briefly discussed how they moved past unsupportive faculty members to successfully enroll in doctoral study.

Moving Past Unsupportive Faculty

Participants developed relationships with various faculty members during their undergraduate and Masters level graduate programs. Not all of those relationships were supportive but participants seemed hesitant to discuss unsupportive relationships. In fact, only a quarter of participants discussed unsupportive relationships when asked directly "Were there any faculty members or anyone on campus that you feel was negative towards the idea of you pursuing a Ph.D. program?" It is possible that participants did not have negative experiences but it is also possible participants did not want to dwell on them. For example, before mentioning her negative interaction with a faculty member, Laura said "I don't even think it's fair to mention him…" Ezekiel and others had similar reactions. Ezekiel said, "I ignored them for the most part…I came to realize anything that

she said didn't matter…I just put it out of my mind."

Participants who attended PWIs as well as HBCUs for their undergraduate study reported having unsupportive faculty members. Not surprising the majority who reported this attended PWIs. Faculty members were generally unsupportive because they did not believe in the participant's ability to succeed in a doctoral program. Participants viewed the negative comments and interactions with faculty members as disheartening but stated that the negative feedback did not deter them from moving forward in the decision process because they had relationships with other faculty members who believed they could succeed. During his interview Cayden described the negative interaction he had with a faculty member and then explained how that negative interaction was countered by the positive relationship he had with another faculty member.

> R:…[a faculty member] was criticizing me because he thought my research wasn't good, thought I wasn't doing what I should be doing and actually said that he wished he hadn't written me a letter of recommendation because he didn't want to inflict me on his colleagues in higher education. That was really hard to deal with because I knew…everything he was saying was completely irrational…but still him throwing all this stuff at me was really hard to deal with. That was a really huge discouraging factor.
>
> I: How do you think that affected your decision to push forward and continue?
>
> R: It was really hard … If my adviser hadn't… had she not been there, I think it would have hit me a lot harder. But afterwards we debriefed and talked about it and [another faculty member] encouraged me and gave me a lot of encouraging

> words, and reaffirmed all the work that I had done and the progress I had made and [stated] that she had faith in what I was doing. She didn't see all these problems that he talked about it. So she countered what he did.

Elva and several others had similar experiences. During her Master's program Elva was told "you do not have what it takes" to successfully enroll in a Ph.D. program. Cayden and Elva experiences typify the experiences of other participants who encountered unsupportive faculty. Elva explained,

> My faculty advisor at the time told me that I couldn't get accepted into a Ph.D. program. She was like 'your writing is bad and you need that so you can't get accepted.' She'd be like 'you can't write so that nicks you out of the pile for what we want for Ph.D. programs'…I felt terrible. It was something that I wanted to do and I wanted to do it because I always thought the professors I had were smart and great people…I wanted to be that person and she just was like no you can't do it. I didn't have a backup plan. I remember talking to another professor and I told her I wanted to drop out of school and I don't want to do this anymore…

Thankfully other faculty members encouraged Elva to continue pursuing the degree. She was ready to give up on her dreams of earning her Ph.D. but the encouragement and support she received from supportive faculty gave her the confidence she needed to finish her Masters program and apply to Ph.D. programs. It was through faculty encouragement that Elva was able to find the confidence she needed to apply and successfully enroll in doctoral study.

Elva recalled,

> She said 'that's not true, you can write.' She was like 'and you should get a Ph.D.' and she was like 'I don't know why she would tell you that'…and I began to believe…she is the reason I ended up here.

Although participants minimized the effects of unsupportive faculty members it was obvious discussing those experiences were painful for participants by their facial expressions and body language. Female participants seemed more reluctant to discuss these relationships than their male counterparts but both were extremely hesitant to discuss details of relationships with unsupportive faculty. Thankfully, participants had positive faculty to combat the negativity of unsupportive faculty members. If they had not had supportive relationships several may have opted not to enroll in doctoral study.

Characteristics of Supportive Faculty Relationships

The relationship between students and faculty is extremely complex. In order to further understand student/faculty relationships that contribute to the decision to enroll in doctoral study I asked participants to elaborate on characteristics of their relationships with faculty that they deemed important. It was my attempt at getting at the mechanisms that allowed participants to internalize and act upon the positive messages they received from faculty that propelled them to pursue and enroll in doctoral study. The inquiry revealed those relationships contained characteristics that were not present in other student/faculty relationships described in this study (ex. relationships with non-supportive faculty). In this section I will discuss characteristics found in student/faculty relationships that participants identified as having enhanced their relationships with faculty and contributed to decision to enroll in doctoral study.

Caring

Several participants indicated that they trusted and believed faculty when they told them that they could successfully gain admissions into a doctoral program because past behavior indicated that the faculty member "genuinely cared" about the participant on a personal level. Participants stated that these faculty members were not just concerned about their academic success rather they were concerned about personal aspects of the participants' everyday life. Laura shared,

> [faculty] was interested in not only my academic success but my personal well being and those things were really important to me. At that point it wasn't just about [the faculty] looking good and having a student that looks good or producing a student that looks good …So I felt like they cared about me…that was really important…that's something that I value in my relationships [with faculty]…

Because faculty demonstrated care for participants' wellbeing participants began to view supportive faculty as extended family members rather than mere professors at a university. In fact, participants often referred to faculty as my other "mom," "uncle," or as Laura so creatively put it, "my brother from another mother." The closeness of the relationship made it comfortable for participants to trust faculty when they recommended that they should pursue and enroll in doctoral study.

Faculty demonstrated that they cared about participants in a variety of ways. Mya realized that her relationships with faculty members were special when they began supporting her in endeavors outside of the classroom.

> …outside of the classroom they attended the events that you participate in. For instance, I was in the dance company at [location] and they would be at those performances or I was doing forensics so they would come to my speeches. Then they'll come into class and say 'I really enjoyed you on Saturday'…so it wasn't just in the classroom. [Faculty were showing]I also want to get to know you further than just grading your papers and things like that.

Similarly, Kyle and others stated they began to feel their relationship with faculty moved from a professional to a personal relationship once faculty began inviting them to private family events. Kyle, for example, was invited to a faculty members' wedding. He was the only student in his cohort who was invited which indicated to him that the invitation and his relationship with the faculty member was special. Being able to spend time with the faculty member outside of the classroom indicated to Kyle that the faculty member did indeed care about him on a personal level. The couple wedded were both faculty at Kyle's institution so he talked about both faculty members simultaneously.

> They would take me out to dinner. I had met their children so it was my family away from home. They cared enough that they just wanted to sit down and have a beer and we would discuss articles in class over appetizers and that wasn't something that he had to do and it wasn't something he did with everyone, clearly, but he saw something in me... …He invited me to his wedding, …the reason that I decided to pursue the Ph.D. was their voice was always in my head.

A few participants stated they became aware that faculty cared about them when they had a traumatic experience that forced them to leave school. To their surprise faculty

remained in contact and constantly encouraged them to reenroll. For instance, Michele was in a car accident in 2002 that placed her in a coma. Although she does not remember much she does remember two faculty members visiting her in the hospital. Michele stated that if they were that dedicated to her as a student than she would return the favor by being dedicated to her studies. When the faculty who visited her mentioned that she should consider the Ph.D. Michele said she did not hesitate to move forward in the process.

> I know this sounds so crazy, in my car accident in 2002 I was in a coma…I think like 2 days. But when I had come out of my coma…I don't have much memory of being at the hospital at all but one person I remember seeing by my bed… [faculty names]. I remember seeing them at my bedside, I promise you, I will never forget that and I was like "oh my God they care about me!"

Participants believed that faculty members cared about them when they went above and beyond the traditional faculty/student relationship and began interacting with students on a personal level. Participants found those interactions to be genuine therefore they trusted faculty when they suggested they should enroll in doctoral study. Being genuine or "keeping it real" was another characteristic participants indicated was essential in trusting faculty/student relationships.

Keeping It Real

Participants were able to trust and believe supportive faculty members because they provided a realistic picture of the journey to the doctorate. Not only did supportive faculty members share "the nuts and bolts of how to apply" they also shared information

about the journey "that you cannot find in books." They shared the struggles they encountered while pursuing the doctorate. They often warned participants that as African Americans they would face unique struggles gaining admission to and persisting in doctoral programs because they would often be the only one or one of few admitted. Participants stated they appreciated the honesty of supportive faculty members because they shared information they were not required to share. They gave of themselves in unique ways that validated participants' experiences and acknowledged the challenges they would encounter in the future. Unlike unsupportive faculty, who only discussed the challenges, supportive faculty members provided strategies participants could use to overcome the challenges and be successful in doctoral study. In general, supportive faculty "kept it real" about what it takes to successfully enroll and obtain the Ph.D.

Alexa and several others indicated they had a clear picture of the physical and mental toll pursuing a doctorate could have on a person. Alexa said faculty often told her above everything else "keep your sanity!" as you pursue, enroll, and complete your doctorate. Alexa explained,

> I have heard horror stories about graduate students; one faculty was saying [about a Ph.D. student] 'yeah she had a mental breakdown one year, went through a depression.' I had another professor who attended a predominately white school when it was very strange for a Black woman to be getting a Ph.D., so she was talking about having a whole lot of stress and everyday she would call home and say 'I want to go home.' So they prepared us for the reality. It's not easy but they say 'keep your head up and keep doing what you got to do..you will make it.'

In order to "make it" faculty often warned participants they had to develop academic and social support networks. April's family constantly pushed her to consider graduate school and consequently she was more focused on academics than developing a balanced social life. During her junior year faculty told her that successfully enrolling and completing a Ph.D. program would require her to have balance in her life. Faculty told her that without balance the stress of completing the degree may overwhelm her and consequently she would not reach her goals. They suggested using the remainder of her undergraduate years to work on balance and creating support networks. April recalled faculty saying,

> You have to have a serious support system. You cannot just go to school and be at school and be here all day. You have to do other things outside of this because you will go crazy. Now it may be ok but later….you just can't do it…

April took heed to their advice and developed a support group that was both social and academic. That group was instrumental to April enrolling in doctoral study as they shared resources and developed friendships that continue to remain intact as she entered her second semester of doctoral study.

Faculty "kept it real" about what it means to be an African American pursuing a Ph.D. Although participants found faculty in general to be encouraging about their pursuit of the Ph.D., faculty members who participants' trusted the most were able to discuss what it meant to be an African American applying to doctoral programs. They pointed out that very few African Americans successfully apply, enroll, and complete their Ph.D. Because of the statistics some faculty on admissions committees have

concerns about admitting African Americans into programs where admission spots are limited; often viewing admission of African American students as a risk of resources—regardless if these concerns are voiced consciously or unconsciously. Bianca and several other participants were aware that gaining admission would be difficult due to their race but because they had a supportive faculty member helping them in the process they believed they could succeed. Bianca said,

> She didn't sugar coat anything in terms of what I'm getting myself into. She basically said 'you would be surprised at how narrow-minded some people are' in terms of discriminatory things…She really let me know what I was getting myself into and just instilled in me that I was able to do it despite those things.

Faculty were also "real" about job prospects post graduation. Trusted faculty often warned participants of the risk they were taking pursuing the Ph.D. During her Master's program Kelly discussed the possibility of pursuing the Ph.D. She was working full time and was considering leaving her job to pursue the Ph.D. full time. Kelley and other participants who had to make the decision to leave their jobs in order to pursue the degree discussed how trusted faculty members were straight forward of the financial risk they would be taking. Kelley shared,

> He definitely played devil's advocate because as much as he told me the positives he very much stressed the negatives in the field. He said 'you know jobs are limited at this time in this area. Unless you are looking to geographically relocate you may have difficulty finding a teaching position at a University here in this city or in other cities around here.' He said '…do you realize there may be a financial risk that your taking from changing from the stable career you already

> have into going into a brand new career.' In that way he was good because often times you have people telling you the positives. When you get out you have a Ph.D., you have a chance of making a better income. All of the positive things but they don't really tell you that you might not have a job right away or you may owe a lot of money after you've gone through this process so I would say that was key in me pursuing the process,…I think he provided that reality check for me.

Female participants remarked that female faculty in particular "kept it real" about starting a family while in graduate school. Bianca stated that she was in a serious relationship during her undergraduate years. Both Bianca and her boyfriend had dreams of getting married while pursuing graduate degrees. Bianca also desired to have children and was considering doing so during her doctoral studies. Bianca was surprised when she was advised not to follow that path.

> She told me about her past experiences in grad school. She also got married and had kids in grad school so she was advising me not to do that because of the struggles that she faced with finishing her degree.

Bianca stated that the conversation she had with this particular faculty member was a very "real conversation" that she appreciated as she was considering enrolling. Bianca said having a realistic assessment of how difficult it may be to reach her personal and professional goals simultaneously weighed heavy on her decision.

April and several other female participants discussed the role of family and children in the decision to pursue the doctorate. April recalled a female faculty member being very persistent with the idea that she should seek the degree now rather than

waiting until "I was settled and had kids and a family." April explained further why her faculty member had concerns.

> …she told me a lot of the time she has seen that when women [with aspirations to pursue the Ph.D.] graduate from undergrad and then go into to the work force, A lot of them don't return to go to Grad school because, you know, the older you get, you get a family, that kind of thing and then that sort of takes over. She was like 'just do it now.'

Unlike Bianca, April did not have any immediate plans to start a family but the possibility of having one was a concern as she made her enrollment decision. April, as well as other participants, were appreciative that faculty were willing to share their experiences as it was not a topic mentioned by other faculty members in their programs.

Above all, faculty advised participants to stay true to themselves. This was particularly true for students who were interested in studying race, privilege, discrimination, and social justice. While others encouraged participants to study and research whatever they wanted trusted faculty members engaged participants in conversations about what it meant to study those topics in the academy. David remarked,

> He said you want to study race, you want to challenge power and privilege, you want to address inequality and hopefully do research that will make things more equal for particular African American males, African Americans in general. He warned me that people, faculty, students may not like that. He really prepared me on a mental and emotional standpoint. He said 'stay true to yourself as you go

through your Ph.D. program. Carry yourself with integrity and stick to the reasons why you pursued the Ph.D. in the first place…' You have to be ok with that…

Although the realistic picture trusted faculty provided often seemed bleak they always ended conversations encouraging participants to pursue their goals and follow their dreams. Gloria's mentor and favorite faculty member told her, "There are going to be times where you are pulling your hair out. In order to keep going and moving you are going to have to really focus on something that you really feel passionate about…regardless of what others think…follow your passion"

High Expectations

Participants stated they trusted certain faculty members over others because they had high expectations for their work. Participants stated these faculty members were "hardcore," "challenging," and "tough" however participants realized their most trusted faculty members had high standards because they wanted to make sure they prepared their students for doctoral study. April recalled the first class that she had with a faculty member who suggested she should pursue doctoral study. As an undergraduate student April stated that she was a pretty good student and typically received high marks on her papers without little effort. Therefore she was surprised when she got her first paper back from a faculty member that she admired and she received a low grade. April acknowledged that it was not her best work but previous professors did not hold her to such standards. The conversation which followed April receiving the low grade indicated for April that her professor had high standards and cared about her success.

April explained,

> …I mean the paper was a good paper as far as my ideas. I just had done it the night before so I had typos and errors and she said 'you know this isn't good enough and I know you can get an A on the next thing but, I'm not going to give it to you now.' She said, 'I mean the ideas are there.' She said' I knew you would have good ideas because you have good well thought out ideas in class but, you can't do things last minute' so, yea I knew definitely I better start doing my best…

Fawn and other students had similar experiences. They were aware that trusted faculty members were tough academically but they recognized that trusted faculty members wanted participants to excel so that they could be competitive applicants for doctoral study. Fawn discussed the how she viewed the rigor of her trusted faculty member.

> She was a hardcore teacher and really would never cut us any slack, but I feel like it actually made us want to work harder on doing well in her class... Sometimes she shuts me down but she is not shutting me down to tear me up. No, she's shutting me down to build me up. She is telling me I am not about to take anything that is not your best from you…and no one else will either. She is one of those teachers you want to make sure that whatever you are bringing to her, it was done correctly and to your utmost ability…

The expectation that participants would perform well was prevalent in the classroom as well as in research labs. Keisha described the rigor of the work her trusted

faculty member expected from her in the lab. Although at times Keisha explained that she felt overwhelmed as a doctoral student she felt extremely prepared for the rigor of graduate school work,

> My advisor treated us like grad students. 'I need you to do this lit review. I need you to read these articles and tell me what is relevant to this paper. I need you to write an abstract on this paper. I need you to run a regression. I need you to do a test on this medication. I need you to do these things.' Because we were undergrads he would check us all the time and walk us through things but as we got older we really had to do them. He said 'this is going to be undergrad part 2 advanced.' He expected us to perform in the lab…

Trusted faculty members had high expectations of participants in their classrooms as well as in their research labs but participants understood that faculty were requiring them to meet their high expectations so that they would be viewed as viable candidates when applying for doctoral programs. Participants believed that faculty "saw something in them" and therefore pushed them to reach their potential.

Identity Matters

Participants expressed appreciation for having faculty members that shared similar identities. The similarities signaled to participants that there would be a mutual understanding of the role of race and other background characteristics on the decision to pursue the doctorate. For example, Fawn discussed how important it was for her to connect with a faculty member of the same race and similar socioeconomic status. Fawn stated that it was important for her to see someone "like her" as an academic in order for her to believe that she could become an academic. Had she not connected with a faculty member that understood the journey to the doctorate from an African American lower-

middle class perspective, Fawn stated she would not have considered pursuing the degree.

> …most of my other professors were very distant and different from me in terms of how I was brought up, the things I was exposed to, and so….. they often seemed very distant. When I met her, she [African American faculty from a low SES background] was just very personable and I could see myself as a professor through her…she helped me to realize that I was able to be a professor…versus other professors that I had that didn't look like me. I'm sure their experiences was nothing like mine so I just didn't see [their career] as a way for me. But once meeting [an African American faculty member], doing research with her, getting exposed to her lifestyle, her family, her story I found out that I could see myself through her as a professor.

Further illustrating this point, Frank discussed the connection he made with a faculty member at his undergraduate institution. Frank attended a predominantly White institution during his undergraduate years which only had three African American faculty members on staff. Because Frank desired to connect with African American faculty he actively sought relationships with them although they were not in his field of study. Frank was thrilled to discover that one of the faculty members shared his most salient identity--sexual orientation. The self-identified African American lesbian faculty member became Frank's most supportive and trusted mentor because he believed she understood the challenges he would encounter along his journey to the doctorate due to his sexual orientation. In addition to discussing his need to connect with African American faculty

Frank said,

> I am also gay… and she was a lesbian, an African American lesbian and she did a lot of research on Black lesbians and health. I sought her out…she was the only professor I had a real connection with and she is also a minority, Black person. She understood…I know the difference, I've had teachers that have blatantly discriminated against me, have singled me out for being Black or being gay…I have known the difference, I felt supported….

The ability to see and interact with faculty with similar background characteristics contributed to participants' decision to enroll in doctoral education because participants felt understood in their journey. The relationships provided confirmation that they could be successful as scholars in the academy.

Although connecting across identities was important absence of similar characteristics did not prevent students from developing meaningful relationships with supportive faculty with alternative identities. For example, participants like Frank who attended predominantly White undergraduate institutions frequently discussed the need to build alliances with faculty across identities because the availability of faculty with similar characteristics, especially race, was rare. Likewise, Aaron's campus only had two African American faculty members. In order to get the support he needed he knew he had to build alliances with White faculty. Aaron said he was able to build a trusting relationship with a White faculty member because the faculty member had a degree of cultural competence. Meaning the faculty member possessed an understanding of and was able to communicate with students across cultural differences. Aaron explained,

> I talked to White professors because there are tons of them and they know how to do it [enroll in doctoral study]. The ones I felt comfortable with and supported my intellectual growth helped me…they understood me, understood who I was as a person…

Deborah and others who attended predominantly White institutions had similar experiences. In Deborah's interview she discussed a total of four faculty members who contributed to her decision to enroll in doctoral study. Only one was African American but there was only one African American faculty member at her school. Yet despite race, Deborah was able to develop close relationships and receive support towards pursuing the doctorate. Deborah discussed feeling understood and appreciated by White faculty members who did not judge her because of her background (low SES). Here Deborah describes a White faculty member who she found to be supportive and an important influence to her doctoral decision.

> She was awesome…she was just our Mom. She was young, so she could still appreciate the rigor of undergrad and she understood. She was very knowledgeable about the field in general and just about what are your options after college, and the experience of working for pharmaceutical companies, she could talk about that, she could talk about her grad school experience, she could talk about all sorts of things that I was able to relate to and she was able to give me such great advice. She will always be there for me, even though I graduated. She is still my adviser, and I still feel that I can call her or email her and she will help me out.

Overall, participants sought to build connections with faculty members who shared similar identities. The majority of participants desired to connect with African American faculty but if an African American faculty member was not available they were willing to connect with someone who shared an alternative identity—SES, sexual orientation, etc. At some undergraduate and Master's level institutions it was not possible for participants to find someone who shared a similar identity and when this scenario occurred participants sought faculty who were culturally competent. In participants' narratives it was apparent faculty's identities and understanding of participants' identities was important in student/faculty relationships.

Discussion

Faculty contribute to the decision of African Americas to enroll in doctoral study. From inception of the idea to the final decision to enroll faculty members assist students in preparing for and applying to doctoral programs. In many cases it was a faculty member who suggested to a participant that they should consider earning the degree. Without the suggestion many participants stated that they would have chosen an alternative career path. Faculty showing an interest in them and believing in their capability to be a viable candidate motivated many participants to investigate the career path and eventually decide to enroll in a doctoral program.

The idea that faculty are important and contribute to students' career decisions is not a new finding (Davis, 2007; Lewis, Frierson, Strayhorn, Yang, & Tademy, 2008). Scholars have found that faculty have encouraged students to engage in research projects, explore fields of study, and pursue graduate education (Davis, 2007; Lewis et al, 2008). Participants in this study articulated that faculty assisted them in similar ways. However,

findings from this study go beyond describing the traditional levels of support students receive to unpacking how participants interpreted the support they received. The majority of participants tended to view faculty support through a personalized lens. They believed that faculty were offering research opportunities and providing "insiders' information" to them because of the personal relationship they had developed with the faculty members. Participants believed faculty had a vested interest in their success and noted that they often did not see faculty investing in other students in the same way. Because participants viewed the support they received as personal they were able to build trusting relationships with these particular faculty members that they were not able to build with others. Establishing those relationships was essential to participants' decision to enroll in doctoral study.

Both male and female participants discussed having intimate relationships with faculty but female students indicated they needed more from faculty members than males to move forward in the decision process. Female participants needed a faculty member who was cognizant of their academic abilities and research skills to validate that they could successfully apply and enroll in doctoral study before they would move forward in the process. If a male participant received the suggestion that he should consider pursuing his Ph.D. he would move forward in the process even if he had not taken a course or conducted research with the faculty member making the suggestion. Contrastingly, if a female participant received the suggestion from a faculty member whom she had not taken a class from or conducted research with she would be hesitant to actually consider the career path. Female participants reported that it was not until a faculty member who was aware of their academic abilities and research skills validated

the idea that they should pursue the Ph.D. that they began taking concrete steps towards enrollment. This finding is significant as it suggests that faculty members should approach males and females students differently when suggesting they should enroll in doctoral study. For example, female participants discussed the value of having a clear conversation about how pursuing the doctorate may affect their capability of getting married and starting a family. Male participants did not discuss conversations unique to their gender but conversations with faculty regarding concerns specifically about males in the academy may be helpful in the decision process. Nonetheless, it was clear in males and female narratives that they were more willing to move forward in the decision process when they believed that faculty cared about them and their career decisions.

Faculty demonstrated that they cared for participants in a variety of different ways: (1) they were honest about the benefits and the challenges participants would encounter along the journey to the doctorate, (2) they held high expectations for the work participants did in their classroom and lab settings, and (3) they allowed participants to get to know intimate details about them as people. Faculty members shared information about their background, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. Participants stated these relationship characteristics made the relationship more personal making it easier for them to trust the advice faculty members provided about pursuing their doctorate. The personal nature of the relationship reinforced that faculty members were acting in the student's best interest.

All faculty members were not supportive, however, only a few participants thoroughly discussed unsupportive faculty members. Participants who discussed unsupportive faculty members were hesitant to discuss the nature of those relationships

indicating they did not have an influence on their enrollment decision. Yet, it was obvious during interviews that unsupportive faculty members did have an affect on participants. It was obvious in participants' body language and the tone with which they discussed unsupportive individuals. Therefore, I suspect participants were not being completely honest in their assessment of the affect unsupportive faculty members had on their enrollment decision. Or perhaps unsupportive faculty members influenced participants' lives in ways not directly connected to their enrollment decision. Further research needs to be done to unravel the impact unsupportive relationships have on African Americans considering pursuing doctoral study.

In summary, faculty have an essential role in encouraging and preparing African Americans to enroll in doctoral study. In order for that encouragement to be received faculty may need to take a different approach with African American students than they do with their racially diverse peers. African American students need to connect with faculty on a personal level in order to be receptive to faculty suggestions. In a college environment personal relationships are encouraged yet cautioned due to the power dynamics between students and faculty. Further research should be conducted to explore how student/faculty relationship can best be developed to encourage African American students to enroll in doctoral education.

Chapter VI

The Experience of Being African American

> While I didn't go through the Civil Rights Movement and those experiences [my ancestors] had, I am still connected to them. I think that's really a big part of being in this kind of community, lifestyle. Being African American and knowing that you're getting this degree for yourself but also knowing it's for those who came behind you and those who came before you. You are standing on their shoulders. I want to leave a legacy and I want to help those who came before me and also help those who helped me get to where I want to be (Makayla).

There is no doubt that having the support of family and faculty is essential for African Americans to make an affirmative decision to enroll in doctoral education. However, intertwined with that need to have support is an underlying motivation embedded in the need to be interconnected with other African Americans. A motivation derived from a historical understanding of the history and struggles of African Americans in American society. Despite being generations removed from slavery, Jim Crow Laws, and other discriminatory policies and practices that negatively affected the fortunes of African Americans, participants expressed their understanding of how those experiences shaped their racial identity which is the primary lens through which they make life decisions. For example Frank said, "My racial identity is very important. Seeing pictures of my great grandmother in line of all the slaves and my great grandfather, the white man with his white family, that is huge…it makes you." Hearing about and understanding racialized experiences reinforced for participants the ideology that in order to survive African Americans need to be dependent on one another and work together towards the betterment all African Americans (Allen & Bagozzi, 2001). Thus, the majority of participants in this study discussed feeling obligated to succeed in order to advance the

status of African Americans in society. The idea that *I must be successful and succeed because those before me could not* was prevalent. Feelings of commitment and accountability to other African Americans propelled the majority of participants to enroll in doctoral study.

In this chapter I will discuss why participants feel committed to succeed and improve the overall status of the African American community. I will conclude by describing the ways in which participants believe earning the Ph.D. would allow them to fulfill their commitment to be successful and improve the African American community.

Commitment to African Americans

The majority of participants shared a common understanding that they were pursuing the degree as a means of fulfilling an obligation. They felt the need to take advantage of educational opportunities that would place them in position to advance their race. The feelings of commitment and obligation came from understanding how their ancestors were denied access to higher education because of discriminatory practices. Thus participants described feeling obligated to earn their Ph.D. because their ancestors were not able to do so. Cassandra commented,

> I just felt a tribute to them because they didn't have the opportunity that I did growing up…. they knew back in their day that this wasn't even a possibility; it was rare. Where now, you have an opportunity, so why not? If there's a door open you need to walk through it…because of the history that it wasn't open for us, but since it's open for you, you need to walk through it because you can do it and you need to keep going far.

Ben and several other participants shared similar sentiments. Since historically access was denied to African Americans, participants believed African Americans seeking

advanced degrees should have a sense of commitment to improving life conditions for other Africans Americans. "…there is an obligation to be obligated to and concerned about [African Americans]," according to Ben. When discussing why he decided to enroll in doctoral study Hank said,

> I think being an African American I have a sense of duty and responsibility to African people. I have a commitment and I am committed to trying to make the world a more beautiful place. So, the Ph.D. allows me to do so.

Jackie and several others agreed,

> I feel like the reason for [pursuing the degree] is because we feel like we have to further the race, and we have to set the standard higher. It motivates me… The African American children that are out there who may not feel like they aren't worth much that is my motivation to keep going…

Participants felt obligated to pursue the degree because of their ancestors as well as more immediate family members. When asked why he ultimately made the decision to enroll in his doctoral program Frank discussed the commitment he had to helping his family as well as other African Americans.

> It was not about me, but so much more about expectations others had of me. Responsibilities I had to other people. Taking care of them [parents] when they were older. [Taking care of] these people that I don't know that I want to advocate for. All these other things that give a sense of purpose beyond myself and my groups that I feel a part of solidarity with. These are all really big factors that lead me into wanting to help others and realizing that I could do it [by earning the Ph.D.].

Participants were adamant that this notion of commitment to the group was unique to African Americans and other underrepresented populations who have been oppressed in American society. Participants felt this was obvious given the research questions they choose to pursue compared to their white counterparts. Ben's discussion of this phenomenon represents that of the majority of participants on this issue.

> A lot of my African American friends tend to focus on questions that are relevant—anyone can think of a random question but [my friend's] work tends to be more relevant and urgent and more (dare I say) meaningful in general. Not to say that my White friends don't do that, but it doesn't seem to be a part of the decision making process when they pick things to study. We tend to focus on things larger than ourselves. We look at communities' problems and we tend to have a sense of moral responsibility towards each other… a lot of my White friends tend to not have that… Being a person of color we tend to think and consider things broader than ourselves and we tend to not be as self-centered and selfish. They say it's intellectual freedom and I think it's a luxury; it's a luxury to spend your time dealing with variables that's been up in your tower while people really are suffering…

Repeatedly, participants discussed their research interests and projects they were involved with during their undergraduate and graduate level programs. Across disciplines, participants shared how their research interests or findings from their studies had the potential to impact the lives of African Americans. Doing work that has the possibility of having an impact on the lives of others like them was a major motivating factor to enrolling in doctoral study. Participants were cognizant that the Ph.D. would

provide them opportunities to influence their communities in ways inaccessible to them without the degree.

The ways in which participants believed the Ph.D. would allow them to impact the African American community were vast. In particular, participants discussed how increasing the number of Ph.D. holders, having opportunities to give voice to issues and concerns specifically relevant to African Americans, and working hands-on demonstrating the impact an advanced degree can have on a community are the primary ways participants envisioned the Ph.D. helping them fulfill their commitment. In the following section I will further discuss the primary ways participants believed the degree would assist them in giving back to the African American community.

Increase the Numbers

Participants were aware that few African Americans enroll and successfully earn their Ph.D.. Therefore they were motivated to enroll in doctoral programs as a way of increasing the number of African Americans who enroll and successfully earn the degree. Fawn and several other participants expressed this sentiment. Fawn shared,

> I feel like it is not a lot of African American people in graduate school. I think it makes me want to change the fact that there aren't that many. So, being African American has affected me on this journey getting the doctorate. I guess in wanting to get it and add to the numbers, or just add to the numbers of getting an advanced degree period! Clearly there is not that many of us….

Deborah agreed and explained that she wanted to pursue the degree in order to be a role model to other African Americans considering the degree. Deborah is pursuing her Ph.D. in a STEM field where she is the only African American student in her program. Although she knew that she would be isolated, Deborah stated that she decided to enroll

in her program anyway because she wanted to show other African Americans that they can break down barriers and create pathways for others interested in having a career in the sciences. Several times Deborah stated,

> It's not about me but how I can show others we can make a difference…it's important on numerous levels. Not just to further yourself and your career but it's about showing African Americans at large that 'hey, I am adding to the numbers, you can do this too.' It is about being an example for your family, your community, for whoever it is. It is not just about you…

Gabe found himself in a similar position. He was in a field where there were very few African American professionals. Throughout his undergraduate and Master's Programs he did not encounter any African American faculty in his field. He often questioned if it was a field that he could enter and excel in due to the lack of African American representation. His feelings of isolation motivated him to enroll in doctoral study in his particular field. Gabe stated he wanted other African Americans to "see his face" and know that pursuing the field was possible.

> I didn't know any Black [field], there are some Black [field] out there but… I thought about what I could do with the profession, as far as research as well as being on a college campus and mentoring other students of color. I thought that was important. Not seeing any faculty of color in [field] until four years ago was like, wow, there is no one there. If there are not individuals like me in the institution, what are [students] going to do if they can't find a faculty of color with similar research interests as them? I wanted to fill that void that happens at most research institutions.

By increasing the numbers of African American Ph.D. holders participants were cognizant that they would have the opportunity to increase the number of African American doctoral students and faculty on college campuses. Participants believed the trickle down affect would be imminent. By seeing African Americans as faculty other African Americans college students would know that pursuing a doctorate and a career in the academy would be an accessible career option.

Bianca believed that her approach to particular subjects was unique because she viewed the subject matter through an African American lens. Thus, as a faculty member she believed she would be able to reach African American students in a different way than her White colleagues. To illustrate, Bianca discussed how her race influences how she views the world and how her world view can be useful when encouraging other African American students to pursue advanced degrees.

> I think what also influences African Americans in particular to pursue doctoral studies is what academia does. So when you become a professor you're able to influence young minds and kind of add to the diversification of faculty on college campus and that's really important…You bring this kind of unique identity that influences how you view the world and you can give that and pass the torch to young minds and influence their decision.…When other African Americans go on to pursue doctoral studies it influences and changes the [students] mindsets hopefully and eventually you just don't think of a white guy, you think of someone who looks like me, or you, or whatever.

Influencing other African Americans to pursue doctoral study was a primary reason why participants wanted to increase the numbers. Kelly remarked,

> …it's key that we have African Americans that are inspiring younger African Americans to pursue their Ph.D. That is the only way that we are really going to progress…if we want to change the educational system and a college level system we have to begin to be representative in those areas and I think it's important for those who are in the academic field to make that an issue and make it known to their students. You can change this [college] experience for yourself and you can make it a better experience, if only one or two or three more of you decide that you want to become professors or you want to pursue a Ph.D. That you can help other students.

Participants were interested in increasing the number of African Americas who enroll in Ph.D. programs, but they were equally concerned about increasing the number of African Americans of their particular gender. The males in the study frequently mentioned the importance of increasing the number or African American males and the females were just as adamant about the need to improve the number of females who earn the degree and pursue particular fields of study. In support of increasing the number of African American women in her field Fawn shared,

> I read that [as late as the early] 2000's they still did not have many women or Black women and it made me feel like, wow, this field is lacking a lot of African American Women. I felt, if I continue doing research and I can actually get my foot into the door to actually apply to a Ph.D. program and get in, then I am going to do it to increase the numbers, because the numbers is lacking. The number of African Americans pursuing doctoral degrees is lacking. I kind of wanted to be a

> statistic to represent for the lack of African American women in doctoral education…

Aaron and others males had similar sentiments about African American males. Aaron said,

> I'm like I have to do this to show the Black man that you can do this. You can pick a field that you don't know anything about and it's ok because you can learn and then you can take advantage of these opportunities. I feel like it is so important for us to be in academia and it's so important for me to share with them that don't give up [attitude].

Participants concerned about increasing the number of African American males or females appeared to narrow their focus on gender over time. Meaning, they originally desired to enroll in doctoral study as a means to increase the number of African Americans in general but as they learned more about their field of study, research, career opportunities, etc., the lack of representation from members of their gender made their concerns more specialized and focused on gender. April explains,

> I always used to like see things as, ok, I'm a Black person like, Black/White like the whole race dynamic and it wasn't till like the last year of undergrad that I began to really think about, like, oh my goodness, well as a Black women there is this very unique experience. I always knew that it was a different experience for Black men but I guess I didn't understand the complexity of it till taking that African American feminist class. It got me to think about that more. Even though we in the Black community are fighting for progress there's some stuff going on in our own community that can be changed, as far as like the gender. We need to

fight for us.

Participants were interested in increasing the number of African Americans who choose to enroll in doctoral study in order to increase African American representation in doctoral programs, faculty on college campuses, and in career fields lacking diversity. However, participants were aware that merely earning the degree would not be enough to make a difference. In order to make a difference participants discussed using the power and privileges that the degree provides to "have seat at the table" and raise their voices about injustices which plague the African America community.

Taking a Seat at the Table!

Many of the participants described the Ph.D. as an empowering tool that would allow them to have a voice in White spaces where previously it would be discredited. As holders of the Ph.D. participants believed they would be viewed as creditable, knowledgeable, and as possessors of specialized knowledge. Therefore, they would be invited into conversations where policies and procedures that affect African Americans transpire. More importantly, participants believed the degree would provide them with specialized skills so if they were not invited into the conversations, they could successfully and legitimately infiltrate those pertinent to African Americans. Ben and other participants stated that having an "opportunity to have a seat at the table" was one of the main reasons why they decided to pursue the degree. When discussing his obligation to his community Ben said,

> …the sole reason why I want to pursue this Ph.D. is to bring the voices of marginalized populations onto a broader agenda. To bring those voices that are traditionally ignored by social research, mainstream research, and media—bring those voices to the table…they are not even at the table. Yes, the reason why I want to get this advanced degree is to equip me with as much skills as possible to

> bring those voices to the table. To give them a chance to be heard and considered when it comes to substantive policy. That is the main reason why I do this.

Similarly, Laura said,

> My ultimate goal is social change…African American and Latino American students are underrepresented in the professoriate, underrepresented in higher education, underrepresented in these theories about who we are as a people and how we contribute to society or how we don't and the only way that more comprehensive theories about social issues and social problems as they relate to populations of color. We need to have voices from the populations of color. And whose going to do that if we don't stand up and to it? Whose going to give my opinion if I don't?

The notion that the doctorate would be empowering was something that many participants hoped. Others, who had worked significantly in their field prior to enrolling in doctoral study, were confident of the degree's ability to legitimize their thoughts and opinions. For example, Gloria owned her own counseling business. In the process of securing a contract for her employees with a local school district, negotiations ended abruptly. Later Gloria discovered that despite her employees having their doctorates the school district pulled out of the deal when they learned she did not have one. Gloria said that incident prompted her to enroll in doctoral study,

> …when I realized again that having the highest level credential would help me in my [counseling] business and people would take me seriously…they would listen to what I have to say…I realized that I needed a higher credential…so I went back to school and started working on the Master's degree and decided to

> even be tak*en* more seriously that a Ph.D. probably would be what I would need."

Henry, who worked in a similar field, had a similar experience.

> Working for ten years in schools and seeing children get assessed by psychologists and set up treatment team meetings where people offer their opinions, I see the weight that the person with the Ph.D. has…The Ph.D. and doctorate will certainly enhance the voice that I have at the table, I want to do justice and offer a more sensible assessment of our children than the one that is clearly out there.

Whether perceived or experienced, participants were motivated to enroll in doctoral study by the authentication the degree provides. Participants indicated that earning the degree would signal to others that they were knowledgeable enough to speak and be taken seriously in various spaces. Earning legitimacy via earning the doctorate made participants feel they could use the degree to fulfill their obligation to the African American community by speaking about injustices and advancing agendas beneficial to African Americans.

At the Grass Roots Level

Some participants were adamant that using their voice to influence social change was the best way to levy the degree in order to give back to their community. Others believed the degree would allow them to have a more hands-on approach. For example, David said,

> […the Ph.D. will] help me inform not only policy but practice in grassroots efforts that are going on in communities. I'd like to go back home and be able to

do that some day to give back and to use my assets that I've accumulated over the years and disseminate them for communities

David and several other participants were specific in the communities that they wanted to assist and the fact that they wanted to be directly involved in the efforts. These participants desired to help African Americans in general. But they also wanted to return to their specific home towns and communities to help those who they left behind so that they could pursue their degrees. Leaving the community to pursue higher education was viewed as a community sacrifice. It meant one less person in the community working towards its improvement. Because of their commitment these participants discussed returning home to create programs and form organizations that would benefit the people there as well as other African Americans. For example, John and his friends made a pact during their undergraduate years to return to home to help others.

> …while I was in my undergraduate program me and a few friends talked about a non-profit organization we wanted to create. We wanted to open up a program advocacy for education, travel, and talent to help kids get into school and foster their talent and support them. Travel because most people don't travel outside of the state they were born in… I want kids to experience that. We know that in order for us to be really successful, get grants, and have the credibility you are going to need post-secondary education. You need a Bachelor's or you need a Master's or Ph.D. so that is why I decided to apply to school…

Erika and several others were also specific in the way they wanted to give back to their communities.

> I've always been committed to my community and so I wanted to open nonprofit centers that offered different resources around education and kind of low-income places of Black and Latino urban community, which is kind of similar to where I grew up…historically Black people [in my community] have invested so much in the development of cities and colleges and all that and I feel like people haven't benefited from that as much so I was kind of thinking [of working with organizations] to create the center.

The desire and commitment to give back was so compelling that at the time of the interview some participants had already begun to use their status as future doctors of philosophy to give back to their communities at the grass roots level. For example, Aaron visited African American churches near his college and back home to demonstrate to others that earning an advanced degree is possible.

> At all of the churches I have gone to, I spoke to the kids and let them know what's possible. My pastor here in [state] has had me talk in front of the whole congregation because I am the only one who is [pursuing the Ph.D.], and that has been on scholarship since 2002… I adopted this policy of we have to help each other, especially people of color and especially Black people get through.

Aaron also discussed using his voice to advocate for policy change. But it was equally important for him to "get his hands dirty" and work directly with community leaders for change in African American communities.

Discussion

Participants were motivated to enroll in doctoral study because of their understanding that historically, pursuing an advanced degree was typically not an option for their ancestors and those that came before them. Thus, because they had the

opportunity, they felt obligated to earn the highest degree possible. They believed the degree would legitimize their knowledge and provide them with the skills needed to improve conditions in the African American community overall and specifically in their communities of origin. Although participants could have chosen alternate career paths, they chose to pursue the doctorate because of the multiple ways the degree allows them to influence others. Even without advocating for others to earn the degree, earning the degree was viewed by participants as a sign to the world that African Americans are smart, able, and capable of solving complex societal problems.

The idea of pursuing the degree for yourself as well as to fulfill an obligation to others who share your racial identity was considered to be an ideology uniquely present in African American and other oppressed communities. Participants shared they did not believe their White peers had the same commitment to their own race and ethnic groups (White race) and pointed towards their White peers' research agendas as evidence of this racial divide. While participants and their African American peers focused on problems impacting their communities, White peers focused on "irrelevant topics" they found interesting. The motivation for pursuing a research agenda that focused on self interest versus broader community concerns was viewed as evidence by many participants that White peers do not have the same commitment to community as African American doctoral students.

There are several ways in which participants believed that enrolling and earning the degree would assist them in fulfilling their commitment to be successful. Participants acknowledged they were making a difference by simply enrolling in doctoral programs. By enrolling, they were increasing the number of African Americans pursuing doctoral

study and upon completion they would be increasing the number of African Americans qualified to become faculty. Participants were aware that few African Americans enroll and successfully complete doctoral programs so they viewed the act of increasing the numbers of potential earners as a necessary strategy to improve the experiences of African Americans pursuing the degree in the future by creating a critical mass of scholars on campuses. By being present, participants indicated that they could serve as role models, mentor undergraduate and graduate students on career options and fields of study, as well as pursue research agendas relevant to the African American community. These acts only consistently occur on college campuses if African Americas are present on campuses across the country. African Americans can only be present on campuses across the country in graduate degree programs if the number of African Americans enrolled in doctoral programs increases.

Interestingly, participants were concerned about increasing the numbers of African Americans enrolled in doctoral study but they were also concerned about increasing the numbers of African Americans of their particular gender. African American males wanted to see more males enroll and complete the degree and African American females wanted to see more females infiltrate programs and pursue fields that lacked race and gender diversity. This intersection of race and gender is important and illuminates the importance of the salience of multiple identities when making life choices.

Upon receiving the degree participants discussed levying the credential to advocate for African Americans in a variety of ways. The degree itself represents knowledge and with the degree participants believed that their thoughts and opinions

about policies and concerns affecting the African American community would be legitimized. Participants believed the degree would allow them to "have a seat at the table" thus providing opportunity for them to use their knowledge to better the African American community.

In addition to being able to voice concerns by having a seat at the table participants discussed how the degree would provide an opportunity to be actively involved in creating change. Thus, participants discussed using their credentials to open community centers, give presentations to community members at functions, and returning to previous employers to share knowledge that would improve organizations.

In conclusion, participants adamantly expressed that a major reason for them enrolling in doctoral study was to be able to give back to their community in a variety of ways. Their commitment to improving the African American community and their feelings of obligation to the group is a major underlying motivating factor that influenced participants to enroll in doctoral study.

Chapter VII

Discussion and Conclusion

This study sought to increase our understanding of how African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral education by exploring the relationships and experiences that contribute to their decision. Scholars have focused on completion, attrition, persistence, time to degree, and socialization of doctoral students (Baird, 1993; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Ellis, 2001; Lovitts, 2001) but rarely have scholars explored the factors that motivate students to enroll in doctoral study. This study adds to the literature on doctoral education by specifically focusing on factors that influence African Americans to make the decision to enroll in doctoral education.

The study uniquely and exclusively focuses on the decision to enroll in Ph.D. programs. Because so few students of color enroll in Ph.D. programs, scholars tend to combine all graduate students in their analyses; mixing master's level students with doctoral, professional degrees with Ph.D. Unfortunately, the unique experiences of doctoral students are often lost in an overall examination of graduate students (Millet, 2003). By using qualitative methods and focusing only on the decision to enroll in Ph.D. programs this study captures the relationships and experiences pertinent to individuals interested in pursuing their doctorate.

Most importantly, this study specifically focuses on the decision-making process of African Americans. The majority of the literature on doctoral education primarily focuses on White students or other underrepresented student populations. Very few studies specifically focus on how and why African American students make the decision to enroll in doctoral education. Therefore, there is not a general understanding of the salient factors that contribute to African Americans in their doctoral decision-making process. Consequently, the influence of

race and cultural understandings are not well-understood regarding how African Americans make their decision. This study brings race and culture to the forefront of the conversation regarding how African Americans decide to enroll in doctoral study.

Summary of Findings

Results from this study are divided into three main chapters: Chapter four focused on family relationships and the support the African American student participants in this study received on their journey to the doctorate. Chapter five explored relationships and experiences participants had with faculty members and chapter six analyzed the cultural aspects of being African American and how that cultural understanding motivated participants to enroll in doctoral study. This section will summarize the key findings from each chapter.

In chapter four I demonstrate how family relationships, specifically parental relationships, are the most salient relationships to African Americans considering the decision to enroll in doctoral education. The chapter begins by expanding the definition of family as defined in the doctoral enrollment literature. To date, there are no studies which focus on doctoral enrollment emphasizing the role of extended and fictive family members in the decision process. The inclusion of extended and fictive family members has been discussed in previous studies of African Americans (McCollum, 1998; Person & Bieschke, 2001) but that understanding has not been incorporated in how we conceive African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral study. Typically, scholars have only focused on the role of parents in the decision process and their role is usually minimized. Yet, over half of the African Americans in this study indicated that they knew someone, often an extended or fictive family member, who earned their Ph.D. and they viewed those family members as role models. If scholars continue to only explore the

influence of parents—which is typically narrowed down to parents' income and education—we may be missing an important element in how African Americans make their enrollment decision.

Chapter four suggests that we expand the definition of family when discussing African Americans and highlights how family members' contribute to the enrollment decision but overall findings revealed African Americans' relationships with their parents are the most influential. In fact, African Americans in this study indicated they would not have made an affirmative decision to enroll in doctoral education without the support of their parents. When parents were deemed unsupportive participants actively sought support and eventually earned parental support before they made the decision to enroll in doctoral study. Participants were concerned when extended and fictive family members were unsupportive but they did not attempt to persuade those family members to be supportive. It is possible that the significance of the parental relationship to the doctoral decision in this study is influenced by the African Americans in this study. None of the participants were married which may have changed the role of parents in their decision-process. Nonetheless, parental relationships are strong contributing factors to African Americans' doctoral decision making-process.

Relationships with parents and other family members are important because within those relationships African Americans in this study found the support they need to endure the journey to the doctorate. Early on, findings indicated that support from family members was more general in nature and centered on general support of educational endeavors except for females from middle to upper-middle class families. Females from middle to upper-middle class families where a parent had earned a graduate degree received messages from their parents that obtaining a bachelor's degree was not enough. From a very early age these female participants knew that

their parents expected them to earn a graduate degree. Males from middle to upper-middle class families did not indicate their parents had the same expectations.

Other participants indicated that conversations about graduate school with family members did not begin until they initiated them while attending college. During that time the type of support was determined by the level of education the provider had achieved. Family members who earned at least a bachelor's degree were able to provide support more aligned with the enrollment process—critique personal statements, advise about fields of study, provide recommendations about intuitions, etc. Family members who did not attend college were able to provide more general encouragement.

Chapter four shed some light on the role of family in African Americans' doctoral decision but there is still a gap in our comprehension of how gender influences these relationships. It is not clear why males from middle to upper-middle class families did not have the same graduate degree expectancy as their female counterparts. This warrants further research regarding gender differences and educational expectancy among African Americans.

The relationships African Americans develop with faculty members are discussed in chapter five. For the majority of African Americans in this study the suggestion to enroll in doctoral study was given by a faculty member. Without the suggestion many indicated that they would have pursued an alternative career path. African Americans in this study took heed to the suggestion because of the personal connection they had with the faculty member. They expressed beliefs that faculty members cared about them more than they cared about other students. Thus the suggestion that they should pursue their Ph.D. was viewed as a valid suggestion.

Faculty demonstrated that they cared for participants in a variety of different ways: (1) they were honest about the benefits and the challenges participants would encounter along the journey to the doctorate, (2) they held high expectations for the work participants did in their classroom and lab settings, and (3) they allowed participants to get to know intimate details about them as people. Faculty members shared information about their background, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. African Americans in this study stated those characteristics made the relationship more personal making it easier for them to trust the advice faculty members provided about pursuing the doctorate. The nature of the relationship reinforced that faculty members were acting in their best interest.

Male and female participants both discussed having personal intimate relationships with faculty but female participants needed more than a personal connection in order to believe the suggestion that they would be a viable candidate for doctoral study. Female participants needed the recommendation to come from a faculty member familiar with their academic and research capabilities so that they could ensure that the recommendation was based on merit and not the personal relationship they had established. This finding compliments Hearn (1987) research which suggests that males and females approach the decision to enroll in graduate education differently. Hearn's found that during college women make the decision to pursue graduate education on a continuum: continuously evaluating on a year-by-year basis if an advance degree is necessary in order to reach their personal and professional career goals. On the other hand, men tended to make their decision based on a single event which occurs during their freshmen year (Hearn, 1987). Findings from this study compliment Hearn's finding by unpacking what African American females are evaluating on a year-by year basis. They are determining that the

suggestion that they should pursue doctoral study is based on merit not a personal relationship with faculty.

Chapter six focuses on the role of culture in the decision-making process for African Americans. It suggests African Americans have a shared understanding of what it means to be African American in a racialized society and that shared understanding motivates them to pursue their Ph.D. The notion of a shared culture that teaches African Americans to be concerned about the group not the individual, that promotes the idea that the success of one African American is a success for all African Americans, and believes that goals can be achieved by working together with others within your race has been discussed in other bodies of literature (Carson, 2009; Dillard, 2008; Morgen, 1989) but few scholars have connected this understanding to how African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral study (Louque, 1999; Schwartz et al., 2003; Williams, et al., 2005). It is important for scholars to be aware of the influence of culture because it is uniquely associated with African Americans and other marginalized groups and it is a strong contributing factor for why African Americans in this study have chosen to continue their education and earn the Ph.D. This chapter specifically makes the connections between cultural beliefs and the decision to enroll in doctoral study. It explains how African Americans in this study foresee the degree facilitating their ability to achieve their goal of giving back to their communities.

There are multiple ways in which African Americans believe earning the Ph.D. will allow them to give back to their community. Due to the limited number of African Americans admitted into Ph.D. programs African Americans in this study view achieving admission into a Ph.D. program as an act that facilities the possibility to give back. It allows them to increase the number of African Americans who earn the degree which increases the number of African

Americans qualified to become faculty. As faculty members African Americans see themselves serving as role models, mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, and pursuing research relevant to the African American community. They also believe the degree will provide them with the knowledge necessary to intelligently voice concerns about policies that affect the community as well provide them with the credentials necessary to open community centers, give presentations to community members at community functions, and return to previous employers to share knowledge that would improve how organization service their African American constituents.

Earning the degree is viewed as a means to give back to the community. African Americans in this study expressed beliefs that by earning the degree they would be benefiting all African Americans. In addition to being concerned about all African Americans findings indicated that African Americans in this study were also concerned about African Americans who shared their gender identity. African American males desire to see more males enroll and complete the degree and African American females desire to see more females infiltrate programs and pursue fields that lacked race and gender diversity. This intersection of race and gender is important and illuminates the salience of multiple identities when making life choices.

Each chapter focuses on different influential relationships but across and between those relationships there are similarities and connections that provide us a more complete picture of how African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral education. In the section below the most pertinent connections and reasoning behind choosing social capital as the study's theoretical; framework will be highlighted.

Discussion

I chose the theory of social capital as the study's theoretical framework because it helps explain the value of being connected to individuals with similar interests. The theory refers to these connections or relationships as 'social networks' and posits that within relationships that have social capital you will find trust, norms, and sanctions which produce capital. Capital can be intangible or tangible between individuals, individuals and groups, and/or individuals and communities. The framework allowed me to explore the utility of interpersonal relationships to African Americans making the decision to enroll in doctoral study. The examination of interpersonal relationships is currently deficient in the doctoral enrollment literature. This study attempts to expand our understanding of how relationships inside and outside the academy contribute to African Americans' decision to enroll in doctoral study while simultaneously explicating how social capital as a theoretical lens can be conducive in studies about doctoral enrollment decisions. Scholars have questioned whether social capital should be used as a theoretical framework in empirical studies because of its lack of clarity in definition and conceptualization (Dika & Singh, 2002; Portes, 1998; Putzel, 1998). This study addresses those concerns by identifying and clarifying how the capital African Americans in this study received facilitated progression towards doctoral study.

The theory posits that individuals receive resources which are intangible and tangible from individuals in their social networks which can be levied for personal gain (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Loury, 1992; Putnam, 2000; Woolcook, 1998). Findings reveal that African Americans in this study received intangible and tangible resources from relationships which contributed to their decision to enroll in doctoral education. Diefenbach (2006) suggests that intangible resources differ from tangible because they are immaterial, reusable, can increase or

decrease in prevalence, and have the ability to change while being used . With this understanding in mind the following intangible resources were solicited from family and faculty members by African Americans in this study: educational values, encouragement, emotional support, advice, and knowledge. These intangible resources encouraged and motivated students to progress towards enrolling in doctoral study.

Overall, the intangible resources provided a sense of security for participants as they embarked along an unfamiliar journey. The support made the risk of applying to doctoral programs and being accepted or rejected acceptable. Whether participants successfully gained admission or not they knew they would be viewed as successful for even attempting to gain admission into graduate level programs not normally pursued by the people in their home communities. Having unwavering support was necessary because African Americans in this study were aware they would face resistance to entering into the upper echelons of higher education. More specifically, participants were aware that American universities are imbedded in racist structures, practices, and discourses that can work against African Americans in their pursuit of higher education (Tate, 1997). Therefore, in order to successfully navigate the system African Americans have to continue to rely upon their established support systems while also developing support systems in their educational context. Participants particularly valued the intangible supports they received and made certain those types of support systems were intact before pursuing a degree.

African Americans in this study also received tangible support from family and faculty members. Family and faculty members edited personal statements, assisted with the completion of application materials, and provided research opportunities in faculty labs. Distinct from intangible resources, these resources have physical properties and were equally pertinent to

participants' doctoral enrollment decision. Without these tangible resources most of the African Americans in this study would likely not have been viewed as viable candidates for the doctoral program to which they applied.

The study's findings did not support the need to make conceptual distinctions between micro and meso level social capital. Participants did receive capital from individuals as well as from their connection to the African American community (Halpern, 2005). However, the majority of the capital identified by African Americans in this study was received via an interpersonal relationship with an individual. It was extracted from relationships where participants indicated there was a level of personal attachment. Participants described these relationships as trustworthy and caring, and they often indicated that the relational expectations of the relationship made it mutually beneficial. These findings resonate with Pooley, Chohen and Pike (2005) who concluded that the essence of social capital is found in relationships where someone has a sense of belonging that reflects attachment to an individual and/or community. A sense of belonging and responsibility to members of the African American community motivated participants to enroll in doctoral study. Furthermore, personal attachments established with family and developed with faculty members made it considerable for participants to trust in family and faculty who were suggesting or encouraging them to make more ambitious career choices. Findings which reveal that the influence of these personal bonds between African Americans students, family, faculty, and community on the doctoral decision for Africans Americans support the arguments made by social capital theory.

The study was also not able to distinguish how relationships with weak social capital ties (relationships with acquaintances) contribute similarly or differently than relationships with strong social capital ties (relationships with family and close personal friends). Granovetter

(1973) posits individuals receive different advantages and resources depending on the strength of the social capital ties within the network. Networks with weak social capital ties are comprised of individuals who are associates or mere acquaintances. These networks are different than networks with strong social capital ties because they are solely defined by the resources an individual is able to extract from the network. Individuals in such networks are loosely committed to the advancement of those within the network. Networks with strong social capital ties are comprised of family members and close personal friends. The intensity of the relationships within the network impels individuals to be committed to the networks advancement regardless of the resources they are able to extract. The richness of the relationships impels individuals to collectively work towards the advancement of the group.

In this study participants rarely discussed relationships with weak social capital ties. Relationships which contributed to participants' decision to enroll in doctoral study were described as deep and personal. Rarely did participants credit acquaintances with contributing to their doctoral enrollment decision. Participants repeatedly discussed how the personal connection between themselves and the contributing individual was the characteristic that allowed them to trust in the advice being given about pursuing the degree. The relationships in this study resemble Granovetter (1973) description of strong tie social capital relationships. The role of weak ties in students' decision to pursue doctoral study needs further investigation and perhaps is an artifact of the methodology chosen.

The design of the study and decisions I made analyzing the data may have contributed to finding more information about the influence of strong ties on students' decision-making than information about weak ties (i.e. meso and micro levels of social capital). The study was designed to explore the relationships and experiences that contributed to African Americans'

decision to enroll in doctoral education. Therefore, the literature review and the protocol were designed to reveal relationships and experiences influential to the doctoral decision. By mostly focusing on interpersonal relationships, the interviews did not provide enough opportunity for individuals to discuss relationships with organizations, acquaintances, or broader communities. Participants did discuss how being a part of the African American community motivated them to pursue the degree but they rarely mentioned the resources they were able to pull from the community to facilitate enrollment. More frequently, participants discussed their desire to use the capital they anticipated gaining by earning their Ph.D. to give back to the community. Individuals within communities who contributed to the decision-making process were viewed as unique individuals (often referred to as family) rather than as representatives of the African American community. To better understand the influence of meso level social capital further inquiry is needed.

My focus on individual relationships versus community relationships also impacted how I analyzed the data. During coding I switched from an inductive coding process to a deductive process which allowed me to focus on the tenets of social capital. But that decision also required me to focus on interpersonal relationships within a particular network rather than on the network itself. I was able to extract information on how relationships provided African Americans the capital necessary to persist towards the doctorate but I was less able to extract other influential factors that may have aligned with meso level social capital (Halpern, 2005). Future studies of African Americans' doctoral decisions should approach projects with meso social capital in mind so that we can more accurately determine how both micro and meso level capital can factor into educational decisions.

Despite these methodological limitations, scholarship written on the type and quality of social capital received was informative (Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Granovetter, 1973, Halpern, 2006; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Woolcook, 1998). Putnam (1993) posits relationships that contain social capital can be classified as "bonding" or "bridging" (Putnam, 1993). "Bonding" relationships exist between individuals who have some type of commonality across a social identity (e.g. race, gender, SES, etc.) "Bridging" relationships exist between individuals who do not have commonalities. Individuals engage in these relationships solely because they believe the exchange of resources will be mutually beneficial. Findings from this study indicate that African Americans seek capital in "bonding" rather than "bridging" relationships when deciding to enroll in doctoral study. Repeatedly, participants discussed the importance of engaging in relationships with faculty members where they could connect across one of their salient identities. These faculty members provided participants with a variety of information and resources pertinent to them making an affirmative decision to enroll in doctoral study.

It is also important to note that "bonding" relationships/social networks are typically exclusive and homogeneous. These relationship characteristics help explain why participants considered information received from faculty members "insider's information." The exclusiveness of the relationship made participants feel as if faculty members were only sharing information with them due to their membership in the network. Participants did acknowledge "bridging" faculty relationships but they did not consider them a primary resource in their decision-making process.

Findings also confirmed the notion that the quality of social capital can vary. All participants received some form of social capital (support, encouragement, etc.) from their parents but only females from middle to upper-middle class families who had a parent with a

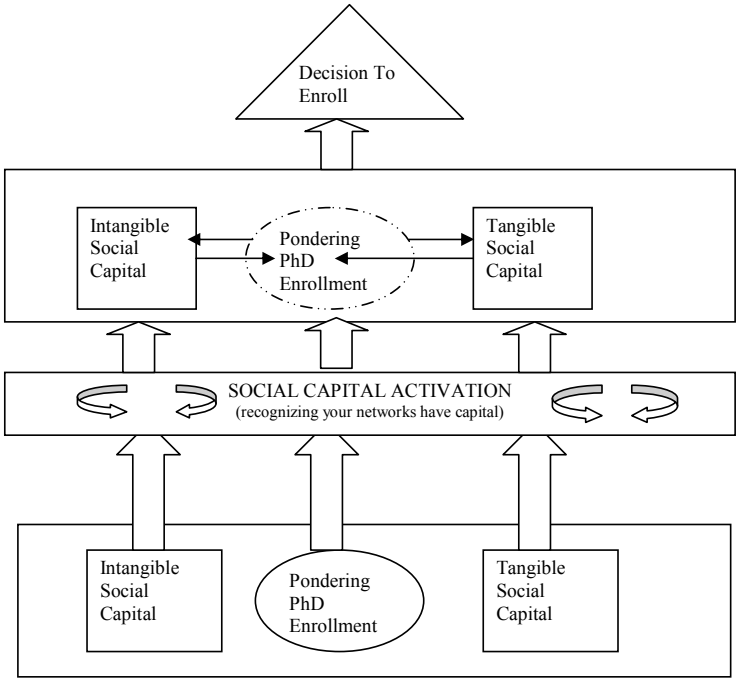
graduate degree emphasized parental expectations to attend graduate school. Parents' expectations turned into participants' aspirations to enroll in doctoral study. They entered their undergraduate programs already knowledgeable about graduate education and more aware of the opportunities they should seek to help qualify them for admission. Males and other females from lower SES backgrounds, who were equally attached to their parents, did not receive the same type or quality of social capital.

Inherent in the definition of social capital is the assumption that individuals within social networks that have capital are able to recognize the capital and utilize it for their benefits. Findings from this study suggest African Americans can be a part of social networks that have capital—knowledge and resources applicable to moving forward academically—but may not be aware or recognize the value of the capital until someone else makes them aware of it. For example, over 50% of participants in this study knew someone in their community who had earned their Ph.D. but less than 25% of participants' retrieved knowledge from those individuals at an early age. The majority did not access those resources until a faculty member suggested that they should enroll in doctoral education. Then participants sought knowledge from individuals in their existing networks. Thus, capital can be present but lay dormant in African American networks.

This study brings to the forefront the notion of activation. Capital must be activated by the person seeking social capital as well as by the person providing the capital. In a network where capital is dormant neither the person needing the capital nor the person who possesses the capital recognizes its importance. A first-generation student who is preparing to go to college and does not pursue resources from extended family members who have graduated from college is in a social network where capital exists but is not being utilized. The capital cannot become

activated until the student or the family member recognizes its value to the student. It can be activated by the student seeking advice or by the provider who recognizes that his/her resources can be of value to the student even if the student does not recognize its utility. Figure 5 below illustrates this phenomenon. Someone pondering the doctoral enrollment decision can be in a network that has capital but it is not until the capital is activated that it can permeate a student's decision making process and facilitate enrollment into a Ph.D. program.

Figure 5: Activation of Social Capital



African Americans in this study recognized the importance of activating social capital as evidenced by their desire to give back to the community. As doctoral recipients they are aware they will earn and possess capital. Instead of waiting for someone to request their capital—encouragement, support, motivation to earn the degree—participants have indicated they will

actively seek to share their knowledge and resources with others who may be unaware of the value of the capital they possess. Participants understood that it is not enough to just posses capital. In order to be an effective member of the African American community or any social network you must activate your capital by using it to benefit others.

Although social capital has proven to be a useful framework it is not all encompassing. It does not account for the influence of race, ethnicity or other pertinent background characteristics. It is important to note the role of background characteristics as they have been found to be influential to the decision-making process for African Americans in this study. As previously mentioned females from middle to upper-middle class families who had at least one parent who had earned a graduate degree were aware that they were expected to attend graduate school. Female participants also needed more from faculty than males and were more hesitant to discuss unsupportive faculty than males. On the other hand, male participants persisted to doctoral education even when earning a graduate degree was not a family expectation. In college, males appeared to have a confidence that permitted them to move forward in the doctoral decision-making process by the mere mention that pursuing the Ph.D. was a viable career option. And, although hesitant, male participants were more willing to discuss interactions with unsupportive faculty members and how they prevailed despite faculty resistance. Thus, this study confirms there are within-group differences in how African Americans arrive at the decision to enroll in Ph.D. program in this study.

Background characteristics were also deemed important as participants sought mentors. Participants desired to build connections with African American faculty mentors. If an African American faculty member was not available participants actively sought faculty members who shared another identity—gender, SES, sexuality orientation, etc. It was obvious from

participant's narratives that having a connection across identities was extremely important to these doctoral students. The connection provided a sometimes unspoken understanding that the faculty member was aware of the challenges that participants may have been encountering based on their identities. That understanding deepened the relationship and allowed participants to trust advice given unsuspiciously.

According to Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley & Chavous (1989) the more centralized an identity is for an individual the greater affect it has on how they view the world. It is possible that gender may be the most salient identity for participants in this study. Its saliency helps explains the differences found in how male and females make the decision to enroll in doctoral study. Scholars have found among African American college students that gender can be the most centralized identity (Ingram, 1989).

With that understanding in mind, we know that the majority of faculty members in American higher education institutions are male (Hargens & Long, 2002). Therefore, once enrolled in college males are able to easily see individuals who share their gender in prominent roles requiring the Ph.D. (Hargens & Long, 2002). In this study both male and female participants more frequently discussed having male faculty, deans, and upper-level administrators in their undergraduate institutions. Therefore, males in this study were privy to an abundant amount of role models they could observe successfully navigating the system. Perhaps, causing them to believe as a male they too could navigate the system. Witnessing individuals of the same gender in successful positions may have contributed to the males in this study confidence making them more susceptible to faculty suggestion of enrolling in doctoral study. Females, on the other hand, were not as privy to female role models in the academy. The lack of representation could have contributed to females in this study needing more support from

faculty. The centrality and salience of background characteristics needs to be further explored in order to unpack their contribution to African Americans doctoral decisions.

It is important to note that the relationship between identity commonalities among participants and faculty members and the quality of faculty/student relationships has not been thoroughly tested in this study. The correlation was perceived by participants but it is possible that participants had a skewed perception. Was the relationship stronger because the student and the faculty shared a common identity or would the relationship have been equally as supportive if a common identity did not exist? Did students look more for commonality in supportive relationships than non-supportive relationships? And if commonalities were present in non-supportive relationships what factors contributed to that relationship becoming or being unsupportive? Further investigation is required to determine the role identity plays in faculty/student relationships.

Finally, the decision to pursue doctoral education is grounded in a culture of academic expectancy. From early on participants indicated that they knew that they were expected to achieve academically. Participants remembered their parents having high expectations about academic achievement as early as adolescence and that feeling of academic expectancy continued during participants' bachelor's and sometimes Master's degree programs as faculty members maintained high expectations of participants' work performance and career goals. Being expected to achieve academically coupled with feelings of obligation to succeed in order to give back to the community and better the race assisted in motivating African Americans to enroll in doctoral education.

Despite its limitations, social capital has proven to be a useful tool in helping to understand how and why African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral study. The theoretical lens provided a framework to explore the utility of interpersonal relationships among African American doctoral students. As previously mentioned, it is often assumed that underrepresented populations are not involved in networks which possess valued capital but findings from this study reveal that African Americans are involved in capital rich networks as early as adolescence and extending beyond their undergraduate years. Because many of the resources African Americans receive are intangible they are often under valued and over looked in the current doctoral enrollment literature however the resources participants in this study received from family and faculty members (encouragement, knowledge, research skills) contributed to them making an affirmative decision to enroll in doctoral study. Social capital provides a good starting point to begin to study how and why African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral education.

The decision to enroll in doctoral study a complex. It can begin as early as adolescence or as late as middle-adulthood. Regardless of when it begins, an affirmative decision to move forward in the process is stimulated by support and encouragement from family and faculty members who have earned the trust of those making the decision. The decision is not made easily. African Americans weigh the remarks of unsupportive individuals as well as their understanding of the challenges they will face along the journey. Those who persist determine that the challenges are worth the expected rewards. It is those African Americans who enroll in doctoral education.

Implications for Practice

This study sought to increase our understanding of how relationships and experiences contribute to African Americans' decision to enroll in doctoral study. Several of the study's findings are exclusive to individuals pursuing their Ph.D. For example, the lack of knowledge about what a Ph.D. is and the career opportunities available upon earning the degree seems to be a phenomenon specifically associated with pursuit of the Ph.D. for African Americans in this study. Likewise, the way participants described how faculty members' mentored them and others pursuing the Ph.D. may be specific to students pursuing their Ph.D. versus other graduate degrees. However, several of the study's other findings may be applicable to African Americans considering pursuing a variety of graduate degrees. (MD, JD, Masters, etc.). Findings indicate that African Americans need encouragement and support from family members in order to make an affirmative decision to enroll in doctoral study. On college campuses, especially predominantly White campuses, African American students are often exposed to racism and discriminatory practices. Those experiences coupled with a historic understanding of racism in America have often made many African American students untrusting of those outside their immediate circle (Sledge, 2012). As a result, when it comes to unknown and potentially uncomfortable situations such as enrolling in doctoral study, African American students often look to family members first for emotional and social support (Parade, Leerkes & Blankson, 2009, Sledge, 2012). Thus, having family support is essential for African Americans pursuing the Ph.D. Similarly, scholars have concluded that African Americans pursuing professional and other types of graduate degrees also need to have strong emotional and social support from family members to move forward in their decision-making process.

Findings from this study also indicate that African Americans desire to earn their Ph.D. to provide them the means to give back to the African American community. But the ways in which participants articulated how earning the degree would facilitate giving back could be accomplished by earning one of several other graduate degrees. Thus, findings from this study have policy and practice implications for scholars and practitioners interested in increasing the number of African American students in a variety of professional and graduate degree programs.

In the policy arena, the government can choose to re-enact the Graduate and Professional Opportunities Program (GPOP) (Pruitt, 1984). This program was originally established in 1976 to increase the pool of underrepresented minorities and women in graduate and professional schools and was combined with other programs in the late 1980s to specifically focus on increasing the number of minority students in doctoral and Master's level programs (Pruitt, 1984). GPOP was proposed to congress by college administrators who recognized that the government needed to take a direct federal role in the responsibility for enhancing educational opportunities for minority graduate students. As part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, GPOP provided fellowships for minority graduate and professional students across a variety of fields (Pruitt, 1984). To qualify for fellowships students had to indicate that they were interested in pursuing an academic career. GPOP also provided grant money to institutions to aid in the recruitment of students from underrepresented groups, to finance special orientation programs such as summer institutes and to pay for counseling and other services geared towards increasing minority student representation in graduate education (Pruitt, 1984). In 1996 GPOP was folded into the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need program (GAANN) but the mission of GAANN was not to specifically increase graduate and professional degrees of minority students. To date, GPOP represents the only Federal commitment to graduate education for minority

students. If policy stakeholders are serious about increasing African American doctoral degree attainment they should consider reinstituting GPOP and other federally funded program that would provide financial support to recruit African American students.

Funding from GPOP could be used to increase awareness of doctoral education for African Americans earlier in the educational pipeline. Findings indicate that many African Americans do not begin to consider doctoral study until enrolled in a four year institution. However, students who are interested in pursuing professional fields are often formally exposed to their field of interest during their secondary years and therefore enter college with an understanding of what is expected of them academically to obtain their career goals. Students are not exposed to Ph.D. related careers in the same way. For example, the U.S. Department of Education and the Duvall County School system in Florida have funded a magnet school for sixth through twelfth graders interested in pursuing medical careers (http://futuredocs.info/student/). The school has a medically integrated curriculum which means that all standard courses were modified to include medical components (http://futuredocs.info/student/). Upon graduation attendees will have four to seven years of medical school related material under their belts. Similar funded projects need to be developed to expose students to the academy and other academic related career fields so that African American students can understand early on what is necessary to do to earn the Ph.D. and how the degree can assist them in contributing to society. If we invest and create programs similar to the Duvall County School System African American students will enter college more prepared to take advantage of opportunities designed to prepare students for doctoral study rather than students having to wait for a faculty member to explain the functionality of the degree and suggesting that they should consider pursuing the degree once they have entered college.

At the institutional level colleges and universities can broaden their recruitment efforts to include immediate as well as extended family members. Most institutions tend to focus their recruitment efforts on the individual student but findings from this study suggest that the most influential people in the decision making-process are the parents. Thus, institutions are recruiting families as well as individual students. Acknowledging this reality and broadening recruitment efforts may prove advantageous in recruiting African American students. Family members could be invited on campus visitation day, graduate school fairs, and meetings with academic advisors. Additionally institutions could adopt family friendly policies that are beneficial for immediate as well as extended family members. Often benefits such as health insurance are made available to doctoral students and their spouse or their children. Since African Americans tend to get married later in life than White Americans many enter graduate school without a significant other. This could be partially why parental input is so important to the doctoral decision. As a recruitment tool institutions could allow students to choose anyone from their family to take advantage of the health insurance offered. If a student does not have a spouse they could chose their mother as the recipient of the policy increasing the reason why attending graduate school would beneficial for the family.

Findings from the study also found that the quality of the student/faculty relationship mattered. African American students indeed benefited from research opportunities and other tangible support that faculty members offered but the true connection between the students and faculty occurred when the student perceived that they had a caring relationship with a faculty member. Although these types of relationships are helpful in encouraging African Americans to enroll in doctoral study they can often be difficult to establish at Research I institutions where the primary focus is research not student development. Faculty at Research I institutions are

rewarded for scholarship not service therefore the organizational structure of most Research I institutions make it difficult for students to develop these type of relationships with faculty. Institutions could assist by creating mentoring programs which educate faculty members on how to successfully mentor culturally diverse students and then reward them for their mentoring and service. Student service practitioners and administrators can support this effort by encouraging students to develop relationships with faculty beyond the classroom and provide workshops on how to do so. Often undergraduate students are told how important it is to develop relationships with faculty but on campuses where faculty members do not share a common identity it can be difficult for students to comprehend how to develop personal relationships beyond the course work that they have in common. Campus administrators, counselors, and staff can assist by educating both students and faculty on how to develop successful mentoring relationships.

Lastly, findings suggest that male and female students approach the decision-making process differently. This understanding should influence how counselors and other higher educational professionals work with students. It may be necessary to approach the topic of attending a doctoral program repeatedly with African American women who may have doubts about moving forward in the process. Conversations may need to center on why deciding to pursue the degree would be a good idea. To facilitate the process counselors can direct African American female students to faculty who are aware of the students' academic and research capabilities to continue conversations as findings indicate conversations with those faculty members are most influential to African American woman considering the doctorate. Counselors who engage in conversations with African American males who indicate that a faculty member suggested that enrolling in doctoral study would be a good career decision may want to begin providing more tangible support towards the admissions process rather than discussing if

pursuing the degree is a good idea. Findings indicate once the suggestion has been made African American males are more likely to quickly make a decision to pursue the path or not. Thus, counselors may be utilized differently by male and female African American students and counselors should be aware of these differences when working with students. Counselors should also attempt to make students aware of how they are approaching the decision in order to help students identify the ways they may be helping or hindering themselves in the process.

Future Research

This qualitative study answered important questions about how and why African Americans enroll in doctoral education. The findings provided answers to: What relationships and experiences contribute to the decision to enroll in doctoral education for African Americans? How do background characteristics influence the decision to enroll? Does the decision differ for men and women? What is the role of social capital and how does it help explain the decision-making process? Despite these answers, many questions continue to remain about how African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral education.

We continue to have a lack of understanding of how negative relationships, especially with faculty members, influence African Americans' decision to enroll in doctoral study. Participants in this study discussed supportive and non-supportive relationships but they were extremely reluctant to elaborate on the role non-supportive relationships had on their doctoral decision. Further research should explore negative relationships with faculty and how those relationships impact African Americans and their decision to enroll in doctoral education. Although this study revealed that African Americans tend to rely on positive faculty members to combat negative experiences with unsupportive faculty members it remains unclear if African Americans utilized other strategies when faced with resistance from faculty. It also remains

unclear why some faculty members appeared to be extremely supportive of a students' decision to pursue the doctorate while others were firmly against it. How were relationship dynamics different between the student and the supportive faculty member versus the student and the unsupportive faculty member? Future research should further investigate African Americans' relationships with faculty to advance our understanding of how faculty can encourage or impede a student who enrolls in doctoral study.

Questions also remain about the role of gender in the decision to enroll in doctoral study. African Americans in this study align with previous findings (Hearn, 1987) that indicate males and females approach the decision to enroll in graduate education differently. Females were more cautious in their decision making while males appear to be more confident in moving forward towards the doctorate. Why are African American males so receptive to the idea that they should enroll in doctoral study when research indicates that African American males are less likely to persist in higher education than other groups? What barriers do they encounter along the journey and what strategies do they utilize to overcome those barriers to succeed? The males in this study debunked longstanding caricatures of African American males as "lazy, unmotivated, under prepared for college, intellectually incompetent, and disengaged (Harper, 2011)." What makes males who pursue the doctorate so motivated to dispelled stereotypes and succeed? Findings from this study suggest that encouragement and support from family and faculty members strongly contribute but future research should examine other factors that enable African American males to be successful in a system designed for them to fail (Tate, 1997). Future research should explore this phenomenon.

Lastly, the motivation behind earning the degree should be further explored. Findings reveal that African Americans in this study were motivated to enroll in doctoral study as a means

to prepare to give back to the African American community. An underlying commitment to improving the African American race, debunking racial stereo types, and becoming a role model to others were identified as some of the primary reasons African Americans in this study sought the degree. What remains unknown is if the reasons for enrolling will remain consistent with the reasons they persist and complete the degree. In other words, do African Americans' reasons for earning their Ph.D. change during doctoral study? Exploring motivations further may increase our understanding of enrollment and persistence of African Americans.

Beyond Social Capital

One way to expand our understanding of how African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral study would be to approach the topic from a different theoretical lens. This study utilizes social capital as its theoretical lens but a new conceptualization of social reproduction theories—Academic Capital Formation—may help broaden the scope of what African Americans consider to be important in their decision-making process. Building upon St. John's Balance Access Model (St. John, 2003), Academic Capital Formation is grounded in social capital, human capital, and other social reproduction theories. Thus, it takes into account the role of relationships, concerns about finances, cultural knowledge passed from generation to generation, and a variety of other concerns that may promote or impede an affirmative decision to enroll in doctoral study. Unlike social capital which primarily explains the utilization of relationships Academic Capital Formation describes how students form the capital they receive.

Scholars may also consider moving beyond social capital to explore influential factors outside of the realm of social reproduction theories. As previously mentioned, social capital and other social reproduction theories do not take into consideration the role of race, culture, or other pertinent background characteristics. Findings from this study indicate that those characteristics

are important in African Americans doctoral decision. More specifically, findings brings attention to the role of race and gender in the decision making process by highlighting the connection African American students have to the larger African American community and how that connection varies by gender. Participants were interested in increasing the number of African Americans who earn the Ph.D. but they were also interested in increasing the number of African Americans of their specific gender—males wanted more African American males and females wanted more African American females. The intersection of race and gender and participants' awareness that racism and sexism are normative parts of society suggest that the theory of intersectionality may be a useful framework to increase our understanding of how African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral study.

The theory of intersectionality was created as a means to understand the role of race and gender of African American women but the concepts are applicable to all racialized populations. Rooted in Critical Race Feminism, intersectionality recognizes that there are systematic variables that engender inequality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). As an analytical strategy, intersectionality addresses within group differences to accentuate rather than trivialize the connection between historical and structural realities of marginalized groups (Sule, in press). The theory's emphasis is on the interaction between individuals and social structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000) so it may be informative to understand how African Americans embedded in college environments are able to navigate the system and enroll in doctoral study.

The decision to enroll in doctoral study is an academic as well as a career decision. Students are deciding to advance their education in order to obtain a certain career or hold a certain position within the African American community. Thus, it may prove useful for future scholars to consider utilizing a theoretical framework that encompasses how individuals make

career choices. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) complements and builds conceptual linkages with existing career theories to explore decision-making processes (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). It may prove to be a useful tool to further advance finding found in this study.

Grounded in Bandura's (1986) revised social cognitive theory, SCCT focuses specifically on the processes through which (a) academic and career interests develop, (b) how interests, in concert with other variables, promote career-relevant choices, and (c) how those interests and consequential choices influence people to attain varying levels of performance and persistence in their educational and career pursuits (Lent et al. 1994, p. 311). The SCCT causal model includes background characteristics, learning experiences, academic interests, goals, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports and barriers that simultaneously affect goals, choices, and ultimate career decisions. Utilizing SCCT as theoretical framework would allow researchers to explore the agency African American students have in their career decisions while taking into consideration how context (e.g., undergraduate institution attended) also influences academic and career decisions.

In general, social capital is a useful theory however; future research should consider combining social capital with other theories in order to unpack some of the nuances that influence African Americans to pursue and enroll in doctoral study.

Conclusion

This study has provided empirical evidence of the importance of relationships and positive pre-college and college experiences on the decision to enroll in doctoral study for African Americans. Results from this study suggest that immediate and extended family members remain significant to the doctoral decision even after students have experienced college

and/or obtained a position in a given field. Results also indicate that characteristics of student/faculty relationships are just as important as the social capital students are able to extract from those relationships to facilitate success in the admission process. Additionally, findings indicate that the majority of African Americans in this study did not begin to consider doctoral education until after they entered college and for some participants consideration did not begin until they entered Master's programs.

Social capital appears to be a useful framework to explore how African Americans make the decision to enroll in doctoral study. It provided a framework which increased our understanding of how family and faculty relationships contributed to the doctoral decision-making of African Americans but the theory is not all inclusive. Scholars interested in learning more about this topic should explore other theoretical frameworks that will allow further exploration of the impact of students' racial and ethnic identity as well as other salient background characteristics.

In conclusion, it is clear that relationships and experiences contribute to the decision to enroll in doctoral education for African Americans. It is my hope that findings from this study will be used and expanded upon to create policies and implement programs geared towards increasing the number of African Americans with earned doctorates in the United States. More importantly, I hope that African Americans considering doctoral education will read this study and know they too can achieve.

Appendices

Appendix A

Definitions of Social Capital

Authors	Definitions of Social Capital
Baker	'a resource that actors derive from specific social structures and then use to pursue their interests; it is created by changes in the relationship among actors'; (Baker 1990, p. 619).
Belliveau O'Reilly, Wade	'an individual's personal network and elite institutional affiliations' (Belliveau et al. 1996, p. 1572).
Bourdieu	'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 248). 'made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 243).
Bourdieu, Wacquant	'the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 119).
Burt	'friends, colleagues, and more general contacts through whom you receive opportunities to use your financial and human capital' (Burt 1992, p. 9). 'the brokerage opportunities in a network' (Burt 1997, p. 355).
Knoke	'the process by which social actors create and mobilize their network connections within and between organizations to gain access to other social actors' resources' (Knoke 1999, p. 18).
Portes	'the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures' (Portes 1998, p. 6).
Brehm Rahn	'the web of cooperative relationships between citizens that facilitate resolution of collective action problems' (Brehm and Rahn 1997, p. 999).
Coleman	'Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure' (Coleman 1990, p. 302).
Fukuyama	'the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations' (Fukuyama 1995, p. 10). 'Social capital can be defined simply as the existence of a certain set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permit cooperation among them' (Fukuyama 1997).

Inglehart	'a culture of trust and tolerance, in which extensive networks of voluntary associations emerge' (Inglehart 1997, p. 188).
Portes Sensebrenner	'those expectations for action within a collectivity that affect the economic goals and goal' seeking behavior of its members, even if these expectations are not oriented toward the economic sphere' (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, p. 1323).
Putnam	'features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam 1995, p. 67).
Thomas	'those voluntary means and processes developed within civil society which promote development for the collective whole' (Thomas 1996, p. 11).
Loury	'naturally occurring social relationships among persons which promote or assist the acquisition of skills and traits valued in the marketplace. . . an asset which may be as significant as financial bequests in accounting for the maintenance of inequality in our society' (Loury 1992, p. 100).
Nahaplet Ghoshai	'the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. Social capital thus comprises both the network and the assets that may be mobilized through that network' (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998, p. 243).
Pennar	'the web of social relationships that influences individual behavior and thereby affects economic growth' (Pennar 1997, p. 154).
Schiff	'the set of elements of the social structure that affects relations among people and are inputs or arguments of the production and/or utility function' (Schiff 1992, p. 160)
Woolcook	'the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social networks' (Woolcock 1998, p. 153).

http://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/definition.html

Appendix B

Recruitment Email to Recommended Participants

Greetings,

My name is Carmen McCallum and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of Michigan. I am conducting a study to understand how African Americans make the decision to pursue doctoral education. You have been contacted because a friend of yours suggested that I contact you to participate in the study. He/She indicated that you often have unique perspectives therefore it is my hope that you will agree to participate.

I am specifically interested in speaking with doctoral students who are **currently completing course work and have yet to complete qualifying exams**. If you meet these criteria, I would like to invite you to participate in an interview. Please note that your participation is voluntary and if you agree to participate in the study, you may leave the study at any time.

All information you provide will be confidential and not disclosed to any person outside of the research group. No identifying information about any individual will be disclosed. Dr. Deborah F. Carter is the faculty advisor for this project. You may contact her at dfcarter@umich.edu if you have any further questions. Additionally, at the time of the interview you will receive a study information sheet that will provide you with the contact information of Dr. Carter and me.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at: cmmccall@umich.edu. My phone number is 313-515-5720.

Appendix C

Recruitment Email Via List Servs

Greetings,

My name is Carmen McCallum and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of Michigan. I am conducting a study to understand how African Americans make the decision to pursue doctoral education. You have been contacted because you have been identified as African American currently enrolled in a doctoral program. It is my hope that you would agree to participate in my study.

I am specifically interested in speaking with doctoral students who are **currently completing course work and have yet to complete qualifying exams**. If you meet these criteria, I would like to invite you to participate in an interview. Please note that your participation is voluntary and if you agree to participate in the study, you may leave the study at any time.

All information you provide will be confidential and not disclosed to any person outside of the research group. No identifying information about any individual will be disclosed. Dr. Deborah F. Carter is the faculty advisor for this project. You may contact her at dfcarter@umich.edu if you have any further questions. Additionally, at the time of the interview you will receive a study information sheet that will provide you with the contact information of Dr. Carter and me.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at: cmmccall@umich.edu. My phone number is 313-515-5720.

Appendix D

Participant Demographic Survey

(Online—Survey Monkey)

1. Name_____
2. Phone _____Cell_____
3. School Email Address_____
4. Alternative Email Address_____
5. Hometown _____State_____

Academic Information

6. Current Doctoral Program_____
7. Year in Program _____First _____Second _____Third _____ Fourth

   _____Fifth _____Sixth _____ Other
8. Current Cumulative GPA_____
9. Anticipated Graduation Year_____
10. Undergraduate Institution_____
11. Major(s)_____
12. Cognate/Minor_____
13. Final Cumulative GPA_____/4.00 Scale (please try to estimate)
14. Graduation Year_____
15. Master's Degree Institution_____
16. Major(s)_____

17. Cognate/Minor_____

18. Final Master's Cumulative GPA_____/4.00 Scale (please try and estimate)

19. Graduation Year_____

Campus Involvement During *Undergraduate* Study

List all campus organizations in which you were involved with outside of classes.

Club/Organization	Leadership Position (if any)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Campus Involvement During *Master's Degree* Study

List all campus organizations in which you were involved with outside of classes.

Club/Organization	Leadership Position (if any)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Summer Programs

Were you involved in any summer programs that helped prepared you for your doctoral program? If so, please describe.

Background Information

Family Structure:

_____Two Parent _____ Caregiver/Guardian (not a parent)

_____Single Parent Household (Mother)

_____Single Parent Household (Father)

_____Other (please explain)

How would you characterize your socioeconomic background and/or the way you grew up?

_____Poor/low income _____Working Class

_____Middle Class _____Wealthy/Affluent

Mother's Education Level

_____No College _____Some College (but didn't graduate)

_____Bachelor's Degree _____Master's Degree

_____Doctoral Degree, Please specify _____

Mother's Occupation_____

Father's Education Level

_____No College _____Some College (but didn't graduate)

_____Bachelor's Degree _____Master's Degree

_____Doctoral Degree, Please specify _____

Father's Occupation_____

Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Introduction

1. Tell me who _____ was before you came to [institution]?

2. What were your expectations of your doctoral program?
    a. Probe: Did you have any specific goals? Did you have any concerns about pursuing the doctorate?

3. When did you first become interested in doctoral studies?
    a. Probe: Whom did you talk to about your goal of pursuing/enrolling in a doctoral program? Who gave you feedback?

Family

5. Tell me a little bit about your family's approach (perspective/philosophy) on higher education.

6. Tell me about your relationship(s) with your parent(s)?
    a. Probe: How was education viewed in your family?
    b. Probe: Can you describe for me how they were supportive or not supportive of you enrolling in a doctoral program?
    c. Probe: Did you feel support and encouragement from family was necessary in order for you to make the decision to pursue the doctorate? Why or Why not?
    d. Probe: Parents often tell us stories about their lives that may have important meanings for our lives. What stories do you recall from your parents regarding their educational background? How did that impact you?
    a. Probe: What qualities of those relationships seem meaningful?

7. Were their other family members that you feel either encouraged or discouraged your decision to enroll in a doctoral program?
    a. Probe: How were these individuals encouraging or discouraging?
    b. Probe: How did your relationship with those individual impact your decision?
    c. Probe: What qualities of those relationships seem meaningful?

Community

8. Were there individuals who were not family members who were influential in your decision to enroll in your doctoral program? Close family friends, community members, etc.?

9. Were there people in your community (when you were growing up) who pursued graduate education? The doctorate?
    a. Probe: Describe your relationship with these individuals. Were these individuals influential to your decision to pursue doctoral education?
    b. Probe: What qualities of those relationships seem meaningful?
    c. Probe: If not, why do you think that is? What made you different?

College Characteristics

10. Let's talk about undergrad. Describe for me experiences with people in undergrad that influenced your decision to enroll in a doctoral program.
    a. Probe: Tell me about your relationships with professors? How would you describe those relationships? How were they supportive or non-supportive of your decision?
    b. Probe: Tell me about your relationships with peers at college? How would you describe those relationships? How were they supportive or non-supportive of your decision?
    c. Probe: Were their other individuals who were influential? Describe your relationship with them? What about your relationship with that individual made it influential to your doctoral decision?
    d. What qualities in those relationships seem meaningful?

11. In what ways do you feel your undergraduate experience prepared (or under prepared) you to pursue doctoral education?

12. If you could change anything about your undergraduate experience in relation to pursuing the doctorate what would it be? Why?

Masters **(Optional)**

13. Describe how your experiences in your Masters degree program impacted your decision to enroll in a doctoral program.
    a. Probe: Tell me about your relationships with professors? How would you describe those relationships? How were they supportive or non-supportive of your decision?
    b. Probe: Tell me about your relationships with peers? How would you describe those relationships? How were they supportive or non-supportive of your decision?
    c. Probe: Were their other individuals who were influential? Describe your relationship with them? What about your relationship with those individuals made it influential to your doctoral decision?

14. In what ways do you feel your graduate school experience prepared you for your doctoral program?

15. If you could change anything about your undergraduate experience in relation to pursuing the doctorate what would it be? Why?

Graduate Institution/Post Graduate Opportunities

16. Describe for me your interactions with your current institution or any other doctoral program prior to you enrolling.
    a. Probe: What kind of support/encouragement did they provide you prior to enrolling? Were there any individuals who were particularly encouraging or discouraging? What was your relationship with them?
    b. Probe: Were you able to easily obtain the information you needed in order to make an informed decision about pursuing doctoral education at their institution? Describe that process?

17. Upon graduation from undergrad, what alternative opportunities were you considering besides pursuing the doctorate?
    a. Probe: Describe for me what impacted your decision to pursue the doctorate rather than the opportunity you just described?

Background/External Factors

18. How do you think being an African American has impacted your journey to the doctorate?

    b. Probe: In what ways has it affected your decision to enroll in a doctoral program? Describe a particular situation where you believe that race directly impacted your decision process as you were deciding to enroll.

19. How would you describe your socio-economic status growing up?

20. Do you believe your family's SES has influenced your decision to pursue the doctorate? If so, how?

21. How would you describe your socio-economic status before enrolling in the doctorate (was there an increase or decrease in income between undergrad and enrolling in the doctorate)?

22. Did the change in SES influence your decision to pursue the doctorate? Please explain how the change was influential?

23. Is there a particular incident that you can recall directly related to your SES—either your family's or your own post graduation—that influenced your decision to enroll in a doctoral program?

24. We have discussed SES and race, are there other social identities that you identify with that have been influential to your journey to the doctorate?

a. Probe: What role do you believe your gender has played in your doctoral decision?

Critical Incidents

25. Are there any experiences that you have encountered that you would consider critical along your journey to the doctorate? Is there a particular moment in time that you can point to and say "that sealed it," I wanted to pursue a Ph.D.?
    a. Probe: Please describe in detail the experience. How did you feel?
    b. Probe: Why do you believe this was a critical experience? How did it influence your journey to the doctorate?

Closing

26. If you had to do it again, would you pursue the doctorate?
    a. Probe: How have your reasons for pursuing the degree changed since you began school?

27. Is there any additional information you think would be helpful for me to understand the experiences that influenced you to pursue doctoral education?

Appendix F

Student Profiles

Pseudonym	Gender	Year In Ph.D. Program	First To Attend College	Undergraduate Institution	Earned Masters	Graduate Institution	Student Reported SES/Class	SES/Class	Field of Study
Aaron	M	3	Yes	PWI	Yes	PWI	Poor	Poor	School of Information
Alexa	F	2	No	HBCU	No	HBCU	Upper Middle	Upper Middle	Psychology
Anthony	M	1	No	PWI	No	HBCU	Upper Middle	Upper Middle	Psychology
April	F	1	No	PWI	No	PWI	Upper Middle	Middle	Communications
Ava	F	3	No	HBCU	Yes	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Sociology
Ben	M	6	No	PWI	No	PWI	Middle	Middle	Political Science
Bianca	F	1	Yes	PWI	No	PWI	Poor	Poor	Political Science
Brittany	F	2	Yes	PWI	No	HBCU	Poor	Poor	Communications
Caleb	M	2	No	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Working	Working	Sociology
Carl	M	3	Yes	HBCU	No	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Cassandra	F	1	Yes	PWI	Yes	PWI	Poor	Working	Education
Cayden	M	1	Yes	PWI	No	PWI	Middle	Working	Psychology
David	M	2	Yes	PWI	Yes	PWI	Working	Working	Education
Dawn	F	2	Yes	HBCU	No	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Debra	F	1	No	PWI	No	PWI	Working	Working	Biochemistry
Donna	F	2	No	HBCU	No	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Ebony	F	1	No	PWI	No	PWI	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Elva	F	1	Yes	HBCU	Yes	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Erica	F	2	Yes	PWI	No	PWI	Poor	Poor	Education
Ezekiel	M	3	No	PWI	No	PWI	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Fawn	F	1	No	HBCU	No	PWI	Poor	Middle	BioPsychology

Pseudonym	Gender	Year In Ph.D. Program	First To Attend College	Undergraduate Institution	Earned Masters	Graduate Institution	Student Reported SES/Class	SES/Class	Field of Study
Frank	M	1	Yes	PWI	No	PWI	Poor	Middle	Psychology
Gabe	M	3	Yes	PWI	Yes	PWI	Poor	Poor	Economics
Gloria	F	3	Yes	PWI	Yes	PWI	Poor	Poor	BioBehavioral Medical Health
Hank	M	2	No	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Poor	Poor	Psychology
Jackie	F	1	No	PWI	No	PWI	Upper Middle	Upper Middle	Psychology
Joann	F	3	Yes	HBCU	No	HBCU	Middle	Working	Mathematics
John	M	1	Yes	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Working	Working	Education
Joyce	F	1	No	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Keisha	F	3	No	PWI	No	PWI	Middle	Upper Middle	Education
Kelley	F	1	No	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Middle	Upper Middle	English
Krissy	F	1	No	HBCU	Yes	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Sociology
Kyle	M	1	Yes	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Laura	F	1	Yes	PWI	No	PWI	Middle	Poor	Psychology
Makayla	F	2	Yes	HBCU	No	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Psychology
Michael	M	3	Yes	HBCU	Yes	HBCU	Poor	Poor	Economics
Michele	F	1	No	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Poor	Middle	Psychology
Mya	F	1	No	PWI	No	HBCU	Middle	Middle	Anatomy
Noni	F	1	Yes	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Middle	Upper Middle	Sociology
Stacey	F	3	No	HBCU	Yes	HBCU	Poor	Poor	Communications
Tyler	M	5	No	PWI	Yes	HBCU	Upper Middle	Upper Middle	Psychology

Appendix G

PWI Consent Form

Consent for Participation in Doctoral Student Interview

You are invited to be a part of a research study that looks at the decision to pursue doctoral education. The purpose of the study is to better understand the factors that influence the decision from the students' perspective. We are asking you to participate because you are a current doctoral student. Carmen McCallum, a current doctoral student at the center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan (cmmccall@umich.edu) is the primary investigator for this research project. Dr. Deborah F. Carter, Associate Professor at the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan, (dfcarter@umich.edu,) is the faculty sponsor.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in one face-to-face interview at the location of your choice. The interview should take about ninety minutes. We would like to audiotape the interview to make sure that our conversation is recorded accurately. The discussion topics will include aspects of your relationships with family, friends and college associates that may have influenced your decision to pursue doctoral education. We will also talk about the kinds of support, if any, that you received and what types of support you anticipate needing in the future. You may still participate in the research even if you decide not to be taped. It is possible that we may contact you after your initial interview for a follow-up interview to verify that we have a clear understanding of your decision process.

Some people find sharing their stories to be a valuable experience. We hope that this study will allow you to reflect on your decision to enroll in doctoral education in a matter that will assist you in moving forward towards completion of your degree. You may choose not to answer any interview question and you can stop your participation in the research at any time.

We plan to publish the results of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you or your faculty advisor. To keep your information safe, the audiotape of your interview will be placed in a locked file cabinet until a written word-for-word copy of the discussion has been created. As soon as this process is complete, the tapes will be destroyed. The researchers will enter study data on a computer that is password-protected and encrypted. The data will contain identifying information as we may wish to contact participants in the future for a second interview. To protect confidentiality, your real name will be kept in a separate file. Another password protected file with pseudonyms will be kept and utilized as the projects working document. Your real name will not be used in the written copy of the discussion. The researchers plan to keep this study data indefinitely for future research about doctoral students.

You may choose not to answer any interview question and you can stop your participation in the research at any time. The interviewer will have a list of support services on campus, if you are interested in discussing your experiences after completing the interview.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Michigan Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, (734) 936-0933, 540 E. Liberty St., Suite 202 Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be part of the study. Participating in this research is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You will be given a copy of this document for your records and one copy will be kept with the study records. Be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

_____ _____

Print Name

Date

_____

Signature

Appendix H

HBCU Consent

Title: Understanding the Relationship and Experiences that Influence African Americans to Enroll in Doctoral Education.

You are invited to be a part of a research study that looks at the decision to enroll in doctoral education. The purpose of the study is to better understand the factors that influence the decision to enroll in doctoral education from the students' perspective. We are asking you to participate because you are a current doctoral student. Carmen McCallum (cmmccall@umich.edu), a doctoral student at the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan (cmmccall@umich.edu) is the primary investigator for this research project. (Faculty na,e), Assistant Professor is the faculty sponsor.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview at the location of your choice or a telephone interview. The interview should take approximately sixty to ninety minutes. The discussion topics will include aspects of your relationships with family, friends and college associates that may have influenced your decision to enroll in doctoral education. We will also talk about the kinds of support, if any, that you received and what types of support you anticipate needing in the future. We would like to audiotape the interview to make sure that our conversation is recorded accurately. You may still participate in the research even if you decide not to be taped. It is possible that we may contact you after your initial interview for a follow-up interview to verify that we have a clear understanding of your decision process.

Some people find sharing their stories to be a valuable experience. We hope that this study will allow you to reflect on your decision to enroll in doctoral education in a matter that will assist you in moving forward towards completion of your degree. You may choose not to answer any interview question and you can stop your participation in the research at any time.

We plan to publish the results of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you or your faculty advisor. To keep your information safe, the audiotape of your interview will be placed in password protected file on a password protected computer until a written word-for-word copy of the discussion has been created. As soon as this process is complete, the audio file will be destroyed. The transcripts will remain on a computer that is password-protected and encrypted. The data will contain identifying information as we may wish to contact participants in the future for a second interview. To protect confidentiality, your real name will be kept in a separate file. Another password protected file with pseudonyms will be kept and utilized as the projects working document. Your real name will not be used in the written copy of the discussion. The researchers plan to keep this study data indefinitely for future research about doctoral students.

The primary investigator, Carmen M. McCallum, can be reached at the 313-515-5720. The faculty sponsor, (Faculty name), can be reached at (Phone number) in the event you have any questions regarding your participation in this project. If you have questions any time that you would like to discuss with someone other than investigators on this project, you are free to contact the (Institution's) Institutional Review Board at (Phone number) between 8:30 and 5:00 p.m. You may also contact Carmen M. McCallum at any time for answers to pertinent questions about this research and your research-related rights. You should contact her in the event of a research-related injury.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be part of the study. Participating in this research is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time and withdraw from the study. You will be given a copy of this document for your records and one copy will be kept with the study records. Be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I have read the above description of the research project and anything I did not understand was explained to me by Carmen McCallum and my questions were answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the above-referenced project.

I acknowledge that I have received a personal copy of this consent form.

_____ _____

Print Name Date

_____

Signature

I, undersigned, have defined and fully explained the procedure involved in this investigation to the above participant.

_____ _____

Investigator's Signature Date

Reference List

Achor, S. & Morales, A. (1990). Chicanas holding doctoral degrees: Social reproduction and cultural ecological approaches. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 21*(3), 269-287.

Adams, F., & Roncevic, B. (2003). Social capital: Recent debates and research trends. *Social Science Information, 42*(2), 155-183.

Adler, P. & Kwon, S.-W. (2002) Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept, *Academy of Management Review, 27*(1), 17-40.

Allen, R.L. & Bagozzi, R.P. (2001). Consequences of the Black sense of self. *Journal of Black Psychology,* 27(3), 3-25.

Allen, W. & Jewell, J. (2002). A backward glance forward: past, present and future perspectives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. *Review of Higher Education*, 25(3), 241-261.

Anderson, M.S. & Swazey, J.P. (1998). Reflections on the graduate student experience: An overview. *New Directions For Higher Education,* 101, 3-13.

Anheier, H., & Kendall, J. (2002). Interpersonal trust and voluntary associations: examining three approaches. *British Journal of Sociology*, *53(3)*, 343-363.

Antony, S.A, & Taylor, E. (2001). Graduate student socialization and its implications for the recruitment of African American education faculty. In Tierney, W.G. (Ed.), *Faculty work in schools of education: Rethinking roles and rewards for the twenty-first century* (pp. 189-210). Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Aragon, S.R. & Kose, B.W. (2007). Conceptual framework of cultural capital development: A new perspective for the success of diverse college students. In J.L. Higbee, D.B. Lundell, I.M. Duranczyk (Eds.), Diversity and the Postsecondary Experience (pp. 103-128. Minnesota: Center for Research on Development Education and Urban Literacy, University of Minnesota.

Bailey, D.F, & Moore, J.L. III. (2004). Emotional isolation, depression, and suicide among African American men: Reasons for concerns. In C. Rabin (Ed.), *Linking lives across borders: Gender-sensitive practice in international perspective.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Baird, L.L. (1977). Social class and entrance to graduate and professional school. *Integrated Education, 15*(4), 38-40.

Barber, J.P., & Walczak, K.K. (2009). Conscience and Critic: Peer debriefing strategies in grounded theory research. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Diego, CA: April 2009.

Barlow, A.E.L., & Villarejo, M. (2004). Making a difference for minorities: Evaluation of an educational enrichment program. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching,* 41(9), 861-881.

Barrera, M. (1997). A theory of racial inequality. In A. Darder, R. Torres, & H. Gutierrez (Eds.), *Latinos and education: A critical reader* (pp. 3-44). New York: Routledge.

Bartee, R.D., & Brown, C.M. II (2007). *School Matters: How African American students need multiple forms of capital.* New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing

Borden, V.M.H. (2009). Graduate top 100 degree producers. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education,* 26(12), 16-25.

Bourdieu, P. (1977a). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In J. Karabel & A. H. Haley (Eds.), Power and Ideology in Education. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1977b). *The logic of practice.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). Forms of capital. In J. F. Richardson (Ed). *Handbook of theory in research for the sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Bowen, W.G. & Rudenstine, N.L. (1992). *In pursuit of the PH.D.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Brazziel, W.F. (1983). Baccalaureate college of origin of black doctorate recipients. *Journal of Negro Education,* 52(2), 102-109.

Brazziel, M.E., & Brazziel, W.F. (2001). Factors in decisions of underrepresented minorities to forego science and engineering doctoral study: A pilot study. *Journal of Science Education and Technology,* 10(3), 273-281.

Brown, C.M II, & Davis, J.E. (2001). The historically black college as social contract, social capital, and social equalizer. *Peabody Journal of Education,* 76(1), 31-49.

Cabrera, A., Nora, A., Terenzini, P., & Pascarella, E. (1999). Campus racial climate and the adjustment of students to college: A comparison between White students and African American students. *Journal of Higher Education, 70*, 134-160.

Camera, W. J. (2000, Summer). Pursuing campus diversity after affirmative action: An assessment of class rank plans for college admissions. *Diversity Digest*. Retrieved from http://www.diversityweb.org/Digest/Sp.Sm00/affirmative.html

Carson, L.R. (2009). "I am because we are:" collectivism as a foundational characteristic of African American college student identity and academic achievement. *Social Psychology of Education, 12(3), 327-344.*

Carter, D. (2002). College students' degree aspirations: A theoretical model and literature review with a focus on African American and Latino students. In J. Smart (Ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research,* 17, (129-171). New York: Agathon Press.

Cole, E.R & Omari, S.R. (2003). Race, class and dilemmas of upward mobility for African Americans. *Journal of Social Issues, 59*(4), 785-802.

Colbeck, C. L., Cabrera, A. F., & Terenzini, P. T. (2001). Learning professional confidence: Linking teaching practices, students' self-perceptions, and gender. *The Review of Higher Education,* 24(2), 173–191.

Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology,* 94, S95-S120.

Coleman, J. (1990). Foundations of Social Theory. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Collier, Paul. 1998. "Social Capital and Poverty" Washington, DC: The World Bank. Social Capital Initiative, Working Paper No. 4.

Conley, D. (2001). Capital for college: Parental assets and postsecondary schooling. *Sociology of Education,* 74, 59-72.

Contreras, F.E., Gándara, P. (2006). The Latina/o PH.D Pipeline. In J. Castellanos, A.M. Gloria, M.Kamimura (Eds), The Latina/o Pathway to the Ph.D., (pp.91-112). Sterling: Virginia: Stylus Publishing.

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. United Kingdom: Sage Publications.

Crane, D. (1969). Social class origin and academic success: The influence of two stratification systems on academic careers. *Sociology of Education,* 42(1), 1-12.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Cuyjet, M.J. (1997). African American men on college campuses: Their needs and their perceptions. *New Directions for Student Services,* 80, 5-16.

Davidson, M. & Foster-Johnson, L. (2001). Mentoring in the preparation of graduate researchers of color. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(4) 549-574.

Davis, D.J. (2007). Access to academe: The importance of mentoring to Black students. *Negro Educational Review,* 58 (3-4), 217-279.

DeFillipis, J. (2001). The myth of social capital in community development. *Housing Policy Debate*, *12(4)*, 781-806.

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Critical Race Theory* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

de los Santos, A.G. & de los Santos, G.E. (2003). Hispanic serving institutions in the 21st century: overview, challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education,* 2 (4), 377-391.

De Sousa, J. (2001). Reexamining the educational pipeline for African American students. In L. Jones (Ed.), *Retaining African Americans in higher education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Diefenbach, T. (2006). Intangible resources: a categorical system of knowledge and other intangible assets. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 7(3), pp.406 – 420.

Dika, S.L., & Singh, K. (2002). Applications of social capital in Educational literature: A critical synthesis. *Review of Educational Research,* 72(1), 31-60.

Dillard, C.B. (2008). Re-membering culture: bearing witness to the spirit of identity in research. *Race Ethnicity and Education,* 11(1), 87-93.

Edward, B., & Foley, M.W. (1998). Civil society and social capital beyond Putnam. *American Behavoural Scientist, 42*(1), 124-139.

Eide, E., Brewer, D. & Ehrenberg, R.G. (1998). Does it pay to attend an elite private college? Evidence on the effects of undergraduate college quality on graduate school attendance. *Economics of Education Review, 17*(4), 371-376.

Ellis, E. (2001). The impact of race and gender on graduate school socialization satisfaction with doctoral study and commitment to degree completion. *Western Journal of Black Studies,* 25 (1) 30-*46.*

Ely, R.J., & Thomas, D.A. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 46*(2), 229-273.

Ethington, C.A. & Smart, J. C. (1986). Persistence to graduate education. Research in Higher Education, *24*(35), 287-303.

Field, J. (2003). Social capital. London, Routledge.

Fine, B. (2001). *Social capital theory versus social theory: Political economy and social science at the turn of the millennium*. London: Routledge.

Foeman, A.K., & Pressley, G. (1987). Ethnic culture and corporate culture: Using black styles in organizations. *Communication Quarterly, 35*(4), 293-307.

Fox, M. (1992). Student debt and enrollment in graduate and professional school. *Applied Economics, 24*, 669-677.

Freeman, K. (1997). Increasing African Americans' participation in higher education: African-American student's high school perspective. *Journal of Higher Education, 68*(5), 523-550.

Freeman, K. (2005). African American and college choice: The influence of family and school. Albany, New York: State University of New York Oress.

Gaines, K. K. (1996). *Uplifting the race: Black leadership, politics and culture in the twentieth century*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Gardner, S.K. (2009). The development of doctoral students: Phases of challenge and support (ASHE Higher Education Report: 1551-6970). San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass.

Gardner, S.K. & Holly, K.A. (2011). "Those invisible barriers are real:" The progression of first-generation students through doctoral education. *Excellence & Equity in Education,* 44(1), 77-92.

Gittell, R., & Vidal, A. (1998). *Community organizing: Building social capital as a development strategy.* Thousand, Oaks, CA: Sage.

Golde, C.M. (2005). The role of the department and discipline in doctoral student attrition: Lessons from four departments. *Journal of Higher Education, 76,* 669-700.

Golde, C.M. & Walker, G.E., & Associates. (2006). E*nvisioning the future of doctoral education: Preparing stewards of the discipline/Carnegie essays on the doctorate.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Gossett, B.J., Cuyjet, M.J., & Cockriel, I. (1996). African Americans' and non-African American's sense of mattering and marginality at public, predominantly, white institutions. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 8*(3), 37-43.

Grandy, J. (1992). *Graduate enrollment decisions of undergraduate science and engineering majors: A survey of GRE test takers. GRE board professional* (Report No.85-01P). Princeton NJ: Educational Test Service, Record Examination Board Program.

Granovetter, M.S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology,* 78, 1360-1380.

Grenfell, M., & James, D. (1998). Bourdieu and education: Acts of practical reason. London: Farmer Press.

Halpern, D. (2005). *Social Capital.* Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Hargens, L. L., & Long, J. S. (2002). Demographic inertia and women's representation among faculty in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education, 73*(4), 494–517.

Harper, S.R. (2011). *Black male student success in higher education: A report from the national Black male achievement study.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education.

Haro, R. (1992). Lessons from practice: What not to do. *Change,* 55–58.

Harper, S.R.; Byars, L.F., & Jelke, T.B. (2005). How membership affects college adjustment and African American undergraduate student outcomes. In T.L. Brown, G,S, Parks, & C.M. Phillips (Eds.), African American fraternities and sororities: The legacy and the vision (pp. 393-416). Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky.

Harper, S.R., Patton. L.D., & Wooden, O.S. (2009). Access and equity for African America students in higher education: A critical race historical analysis. *The Journal of Higher Education, 80*(4), 299-414.

Hathaway, R.S., Nagda, B.R., Gregerman, S.R. (2002). The relationship of undergraduate research participation to graduate and professional education pursuit: An empirical study. *Journal of College Student Development,* 43(5), 614-631.

Hearn, J. (1987). The impact of undergraduate experiences on aspirations and plans for graduate and professional education. *Research in Higher Education. 27*, 119-141**.**

Heller, D.E. (2001). Debts and decisions: Student loans and their relationship to graduate school and career choice. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teaching Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED453722).

Henry, M.D. (1985). Black reentry females: Their concerns and needs. *Journal of National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, 48*(4), 5-10.

Holmes, S.J., Ebbers, L.H., Robinson, D.C., Mugenda, A.G. (2001). Validating African American students at predominantly white institutions. *Journal of College Student Retention, 2*(1), 41-58.

House, J. (1981). *Work, Stress, and social support.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Hurtado, S., & Carter, D.F. (1997). Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on Latino students' sense of belonging. *Sociology of Education,* 70(40), 324-345.

Hurtado, S., & Carter, D.F., Spuler, A. (1996). Latino student transition to college: Assessing difficulties and factors in successful college adjustment. *Review in Higher Education,* 37(2), 135-157.

Huss, M.T., Randall, B.A., Davis, S.F., & Hansen, D.J. (2002). Factors influencing self-rated preparedness for graduate school: A survey of graduate students. *Teaching of Psychology,* 29(4), 275-281.

Ingram, B. J. (1989). Identity issues among African-American students in three university settings. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Miami University, Florida.

Ishiyama, J.T. & Hopkins, V.M. (2003). Assessing the impact of a graduate school preparation program on first-generation, low income college students at a public liberal arts university. *Journal of College Student Retention*, *4*(4), 393-405.

Israel, G.D., Beaulieu, L.J., & Hartless, G. (2001). The influence of family and community social capital on educational achievement. *Rural Sociology, 66*(1), 43-68.

Issac, P.D., Malaney, G.D., & Karras, J.E. (1992). Parental Educational Level, Gender Differences, And Seniors' Aspirations For Advanced Study. *Research in Higher Education, 33*(5), 595-606.

Jehn, K.A., Chadwick, C., & Thatcher, M.B. (1997). To agree or not to agree: The effects of value congruence, individual demographic dissimilarity, and conflict on workgroup outcomes. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 8*, 287-305.

Jones, L. (2001). Creating an affirming culture to retain African-American students during the postaffirmative action era in higher education. In L. Jones (Ed.), *Retaining African Americans in higher education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Johnson-Bailey, J. (1998). Black reentry women in the academy: Making a way out of no way. *Initiatives, 58*(4), 37-48.

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2004). Hitting and climbing the proverbial wall: participation and retention issues for Black graduate women. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 7*(4), 331-349.

Karraker, M.W. (1992). Socioeconomic or race differences? Explaining Black and White adolescent females' plans for education. *Urban Education,* 27(1), 41-58.

Kallio, R.E. (1995). Factors influencing the college choice decisions of graduate students. *Research in Higher Education,* 36(1), 109-124.

Kezar, A., & Moriarty, D. (2000). Expanding our understanding of student leadership development: A study exploring gender and ethnic identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(1), 55–69.

Kim, Y. K. (2006). Student–faculty interaction in college: Examining its causalities, predictors, and racial differences. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of California, Los Angeles.

Kim, D., & Eyermann, T.S. (2006). Undergraduate borrowing and its effects on plans to attend graduate school prior to and after the 1992 Higher Education Act Amendment. *Journal of Student Financial Aid, 36*(2), 5-20.

Kim, Y.K. & Sax, L.J. (2009). Student-faculty interaction in research universities: Differences by student gender, race, social class, and first-generation status. *Research in Higher Education,* 50(6), 437-459.

King, S.E. & Chepyator-Thomson (1996). Factors affecting the enrollment and persistence of African-American doctoral students. *The Physical Educator, 53*, 170-180.

Knack, S., & Keefer, P. (1997). Does social capital have an economic payoff? A cross-country investigation. *Quarterly Journal of Economics. 112*(4), 1251-1288.

Kawachi, I., Kim, D., Coutts, A. & Subramanian, S.V. (2004). Commentary: Reconciling the three accounts of social capital. *International Journal of Epidemiology,* 33, 682-690.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. school. *Educational Researcher, 35*(7), 3-12.

Laird, T.F & Niskode'-Dossett, S. (2010). How gender and race moderate the effect of interactions across difference on student perceptions of the campus environment. *The Review of Higher Education, 33*(3), 333-356.

Lammers, W.J. (2001). An informal seminar to prepare the best undergraduates for doctoral programs in psychology. *Teaching of Psychology, 28*(1), 58-59.

Lee, W.Y. (1999). Striving toward effective retention: The effect of race on mentoring African American students. *Peabody Journal of Education, 74*(2), 27-43.

Leon, D.J., Dougherty, K.A. & Maitland, C. (1997). *Mentoring minorities in higher education: Passing the torch.* Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Lent, R.W., Brown, S.D. & Hatchett, G. (1994). Towards a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 45, 79-122.

Lewis, N., Frierson, H.T., Strayhorn, T.L., Yang, C. & Tademy, R. (2008). Gender and college type differences in Black students' perceptions and outcomes of a summer research program. *The Negro Educational Review,* 59(3-4), 217-237.

Lewis, C.W., Ginsberg, R., Davies, T., Smith, K. (2004). The experiences of African American PH.D students at a predominantly white Carnegie I-research institution. *College Student Journal, 38*, 231-245.

Lin, N., Cook, K.S., & Burt, R.S. (Eds.) (2006). *Social Capital: Theory and Research.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Lin, N. (2001). Building a network theory of social capital. *Connections, 22*(1), 28-51.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications, Inc.

Littlejohn-Blake, S.M. & Darling, C.A. (1993). *Understanding the strengths of African American families.* Journal of Black Studies, 23(4), 460-471.

Lochner, K., Kawachi, I. & Kennedy, B.P. (1999). Social capital: A guide to its measurement. *Health and Place, 5*(4), 259-270.

Locks, A. M.; Hurtado, S., Bowman, N.; & Oseguera, L. (2008). Extending notions of campus climate and diversity to students' transition to college. *The Review of Higher Education, 31*(3), 257-285.

Longerbeam, S.D., Sedlacek, W.E., Alatorre, H.M. (2004). In their own voices: Latino student retention. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 41*(3), 538-550.

Louque, A. (1999). Factors Influencing Academic Attainment for African-American Women Ph.D. Recipients: An Ethnographic Study of their Persistence. *Negro Educational Review,* 50(3), 101-108.

Loury, G. 1992. 'The economics of discrimination: Getting to the core of the problem.' *Harvard Journal for African American Public Policy* 1: 91 - 110.

Louzada, E.S., de Rio, H.S., Abell, A.J., Peltz, G. & Persans, M.W. (2008). Undergraduate research: A bridge to graduate education in agricultural biotechnology for Hispanics. *Horttechnology, 18*(3), 516-519.

Lovitts, B.E. (2001). *Leaving the ivory tower: The causes and consequences of departure from doctoral study.* Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.

Lundberg, C. A., & Schreiner, L. A. (2004). Quality and frequency of faculty–student interaction as predictors of learning: An analysis by student race/ethnicity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(5), 549–565.

Malaney, G.D. (1987). Why students pursue graduate education, how they find out about a program and why they apply to a specific school. *College and University, 62*(3), 247-258.

Malaney, G.G. & Issac, P.D. (1988). The immediate post-baccalaureate educational plans of outstanding undergraduates. *College and Universities, 63*(2), 148-161.

Malecki, C.K. & Demaray, M.K. (2003). What type of support do they need? Investigating social adjustment as related to emotional, informational, appraisal, and instrumental support. *School Psychology Quarterly,* 18(3), 231-251.

Mare, R.D. (1980). Social Background and School Continuation Decisions. *Journal of the American Statistical Association,75(*370), 295-305.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research (3rd ed.).* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. (Vol. 41)* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

McCollum, V.J.C. (1998). Career development issues and strategies for counseling African Americans. *Journal of Career Development. 25*(1), 41-52.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L, & Cook, J.M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual Review of Sociology, 27*, 415-444. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.415

Merriman, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1989*). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: California, Sage Publications.

Millett, C.M. (2003). How undergraduate loan debt affects application and enrollment in graduate or first professional school, *Journal of Higher Education, 74*(4), 386-415.

Moore, J.M. (2003). *Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the struggle of racial uplift.* Lanham, Marilyn: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing.

Morgen, S. (1989). African-American women's quilting: A framework for conceptualizing. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* 14(40), 921-929.

Morrow, V. (1999). Conceptualizing social capital in relation to the well-being of children and young people: A critical review. *The Editorial Board of the Sociological Review*, 744-765.

Mullen, A.,L. Goyette, K..A. & Soares, J.A. (2003). Who goes to grad school? Social and academic correlates of educational continuation after college. *Sociology of Education, 76*(2), 143-69.

Napier, L.A. (1995). Educational profiles of nine gifted American Indian women and their own stories about wanting to lead. *Roeper Review, 18*(1), 7-20.

National Center for Education Statistics (2008). Total fall graduate enrollment in degree granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, attendance status, and level of student: selected years: 1976 - 2007. Washington, DC: US Department of Education. National Center.

National Center for Education Statistics (2008). Actual and alternative projected numbers for doctor's degree, by sex of recipient: 1994-94 through 2018-19. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Nettles, M.T. (1990). Success in doctoral programs: Experiences of minority and White students. *American Journal of Education, 98*(4), 494-522.

Nettles, M.T. & Millett, C. (1999). The Human Capital Liabilities of Underrepresented Minorities in Pursuit of Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Doctoral Degrees. (Report No. NCPI-TR-2-13) East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teaching Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EDED440576)

Nettles, M.T. & Millett, C.M. (2006). Three magic letters getting to the PH.D. John Hopkins: Baltimore.

Ntiri, D. W. (2001). Access to higher education for nontraditional students and minorities in a technology-focused society. *Urban Education, 36* , 129-144.

Olson, C. & King, M.A. (1985). A preliminary analysis of the decision process of graduate students in college choice. *College and University, 60*(4), 304-315.

Parcel, T.L. & Dufur, M.J. (2001). Capital at home and at school : Effects on child social adjustment, *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 63, 32-47.

Pascarella, E. T. (1980). Student–faculty informal contact and college outcomes. *Review of Educational Research,* 50(4), 545–595.

Pascarella, E.T. (1984). College environmental influences on students' educational aspirations. *Journal of Higher Education, 55*(6), 751-771.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students (Volume 2): A third decade of research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pascarella, E.T., Wolniak, G.C., Pierson, C.T., & Flowers, L.A. (2004). The role of race in the development of plans for a graduate degree. *Review of Higher Education*, *27* (3), 299- 320.

Parade, S. H., Leerkes, E. M., & Blankson, A. N. (2009). Attachment to parents, social anxiety', and close relationships of female students over the transition to college. *Journal of Youth Adolescence,* 39(2), 127-37.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. California: Sage Publications.

Patton, L.A. & Bonner, F.A.II (2001). Advising the historically black greek letter organization (HBGLO): A reason for angst or euphoria? *National Association of Student Affairs Professional Journal, 4*(1), 17-30.

Pelled, L.H. (1996). Demographic diversity, conflict and work group outcomes: An intervening process theory. *Organization Science, 7*, 615-631.

Peppas, N.A. (1981). Student preparation for graduate school through undergraduate research. *Chemical Engineering Education, 15*(3), 135-137.

Perna, L.W. (2001). The contribution of historically black colleges and universities to the preparation of African Americans for faculty careers. *Research in Higher Education, 42*(3), 267-294.

Perna, L.W. (2004). Understanding the decision to enroll in graduate school: sex and racial/ethnic group differences. *Journal of Higher Education, 75*(5), 487-527.

Perna, L.W., & Titus, M.A. (2005). The relationship between parental involvement as social capital and college enrollment: An examination of racial/ethnic group differences. *Journal of Higher Education, 76*(5), 485-518.

Perry, T., Steele, C, & Hilliard, C. (2003). *Young, gifted, and Black*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Person, S.M. & Bieschke, K.J. (2001). Succeeding against the odds: An examination familial influences on the career development of professional African American women. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*(3), 304-309.

Polzer, J.T., Milton, L.P., & Swann, W.B. (2002). Capitalizing on diversity: Interpersonal congruence in small work groups. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 47*(2), 296-324.

Poock, M.C. (1999). Students of color and doctoral programs: Factors influencing the application decision in higher education. *College and University, 74*(3), 2-7.

Poock, M.C. (2000). African American Students and the Decision to Attend Doctoral Programs in Higher Education Administration. *College Student Affairs Journal,* 19(2), 51-59.

Pooley, J.A., Cohen, L., & Pike, L.T. (2005). Can sense of community inform social capital? *The Social Science Journal, 42*(1), 71-79.

Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: Its origins and application in modern sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology, 24*, 1-24.

Pruitt, A.S. (1984). G*POP and the federal role in the graduate education of minorities. *The Journal of Negro Education,* 53(2), 106-113.

Putnam, R.D. (1993). The prosperous community: Social capital and public life. *Am Prospect,* 13, 35-42.

Putnam, R.D. (1995a). Tuning in, tuning out: The strange disappearance of social capital in America. *American Political Science and Politics,* 28(4), 664-683.

Putnam, R.D. (1995b). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy,* 6, 65-78.

Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* New York: New York, Simon & Schuster.

Putzel, J. (1998). Policy arena : Accounting for the 'dark side' of social capital: Reading Robert Putnam on democracy. *Journal of International Development, 9*(7), 939-949.

Qain, Z., & Bair, S.L. (1999). Race/ethnic differences in educational aspirations of high school seniors. *Sociological Perspectives, 42*(4), 605-625.

Quillian, L. & Redd, R. (2006). Can Social Capital explain persistent racial gaps. National Poverty Center *(*Issue Brief No. 06-12) Chicago, Illinois.

Ridgwell, D.M., & Creamer, E.G. (2003). Institutional culture and the advanced degree aspirations of students attending women's colleges. *College Student Affairs Journal,* 23(1), 77-90.

Rovai, A.P., Gallien, L.B. & Wighting, J.M. (2005). Cultural and Interpersonal Factors Affecting African American Academic Performance in Higher Education: A

Review and Synthesis of the Research Literature. *Journal of Negro Education, 74*(4), 359-370.

Russell, R.V. & Kovacs, A. (2003). Unobtrusive Measures. In Stage, F.K. & Manning (Eds.), *Research in the College Context: Approaches and Methods* (pp. 63-80). New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Sampson, C., & Boyer, P.G. (2001). GRE scores as predictors of minority student success in graduate study: An argument for change. *College Student Journal, 35*(2), 271-279.

Sax, L. J., Bryant, A. N., & Harper, C. E. (2005). The differential effects of student–faculty interaction on college outcomes for women and men. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), 642–659.

Schapiro, M.O., O'Malley, M.P., & Litten, L.H. (1991). Progression to graduate school from the 'elite' colleges and universities. *Economics of Education Review, 10*(3), 227-244.

Schuh, J., Triponey, V.L., Heim, L. L. & Nishimura, K. (1992). Student involvement in historically black greek letter organizations. National Association of Student Personnel Association Journal, *29*(6), 274-282.

Schuller, T., Baron, S. and Field, J. (2000), Social Capital: a review and critique, pp. 1-38 in Baron, S., Field, J., and Schuller, T. (Eds.) *Social Capital: critical perspectives*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Schwartz, R.A. & Bower, B.L., Rice, D.C. & Washington, C.M. (2003). Ain't I am women, too?: Tracing the experiences of African American women in graduate school. *Journal of Negro Education, 72*(3), 252-268.

Sedlacek, W.E. (2004). *Beyond the big test: Noncognitive assessment in higher education.* Indianapolis, Indiana: Jossey-Bass.

Sellers, R.M., Smith, M.A., Shelton, N., Rowley, S.A., & Chavous, T.M. (1998). Multidimensional model of racial identity: A reconceptualization of African American racial identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review.* 2(1), 18-39.

Sledge, L. (2012). "Get your education: Family support for African American college students." *McNair Scholars Research Journal.* 4(1), 1-21.

Smith, E.P., & Davidson, W.S. (1992). Mentoring and the developmental of African-American graduate students. *Journal of College Student Development.* 33(6), 531-539.

Solorzano, D.G. (1995). The doctorate production and baccalaureate origins of African-Americans in the sciences and engineering. *Journal of Negro Education,* 64(1), 15-32.

St. John, E. P., Hu, S., & Fisher, A. S. (2010). *Breaking through the access barrier: Academic capital formation informing policy in higher education*. New York: Routledge.

Stack, C.B. (1975). *All our kin: Strategies for survival in the black community.* New York: Harper & Row.

Stage, F.K. & Maning, K. (2003). What is your research approach? In Stage, F.K. & Manning (Eds.), *Research in the college context: Approaches and Methods* (pp.19-31) New York: Brunner-Routledge:

Stanton-Salazar, R.D, & Dornbusch, S.M. (1995). Social capital and the reproduction of inequality: Information networks among Mexican-origin high school students. *Sociology of Education,* 68, 116-135.

Stoecker, J.L. (1991). Factors influencing the decision to return to graduate school for professional students. *Research in Higher Education,* 32(6), 689-701.

Stolzenberg, R.M. (1994). Educational continuation by college graduates. *American Journal of Sociology, 99*(4), 1042-1077.

Strauss, A.C. & Corbin, J.M. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Second edition.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing.

Szreter, S. (2000). Social capital, the economy, and education historical perspective. In Baron, S., Field, J., & Schuller, T. (Eds.) *Social capital: Critical perspectives* (pp.56-77). Oxford: Oxford University of Press.

Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. *Review of Research in Education*, *22*, 195–247.

Taylor, E. & Antony, J.S. (2000). Stereotype threat reduction and wise schooling: Towards the successful socialization of African American doctoral students in education. *Journal of Negro Education,* 69(3), 184-198.

Teachman, J.D., Paasch, K., & Carver, K. (1997). Social capital and the generation of human capital. *Social Forces, 75*(4), 1343-1359.

Thompson, C.E. & Fretz, B.R. (1991). Predicting the adjustment of black students at predominantly white institutions. *Journal of Higher Education, 62*(4), 437-450.

Tinto, V. (1975). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Trends in graduate enrollment and degree. (2006, January/February). Council of Graduate Schools Newsletter: The Communicator. Retrieved from http://www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/DataSources_2006_01.pdf.

Trent, W., Owen-Nicholson, D., Eatman, T.K., Burke, M., Daughterty, J., & Norman, K. (2003). Justice, Equality of Educational Opportunity, and Affirmative Action in Higher Education. In M. Chang, D. Witt, J. Jones, & K. Hakuta (Eds.), *Compelling Interest: Examining the Evidence on Racial Dynamics in Higher Education.*

Wall, E., Ferrazzi, G. & Schryer, F. (1998). Getting the goods on social capital. *Rural Sociology*, *63,* 300-322.

Wanous, J.P., & Youtz, M.A. (1986). Solution diversity and the quality of group decisions. *The Academy of Management Journal, 29*(1), 149-159.

Wallace, W.L. (1965). Peer influence and undergraduates' aspirations for graduate study. *Sociology of Education,* 38(5), 375-392.

Walpole, M. (2003). Socioeconomic status and college: How SES affects college experiences and outcomes. *Review of Higher Education, 27*(1), 45-73.

Ward, W.G. (1997). Black female graduate students in the academy: Re-moving the masks. (Report no. 503669) East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED410779).

Weiler, W.C. (1994). Expectations, undergraduate debt and the decision to attend graduate school: A simultaneous model of student choice. *Economics of Education Review, 13*(1), 29-41.

Weiss, R.S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: the Art and Method of Qualitative interview Studies.* New York: Free Press.

Weisbuch, R. (2005). *Diversity & the Ph.D.. A review of efforts to broaden race & ethnicity in U.S. doctoral education.* Retrieved from: http://www.woodrow.org/images/pdf/resPh.D./WW_Diversity_Ph.D._ExecSum.pdf

Wendler, C., Bridgerman, B., Cline, F., Millett, C., Rock, J., & Bell, N., McAllister, P. (2010). *The path forward: The future of graduate education in the United States.* Commission on the Future of Graduate Education in the United States. Retrieved from: www.fgereort.org

Wenglinsky, H.H. (1996). The educational justification of historically Black colleges and universities: A policy response to the U.S. Supreme Court. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 18, 91-103.

Wildavsky, B. (1999, March 22). Whatever happened to minority students? *US News and World Report, 126* (11), 28-29

Williams, M.R., Brewley, D.N., Reed, R.J., White, D.Y., & Davis-Haley, R.T. (2005). Learning to read each other: Black female graduate students share their experience at a white research I institution. *The Urban Review,* 37(3), 181- 199.

Wolcott, V.W. (2001). *Remaking respectability: African American women in interwar Detroit*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Woolcock, M. (1998). Social capital and economic development: Towards a theoretical synthesis and policy framework. *Theory and Society,* 27, 151-208.

Zhang, L. (2005). Advance to graduate education: The effect of college quality and undergraduate majors. *Review of Higher Education, 28*(3), 313-338.