A STUDY ON ACADEMIC ACHIVEMENT

: THE NARRATIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN THE SOUTH

by

SEUNG-YUN LEE

(Under the Direction of Jennifer H. James)

ABSTRACT

This research study explores the narratives of academic achievement of African American students in the South. Specifically, this study conveys the narratives of four student participants, ranging from the sixth to the ninth grades. All of them were recruited from the Young Scholar's Club (YSC), which was a program for enhancing K-12 students' academic excellence.

The recruited student participants and their mothers, who were selected by their students as the most significant people in their achievement, were interviewed. Along with the interviews, the messages that the student participants heard from the program were collected by recording observation notes of the behaviors of the student participants in the program. A narrative inquiry was conducted for the collection, analysis, and understanding of the student participants' interviews and the program observation notes. Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and Yosso's theory of cultural wealth are used for theoretical perspectives.

By the narrative inquiry, these findings were identified: first, the varied definitions of the four students' academic achievement tend to be reduced into the obtainment of high scores on standardized tests; second, the placement in academic track is a symbolic capital in school, and

then, the holders of the capital can earn exclusively benefits which help them achieve high in schools; third, racism apparently do not affect the participants' lives as students; however, in reality, the participants tend to pretend not being influenced by racism; fourth, the participants' volumes of capitals tend to determine their achievement in schools though they and their parents search for the best combination of their capitals to succeed in schools.

INDEX WORDS: African American adolescent education, Tracking, Critical race theory, Academic achievement, Cultural capital

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SEUNG-YUN LEE

B.S., Seoul National University in Republic of Korea, 1998

M.Ed., Seoul National University in Republic of Korea, 2000

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

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SEUNG-YUN LEE

Major Professor: Jennifer H. James
Committee: Deryl F. Bailey
    Kyounghwa Lee
    Margaret A. Wilder

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all my young research participants and their parents. Without your help, I could not have even started this study. I wish all of you success in your academic careers and future pursuits, and I believe that it will be so!

Also, I dedicate this dissertation to Dr. Deryl Bailey and Dr. Mary Bradbury-Bailey. You have my gratitude, and it is well deserved!

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professional career.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study explores four Black students' narratives about academic achievement. A narrative is a "fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 13). Polkinghorne (1988) further explains the meaning of the term narrative by using an example of a story about a son who lost his father. By providing that example, Polkinghorne (1988) shows how a narrative can connect two separate events, which are the father's death and the son's grief, into a story based on an organized experience. According to Polkinghorne (1988), two separate events, which are "the father died" and "the son cried," can be converted into an experience by this statement, "the son cried when his father died" (p. 13). By connecting the two events, the narrator of the story creates the meaningful information about the emotional pain of the son to audiences. In sum, the narrative organizes the two experienced events into one experience to create a new meaningful experience.

A narrative inquiry is, therefore, a study on people's experiences (Riessman, 2008). It is an exploration of the meaningful congruence of narrator's interpretations of events, people involved in the events, and the context in which the events happen, by placing the events, the people, and the context within a narrative. Thus, in order to deliver meaningful stories about the events, the people, and the context to audiences while telling their narratives, narrators have to figure out the temporal order of significant events, the interactions among the people related to the events, and the contexts of the selected events. In fact, while telling stories, narrators have to

select the best events, people, and context to express what the narrator wants to tell the best. For example, when describing the son's emotional pain in the example, the narrator does not have to tell every events happening, such as the numbers of breath that the father took before the death. Thus, a narrative is consisted of the people, the contexts, the temporality among the events, and the relationships among the people, selected by the narrator of the narrative.

Because a narrative is an organized experiences of a narrator, including selected events, people, and background, as Clandinin & Connelly (2000) show, a narrative can be analyzed by exploring the temporal order of the events, the relationships among people who are involved in the events, and the background contexts of the events and the people. Clandinin et al. (2000) theorize the components of narratives such as the temporal order of events, the relationships among people, and the background contexts of the events and the people as "three dimensional narrative inquiry spaces" (p. 50). The three dimensional spaces are the "continuity" of events in time order, the relationship between "the personal and the social," and the contexts expressed by "the notion of place" (Clandinin et al., 2000, p. 50). The three dimensions are named as the "forward" and "backward" dimension, the "inward" and "outward" dimension, and the "situated" direction. Those directions, which are also described as the relationships between future and past, those between self and others, and those of current contexts, are used as a frame to create the following research questions:

    (1) Inward and outward dimension:

        a. How do African American students describe themselves in their narratives of academic achievement?

        b. Outward dimension: What messages regarding academic achievement do the students hear from the people significant to them?

(2) Forward and backward dimension:

    a. What do the students expect to gain from education?

    b. What past events do they select as ones that have significantly influenced their academic achievement?

(3) Situated dimension:

    a. How do race, gender, and socioeconomic classes in the fields, such as Southern culture, influence the students' academic achievement?

The inward and outward dimension represents the questions about selves and others recognized by the research participants. The forward and backward dimension is related to the past and the future dimension, interpreted by the participants from their present perspective. The situated dimension addresses the contexts of the places related to their academic achievement, such as their school. Besides these contexts, this study also examines the influences of race, socioeconomic class, and gender on the participants' achievements. This interest comes from the review about African American students' academic achievement. The review in Chapter 2 will show the studies on the complex relationships among African American students' race, gender, socioeconomic classes, and academic achievement.

To answer the five questions, four students ranging from the sixth to the ninth grade were invited to participate in this narrative study. All of them were recruited from the program called the Young Scholar's Club (YSC),[1] a program aimed at the improvement of students' academic and social excellence. Thus, the participants and their parents were anticipated to be interested in excelling in school. The participants were also requested to choose people that significant influence their academic achievement. All of the selected significant people were the participants' mothers because all the participants pointed out that their mothers were the most

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[1] In order to protect the participants' individually identified information, I give a pseudonym to the program.

influential people in their achievement. Also, while this study was conducted, the majority of the student population of the program was African American. In addition, the program started as a program for assisting African American male students to achieve high in schools and then, currently, the parents and the neighbors of the male students kept sending their children to the program. Though the program were open to all racial and gender groups during this study, the program still could be regarded as an African American community of academic achievement because of its origin, history, and the ratio of student population by race.

Critical race theory is used as a theoretical perspective in this study. According to critical race theorists, the stories of people of color are generally not accepted in the broader society because the people in the majority groups have been barely exposed to people of color's stories with ideologies, values, and emotions challenging the stories familiar to the people in the majority groups (E. Taylor, 2009). In other words, though they are disadvantaged in broader society, their stories are hardly understood by people from majority groups in broader societies because the formats and the content of their stories are not changed to fit to the perspectives of listeners from majority groups. In order to persuade the listeners from majority groups, people of color have to modify their stories which the listeners can understand. However, while doing so, the key content of the original stories may be omitted and not accurately delivered to the listeners from majority groups regardless of the importance of the content.

Thus, by exploring the untold experiences of people of color, critical race theorists intend to provide the unmodified and real experiences of people of color; then, they want to challenge the racial stratification in broader society (Solórzano &Yosso, 2002). Also, by encouraging people of color to tell their stories, critical race theorists e the story tellers of color to recover their identities which may be damaged by disgraces and discriminations of their racial groups,

caused by racially stratified broader society (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In addition, critical race theorists do not think that race solely affects the lives of people of color. Instead, they believe that gender, socioeconomic classes, and other factors differentiating the dominant and the dominated, such as sexual orientation and race, influence the lives of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011). Thus, by exploring the experiences of people of color, which are usually not told in broader society, critical race theorist pursue to reveal how race and other types of factors have jointly affected the lives of people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Among the ideas found in critical race theories, I will focus on Yosso's (2005) idea of "community cultural wealth" (p. 70), which is also called "cultural wealth" (p. 75). In cultural wealth, a wealth means "the total extent of an individual's accumulated assets and resources" (p. 78). In sum, regardless of the usage of the wealth, all the people have assets in their cultures.

Yosso's (2005) constructs this idea by criticizing the concept of cultural capital, suggested by Bourdieu. Yosso (2005) says, "while Bourdieu's work sought to provide a structural critique of social and cultural production, his theory of cultural capital has been used to assert that some communities are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor" (p. 76). In theory of Bourdieu's, among the assets internalized in individuals' bodies and tastes, or habitus in Bourdieu's theory, only the assets of middle and upper class people are regarded as valuable assets, or capitals. Thus, according to Yosso (2005), people of color's assets are not capitals in Bourdieu's theory. Against this implication, Yosso (2005) argues that people of color's assets are also wealth and then, suggests six types of cultural capitals that people of color have developed as groups and learned and possessed by individual in their communities.

However, as I will explain in Chapter 2, critical race theorists tend not to theorize the joint influence of various factors on the lives of people of color. In some domains, their wealth may not be as much useful as the wealth of people from the dominant groups. For example, in schools, students' abilities to speak Spanish may not be useful in classrooms except when they learn Spanish. Thus, though I use the six types of capitals suggested by Yosso (2005), I will take the perspective of Bourdieu's theory, which is that not all students' cultural assets become cultural capitals in schools. By taking the perspectives of Bourdieu's theory about cultural capital, I will be able to explain why the assets of some students are exclusively regarded as valuable in their schools. Specifically, by the distinction between cultural wealth, which are assets that all the students have in their families, and cultural capital, which are regarded as means to contribute to the achievement in schools, I expect to explain why the cultural assets of African American students belonging to particular gender and socioeconomic classes do not contribute to the students' achievement in schools.

When the cultural wealth (or cultural capital) possessed by students are regarded key words to analyze the participants' narratives of achievement, the characteristics of the South, which have been constructed before and after the Jim Crow era, also have to be considered. According to Morris & Monroe (2009) , the South is a unique area, which is characterized by a higher rate of people living in poverty, a history of racism, a higher percentage of African American people, and the presence of strong communities of African American. In the South, a high rate of residents have been impoverished because of the slow collapse of the plantations and the rush of the populations to live in metropolitan cities (J. E. Morris & Monroe, 2009). Also, in this area, African Americans had been segregated from Whites and had experienced discrimination during the Jim Crow era.

In order to cope with segregation and economic difficulties, African American have constructed strong African American communities (Morris & Monroe, 2009). In their communities, they have emphasized education as the means of protecting their racial identities from being damaged by the oppression of the racially stratified broader society (Perry, 2003). In fact, the Southern communities of African Americans are assumed to have common interests in encouraging students to succeed and excel in their schools. These regional characteristics of the South can legitimate the recruitment of the participants engaged in this study from a program in which the majority of the program participants are African American youths.

The contribution of this study can be described as follows: this study will expand the understanding of the achievements of African American students beyond the discourses on the achievement gap between White and Black students. The studies on African American students have focused primarily on the decrease of the achievement gap between White and African American students (Murrell, 2009). Thus, relatively small numbers of scholars have been attracted to study the meanings about achievement, which African American students construct over their lives as students, and the contribution of these meanings to their prospective lives caused by their future academic attainment. Because the purpose of this study is not to explore the gap but to explore the meaning of achievement with African American students, it is expected to contribute to the scholarship of African American studies by providing new ideas. Also, it provides some information about African American students in the South, which is anticipated to be different from the findings of studies on students in the North and the West.

However, before moving to the next chapter, I would like to introduce the terminology of this study. First, I will use the terms African American and Black interchangeably. According to Washington (2015), some Black people do not want to be called African American because they

do not feel any connection to the continent where their ancestors once lived. However, the term African American is an expression often used in the scholarship of the studies on African American adolescents' education. Also, the participants of this study do not think that the term African American awkwardly identifies their race. Thus, in this study, the two words are used interchangeably.

Second, in this study, the terms narrative and story are also used interchangeably. In theories about literature, the two concepts may be rigorously distinguished; however, storytellers use both narratives and stories as the means to organize their experiences into a meaningful entity. In this study, therefore, the participants' narratives are explored on the basis that a narrative is the means for a narrator to express and organize meaningful experiences. Thus, the two words are regarded as synonymous.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review the studies on African American students' experiences of achievement and theories which can explain their experiences scientifically. As theories, I will use critical race theory (CRT) and Bourdieu's sociology theory. Among CRT, I will employ a concept, cultural wealth, suggested by Yosso (2005), for this study. However, first of all, I need to show up why I take those two methods as my theoretical perspectives. Thus, before explaining Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and CRT, I will review the studies on African American students' experiences of academic achievement in the next section and then, based on the finding from the review, I will discuss the application of Bourdieu's theory and CRT for this study.

African American Students' Experiences of Achievement

In this section, African American students' experiences of achievement in previous studies will be discussed according to the three dimensional spaces of narrative inquiry, as described in the first chapter. However, among the three dimensions, I will not discuss students' past experiences of achievement, represented in a backward direction, because they do not tend to be discussed independently from the present experiences of discrimination. For example, in the studies on the relationship between racial discrimination and African American students' achievement, their' experiences of being discriminated against in the past and in the present are jointly discussed. Thus, I will focus on the forward dimension when I talk about the backward and forward experiences related to their academic achievement.

Forward: Possible Self and the Anticipation of Future Attainment

Possible self is one of the topics frequently discussed regarding African American students' perceptions about their future. First of all, possible selves are defined as "the ideal selves that we would very much like to become" (Marcus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Additionally, possible selves contain the selves "we hope to become" and "we fully expect we will become"; Also, the selves "we are afraid we may become" are categorized as possible selves (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006, p. 20).

Regarding studies on African American students, Frazier (2012) reports that African American male students have self images as high achievers in their schools, who can succeed because of their effort and hard work. Like them, African American female students have similar images of successful possible selves (Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes, 2007). However, with regard to negative sides of possible selves, the images that male and female students have of their future selves differ. Female students tend to imagine only their future selves as successful, but male students tend to imagine their future selves as engaged in trouble when they fail in school and imagine their future selves as successful only when they excel in school. In other words, in the possible self of African American male students, the fear of failure is included. To summarize, African American female students tend to construct a positive possible self; and African American male students tend to construct both positive and negative possible selves when they share the same conditions, such as academic achievement and parental support.

The construction of possible selves, which are both positive and negative, motivate students to focus on studying hard (Oyserman et al., 2007). Even when they lack parental support, they focus on studying when they believe that their education will bring them success in obtaining high-paying jobs (Mello, Anton-Stang, Monaghan, Roberts, & Worrell, 2012;

Oyserman et al., 2007). However, the students do not seem to maintain their belief that education will bring them benefits when they recognize that their school and their parents may not support their entrance into college and their college studies (Grant & Sleeter, 1988). On the contrary, when they believe that their parents will help them study, they tend to keep focusing on studying in spite of the racism in their culture and the discrimination against them (Trask-Tate, Cunningham, & Francois, 2014). Apparently, parental support tends to be the most important factor that enables the students to keep their possible selves and to focus on studying.

Also, the close relationship between the possible self and the profession to which they aspire also predicts whether the students are motivated by their possible selves. According to Cunningham, Corprew, and Becker (2009), African American students tend to expect that academic achievement can make their commitment to the achievement related to the academic domains. In order words, when the students' future selves do not match the future that they think their education can bring them, then the students may not study in order to excel in school.

The possible selves held by the students in their peer groups can also be a major factor affecting the students' dedication to excel in school. Oyserman, Bybee, and Terry (2006) find that African American students are motivated to study hard only when the members of their peer groups accept their possible selves. In other words, when the students' future possible selves did not match those of their peers, then the participants in Oyserman et al.'s (2006) study tended to ignore the images of their possible selves.

To summarize, when students believe that their educational attainment can contribute to their success, they tend to make a commitment to their academic achievement. In particular, when their parents strongly support them, students tend to keep their dream despite the unfavorable enviornment of their school, such as the emergence of racism. However, when their

parents do not support them enough and when their peers tend to have images of their future selves that differ from their own, African American students lose interest in academic ahcievement.

Thus, the students' expectations about their future do not explain everything related to their academic achievement. Other factors, such as their relationships with significant people, for example, their parents and peers, need to be examined in order to understand their achievement. In the next section, therefore, African American students' relationships with other people, such as parents and peers, regarding their academic achievement in schools, will be discussed.

Inward and Outward: Parents, Teachers, and Peers

In the various studies on African American students' academic achievement, their parents, peers, and teachers are often introduced as the people who significantly influence student achievement. Thus, this section will discuss the studies that examine the relationships among African American students, their parents, their teachers, and their peers.

Academic achievement and parents. Parents' different ways of rearing children in middle- and working-class families are affecting students' achievement and their teachers' recognition of this achievement in school (Lareau, 2003). For example, middle-class parents tend to schedule their students' after school time to let them participate in extra-curricular activities. They manage time to ride and pick up their students to after school programs and help students have extra-curricular activities which will be added in their statement of personnel. The statement will be able to be used for college application. Unlike them, working-class parents often have no means to ride their students to after-school programs as well as they have no money to pay for those programs. Instead of sending their children to after-school programs, working-class parents leave their children play after they return from schools. The working-class

students, therefore, play with peers in neighborhood while the middle-class students develop their career by participating in diverse extra-curricular activities. Finally, the working-class students, who tend to have no extra-curricular careers, are underprivileged compared to middle-class students, who tend to have those careers, when they apply to colleges and universities. In sum, students from middle-class parents have privilege in going to college and university by using their after-school time more productively than working-class students because of their parents' support. One of the latest study, Bodovski's (2010) one, has also identified the similar effects of these differing child-rearing practices to middle and working-class students' educational attainment like Lareau's (2003) study. At least, the two studies provide that different parenting styles by socioeconomic classes tend to affect students' educational attainment.

However, the parenting styles do not affect students' achievement differently according to race (Bodovski, 2010). In other words, the influences of African American parents on their children do not differ from those of non-African American parents on their children. In Lareau's (2003) study, no different is identified between White and Black parents' child-rearing styles if they are at the same socioeconomic classes. These findings of the studies are consistent with the findings of recent studies which show up the difference of students' motivation toward academic achievement, caused by their parents' child-rearing styles. For example, recently, Gaylord-Harden (2008) found that parents' positive parenting tends to be related to high achievement and fewer behavioral problems across students' racial groups.

Both parents' and children's gender mediates the relationship between parents' ways of rearing children and students' academic achievement. In parents' sides, Lowe and Dotterer's study (2013), who explore how parents' warmth affects their children's achievement across racial groups, show that the mothers' warm reactions predict the strengthening of their children's

motivation to achieve; also they show that the father's warm reactions anticipate the decrease of the school troubles that their children may experience regardless of their race. Mothers and fathers respectively influence the different domains of their children's achieving experiences. In other words, parents' genders affect different domains of students' motivation toward academic achievement.

As well as the parents' gender, the students' gender also plays an important factor causing the differences in the parents' influence on their children's achievement. In particular, Wood, Kaplan, and McLoyd (2007) find that Black male students tend to receive lower expectations for their educational attainment from their parents than Black female students do. However, that study was conducted with students from impoverished families in urban areas. Parents from middle-class families give high expectations to their children and also expect them to go to college regardless of their gender (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2004). Students' and parents' gender, parents' socioeconomic classes jointly affect parents' expectations about students' success in academics.

To summarize all these discussions on the relationships among parents' supports, parents' and students' gender, students' motivation toward academic achievement, and parents' expectations of students' achievement, African American students from low-income families in urban areas are the groups of students that are least expected to succeed in academics by their parents. However, overall, the expectations of parents concerning their children's academic success are not influenced by their parents' socioeconomic status and their children's gender if other factors, such as the children's academic achievement, are controlled.

Expectations from schools. Despite their parents' expectations, African American male and female students tend to be treated more frequently like trouble makers in their schools than

White students are. In particular, African American male students tend to be identified as trouble-makers more than African American female students and more than both male and female students belonging to European American students (Monroe, 2005; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). In addition, African American students also tend to be regarded as talkative and uninterested in education and then, they tend to be disciplined more frequently and harder than Euro-American students (Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2012; Skiba et al., 2002). In sum, both African American male and female students tend to be regarded as trouble makers in schools when compared to Euro-American students.

In addition, the academic knowledge and abilities of African American students tend to be underrated in comparison to those of Euro-American students in schools (Pringle, Lyons, & Booker, 2010). Even elite Black students report that they receive lower academic expectations from their teachers than the White students do (D. J. Carter, 2006). To summarize, unlike receiving their parents' high expectations, African American students do not receive as much high expectations as European American students receive from their teachers in their school; More than worse, they are often regarded as trouble makers and then, become disciplined in comparison to European American students.

The result from teachers' low expectation of African American students' academic success tends to cause the underachievement of African American students. First of all, according to Thomas, Caldwell, Faison, & Jackson (2009), when African American students perceive their teachers' low expectations of their success affect their achievement by decreasing their motivation to pursue academic achievement. In other words, without other sources of support, such as parental support, African American students are likely to lose their motivation toward high achievement because of the low expectations that they receive in school from their

teachers. Also, it seems to hard for African American students to ask help to their teachers. According to Vega, Moore, & Miranda (2015), who explore African American and Latino students' perceptions of the barriers to their positive educational opportunities, African American students as well as Latino students tend to regard their barriers as their relationships with their teachers, their school counselors, and their peers as well as the school policies and a lack of safety in their communities. Unlike their parents and their peers who are perceived as helpers, the faculty members in their schools are perceived as barriers to their academic success in school.

Considering the discussions on the expectations from parents and teachers, African American students tend to experience a mismatch between their parents' high expectations and their school's low expectations. In the discussion in the previous section on African American parental support, African American students appear as those who may lose interest in learning and lose hope in succeeding academically in school. Bonding with their peers may be a method that would enable them to excel academically in school; unfortunately, African American students are likely to regard their peer groups as another group who disrupt them from concentrating on their studies rather than those who can encourage them to focus on their studies.

Peers and Achievement. Traditionally, the studies on the influence of peer groups on African American students' academic achievement have reported that the deep relationships of African American students with their peers tend to distract them from making a commitment to their studies. The theory of acting White, which Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggest, is a representative idea that shows the disrupting relationships between African American peer groups and academic achievement.

Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) study on Black male middle-school students finds that Black male middle-school students reportedly tend to regard the pursuit of high academic achievement in school as acting White. Acting White means that Black students' behaviors are similar to White students' behaviors; however, that is not a value-free concept but a concept that includes the accusations of their Black male peers. Acting White includes behavior such as (1) not speaking Ebonics, (2) not being late to class, (3) spending a lot of time in the library studying, (4) working hard to get good grades in school, and (5) getting good grades in school (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Those are behaviors of high achievers; therefore, African America male students who are excelling in school are accused by their peers as acting White according to Fordham et al., 1986).

This finding is criticized by scholars who argue that African American male students also want to excel and so they encourage each another to focus on their studies. Some scholars criticize Fordham et al.'s (1986) argument by pointing out that the definition of acting White is ambiguous. Peterson-Lewis and Bratton (2004) find that African American male and female students tend to associate high achievement with acting White; however, they do not tend to associate being Black with low achievement. Burrell, Winston, and Freeman (2013) indicate that both White and Black students in middle school tend to define "acting Black" as a mixed set of behaviors and attitudes containing both smartness and stupidity. Their studies imply the possibility that African American high achievers can become regarded as both students who do acting White or not even though they take the same actions.

Some scholars point out that the accusation of high achievers is universal across racial groups. For example, Tyson, Darity, and Castellino (2005) point out that the accusations of high achievers can also be discovered among students from low-income families regardless of their

racial groups. Tyson et al. (2005) find that students from low-income families also tend to define middle-class students as having privileges in school, and then regard high achievers as followers of the school culture and as betrayers of their peer groups. This finding is consistent with the finding of Willis's (1977) classical study on the resistance of male students from working class families, to the school culture. In Willis's (1977) study, male students from working class families define academic achievement as acting feminine as well as being obedient to the middle- and upper-class culture in the school. Thus, they accuse high achievers of discarding masculine working-class culture and following feminine middle-class culture.

This definition of school culture as feminine can also be found in studies in the same minority groups in terms of race, including African American students. First of all, Peterson-Lewis et al. (2004) find that African American male students tend to define the behavior of good students as feminine. That accusation also can be found in Caribbean American communities. In Lopez (2003), Caribbean-American students also regard studying as feminine behavior and that female students rather than male students tended to focus on their academic studies. In Tyson et al. (2005), European American students as well as African American students tend to accuse high achievers. To summarize, acting White can actually be found in diverse race, gender, and age groups; and it also means the possibility to be accused of by peers regardless of the race of the people who are accused.

Thus, African American students' understanding of high achievers is both affirmative and adversative (see Allen, 2012; Burrell et al., 2013). In some cases, African American high achievers experience tension between their peers' requirement to play with them and their own obligations as students to study hard (Allen, 2012). Because of the tension, African American high achievers sometimes choose to resist their school teachers in order to release their tension

and maintain good relationships with their peers; however, the resistance is not permanent, for afterwards they come back to their school to live as good students (Allen, 2012).

In other situations, as for friendship, African American high-achieving students' peers do not disrupt the high achiever's study. In the research of D. J. Carter (2006), Harper and Davis III (2012), and Stinson (2010), high achieving African American students who attend elite schools dominated by the White culture maintain their connections with their Black peers. Their Black peers even encourage them as long as they do not disconnect themselves from their African American communities (D. J. Carter, 2006).

Based on the discussion so far, Black students' parents, teachers, and peers diversely affect these students' experiences of academic achievement in school. African American parents tend to treat the academic achievement of both their daughters and sons highly. However, in school, compared to the European American students, African American students tend to be regarded as troublemakers until they display their knowledge and abilities. Along with that, some African American students feel pressure from their African American peers not to act like White students, though the latest studies point out more than they used to that African American peers also encourage high achievers to study harder. Considering those findings, African American students have the greater burden to prove their ability and knowledge in school than Euro-American students do and also must negotiate between keeping peer relationships and ignoring peer relationships in order to focus on their studies.

Personally, therefore, African Americans students have to focus on their studies in diverse contexts that consist of their relationships with their parents, their teachers, and their peers. The situations in their schools, and the broader society of the South also influence African American students' experiences of achievement.

Situated dimension: The Southern Communities and Education

I will explain the situations in which the students are located. I will tell about the characteristics of the environment of the Southern society, and then, review the relationships between school environments and students' achievement.

The Situation of Southern Schools. Schools do not seem to be a space for encouraging African American students to excel academically. They are often described as places in which White middle-class culture dominates and African American students experience discrimination in many studies (see Dorinda. J. Carter Andrews, 2012; DeCuir-Gunby, 2007; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Monroe, 2005). Actually, the open source data, which is a *State nonfiscal survey of public elementary and secondary education, 1995-96 through 2012-13*, collected by the National Center of Educational Statistics, White students comprise 51% of the students in K-12 public schools; Black students, 15.7%; and Hispanic students, 24.3%. However, in the South, the combined percentage of Black and Hispanic students is 47.4%, which is a higher percentage than that of the White students (45.9%). Literally, African American students and Hispanic students are in majority groups in the South. Table1 demonstrates the distribution of the students in K-12 public schools by race and region, according to the 2012 survey.

Table 1

The Distribution of Students by Race and Region in 2012.

Region	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Two or more races
United States	100.0	51.0	15.7	24.3	5.1	1.1	2.8
Northeast	100.0	58.6	14.6	18.1	6.6	0.3	1.7
Midwest	100.0	68.0	13.9	11.1	3.1	0.8	3.2
South	100.0	45.9	23.8	23.6	3.1	1.0	2.6
West	100.0	39.3	5.2	41.1	9.1	1.9	3.4

According to Table 1, in the South, White is a single racial group that occupies the highest percentage of the student population; however, they are not the majority when their percentage is compared to the combined percentages of the Black and the Hispanic populations. In some Southern schools, White students are predicted to become the minority; and therefore, the school cultures are anticipated to differ when the Whites are in the minority and the racially minority students are in the majority. P. L. Carter (2010), who compares White and Black students' cultural flexibility living in a Northern city and in a Southern city, finds that when African American students are in the majority, the score on cultural flexibility tests is significantly higher in schools of which African American students are in the majority. White students who are in the White-majority schools record lower scores on cultural flexibility than Black students in the minority-majority schools do. In that study, cultural flexibility is referred to as "the propensity to value and move across different cultural and social peer groups and environments" (P. L. Carter, 2010, p. 1529). On self-esteem tests, African American students in the Southern schools, where their race is in the minority, have the lowest scores.

Based on the findings of this study, the culture of the schools is predicted to differ according to the racial distributions of the students. In addition, the Southern schools, in which the percentages of the Black and the Hispanic students are higher than those in the North, the Midwest, and the West, are anticipated to be the environments most favorable to Black students.

Interestingly, the achievement gap between White and Black students in the South also is the same or less than the average scores in the nation. Table 2 shows the average scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2013 and the gaps on the scores earned according to race and each southern state.

Table 2

Black and White Students' Reading and Math Scores on the NAEP in 2013[2]

	Reading						Math					
	Fourth grade			Eighth grade			Fourth grade			Eighth grade		
	White	Black	W-B	White	Black	W-B	White	Black	W-B	White	Black	W-B
National	232	206	26	276	250	24	250	224	26	294	263	31
Alabama	227	202	25	266	241	25	242	215	27	280	250	30
Georgia	233	209	24	274	252	22	250	226	24	292	262	30
Louisiana	223	198	25	269	245	24	242	221	21	285	259	26
Mississippi	222	197	25	266	239	27	243	220	27	285	255	30
South Carolina	224	197	27	271	247	24	247	222	25	292	261	31

Source: The data are retrieved from National Assessment of Educational Progress (n.d.) by state and combined.

In general, according to Table 2, the average scores differ between the Black students and the White students in the southern states as much, or less, as those in the rest of the nation. Also, the average scores of Black students in the southern states, regardless of their school grades and subjects, are the same as or above the average of the scores of Black students in the nation. Specifically, in Georgia, the state in which this study was conducted, the gaps between White and Black students' scores are smaller than the gaps in nation and those in other southern states across school grade and subjects. At least, Black students' test scores in the southern states are not much lower than those of White students', though the gaps between the scores are not perfectly removed.

A hypothesis of the smaller gap between Black and White is that there are that the rates of African American students among enrolled students in public schools are higher in the South

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[2] There are various definitions of the South. Among the definitions, I follow the definition suggested by Morris et al. (2009), who consider the diverse definitions and argue that the regional characteristics of the South have to be considered in order to understand Black and Southern students' educational experiences.

than those in the North, Midwest, and West. As previously mentioned, in the South, the rates of African American students attending in public schools are higher than those in K-12 public schools in the Northeast, the Midwest, and the West. However, it is a hypothesis without supportive evidence, yet. Thus, it is hard to determine the higher rate of African American students in public schools than that of African American students in public schools of the North, West, and Midwest causes the achievement gap between Black and White to be narrowed in the South.

Considering P. L. Carter's (2010) study, the climate of schools where racially minority students are in majority may affect the overall tendency of high achievement of African American students in the South. P. L. Carter (2010) shows up that schools in which racially minority students are in majority, or African American students or Hispanic students, tend to be more tolerate to students from minority groups of their schools than majority students in which racially majority students, or European American students, are in majority. As a hypothesis, African American students may study in more tolerable climates to them in the Southern schools in which they are in majority compared to those in the Northern, the Midwestern, and the Western schools.

Though the evidence verifying this hypothesis is in lack of, Wortham's (2006) study may give an example to show up the importance of climates in which African American students are not isolated but supported regarding their academic achievement. Wortham (2006) reports that students in minority groups may be isolated and be labeled negatively based on the prejudices that African American students are not interested in studies. The classroom that Wortham (2006) observes is an Advanced Placement English Literature classroom and there, students learn Aristotle's *Republics*. In there, students learn the ancient distinctions between citizens and

noncitizens and find that females, children, and animals are recognized into noncitizens. While

learning the distinction, the teacher of the classroom and the students, regardless of their race,

continuously use Black students as examples of beasts, which are not citizens but animals. They

are unconsciously using the prejudices of Black people in there; however, they do not recognize

that they take advantage of negative prejudices about Black people. The labeling of Black

students are repeated every classes and finally, Black students lost interest in the course and then,

become left behind. Though this example cannot be generalized because it is a case study on an

AP classroom, this finding may be used as an example to provide a possible explanation about

the narrow gap between White and Black in the Southern area compared to the North, the

Midwest, and the West. Based on the previously mentioned studies, it may be considered that the

high rate of African American students among students enrolled in public schools may cause the

narrowest gap of achievement between African American and European American.

As well as the different demographic structure of the South and the other areas in the U.S.

with regard to race, the cultural and historical difference between the South and the regions in

the North and the West may cause some uniqueness of the Southern education. According to

Morris and Monroe (2009), the South is characterized as having a higher percentage of African

Americans and Hispanics; a lower annual household income; and the presence of strong African

American communities (J. E. Morris & Monroe, 2009). In particular, the presence of strong

African American communities, as supportive institutions for African Americans, deserves to be

explored in depth. According to Morris and Monroe (2009), the strong African American

communities were established as the means to cope with economic difficulties and

discrimination against African American people. In fact, as Morris and Monroe (2009) mention,

the percentage of African Americans in the South is higher than the percentages in the North, the

Midwest, and the West. According to the latest national census, the 2010 U.S. Census, 56.5% of

the African Americans[3] responded that they live in the South, which is higher than 18.8 % in the

Midwest, 17.6 % in the Northeast, and 8.9 % in the West (Rastogi, Johnson, Hoeffel, &

Drewery, 2011).

Regarding economic difficulties, the average income of the households in the South is the

lowest compared to the average income of all the other regions in the United States. For

example, the median annual income of all the households in the nation was $54,667 in 2010; and

then, that was $46,875 in the South, which is the lowest among the regions of the U.S. (Denavas-

walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2013). The percentage of people in poverty in the South is higher than in

the North, the Midwest, and the West. The percentages are 12.7% in the Northeast, 12.9% in the

Midwest, and 14.7% in the West. Compared to them, the percentage is 16.1 in the South. In sum,

the South is the poorest region in the U.S.

This prolonged poverty in the South was caused by the collapse of the small-scaled

agricultural industries in the early 1900s (Goldfield, 1990). At that time, when small farms

became industrialized, many of those who had worked on the farms lost their jobs and moved to

metropolitan cities. Because they barely had skills except for farming, they were hired as low-

income unskilled workers. At that time, many African American people moved to the North in

order to find better jobs (Goldfield, 1990; Morris et al., 2009). African American who decided to

stay in the South had to cope with the difficulties caused by low income and unemployment.

As well as facing the difficulties, African Americans experienced difficulties caused by

the Jim Crow rules (Goldfield, 1990). The rules include the racial etiquettes to protect the

borderline between Whites and Blacks (Goldfield, 1990). One of the etiquettes is the use of

different appellations according to race and gender. When White and Black people were in the

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[3] This category includes the respondents' category of the self as Black or as multiracial, which includes Blacks.

same place, Blacks always had to call a White man "sir" and a White woman "ma'am." Unlike

Black people, White people were not supposed to call a Black man "sir" and a Black woman

"ma'am"; instead, they should call a Black man "uncle" and a Black woman "auntie." The rules

were essentially oppressive toward Black people, and if Blacks broke the rules, they were

punished and disciplined (Goldfield, 1990). Even though both Black and White people violated

the rules, the Black people tend to receive severe disciplines compared to the White people's

discipline (Goldfield, 1990).

Thus, during the Jim Crow era, Black people lived in areas restricting both their mental

and physical freedom (Goldfield, 1990). Also, as I previously mentioned, Black people had to

cope with economic difficulties. To alleviate those problems, they collaborated to develop strong

communities (Morris et al., 2009). In particular, Black schools became one of the key places

where Blacks exchanged information, received help, and obtained emotional comfort (Walker,

1996). In particular, Black schools played the role of teaching the next generation the norms and

the values of the Black communities (Perry, 2003; Walker, 2010). In these spaces, the students

could learn about Black culture and history. They also could develop their identities as members

of their Black communities and have self-esteem (Horsford, 2010; Mccray, Len, & Beachum,

2005); and then, maybe, the communities of Black people contribute to the higher achievement

of Black students than that of Black students in the North, the Midwest, and the West.

Of course, not all the Black children in the Southern area received high quality of

education matching their culture. In fact, this argument can be criticized by Butchart (2010), who

actually counts the actual numbers of Black students enrolled in public schools during Jim Crow

era. According to Butchart (2010), only a small number of Black youths actually could earn the

opportunity to go to school because of the lack of schools for Black youths and the threats from

some White people toward Black students during Jim Crow era (Butchart, 2010). During the late 1800s and the early 1900s, Black schools were burned, and their teachers and students were threatened and terrorized by White people who did not agree with the idea that Black people also needed education (Butchart, 2010). These riots from the rebellious White people had restricted Black people's opportunities of education even until mid-20th century (Butchart, 2010). Thus, it is hard to conclude that all the Black people during the Jim Crow era had opportunities to learn about Black cultures and develop Black identities in Black schools as some scholars argued.

To summarize, while dealing with economic difficulties and discrimination, Black communities have developed in the South. Black schools have developed as organizations to nurture black students' academic excellence and their understanding about Black culture. However, the opportunities that Black students could learn in the Black schools during the era of the Jim Crow Rules were restricted because of the life-threatening discrimination against Black people. For this reason, it is hard to conclude that the tradition of learning about Black culture in Black schools actually contributed to the decrease of discrepancy of achievement between Black and White in the South. The reason of Southern Black students' relative high achievement to Black students in the North, Midwest, and West still seems to be unfound.

Diverse Black Communities for Education. Despite the obscurity of the contribution of Black schools or Black communities to Black students' academic achievement, educators intentionally create a African American-centered community of achievement, which mainly consists of African American students in order to help them excel in school and plan their future career (see Murrell, 2002). This tradition to build African-American centered community for academic achievement has been known as being originated from Woodson's study (1933). According to Woodson's study conducted in 1933, which was reprinted in 2009, when African

American students learned knowledge in a White way, they became isolated from the learning methods developed by their families, such as African American students' acquisitions of addition and subtraction skill by calculating the number of tenants residing on the plantation. However their learning in school differed from this application of their learning of knowledge in their everyday lives; thus, African American students struggled with applying their knowledge and skill for learning in schools and therefore, many of them left behind.

The finding of Woodson's study is reflected in the idea that African American student' need study in schools in their ways of learning and in African American culture. For example, Murrell (2002) argues for the construction of communities of achievement, or communities for learning, in which African American students can learn without being judged on the basis of racial prejudice and can construct African American learning without losing either their racial identities or their learners' identities. In order to do so, the use of their culture as resources for pedagogy is recommended. Diaquoi (2014) suggests the increased use of strategies that encourage African American students to study by connecting them to the past, the present knowledge about themselves, and the future of their communities in order to encourage them to have interest in academic achievement. By doing so, according to Diaquoi (2014), students can construct meaningful narratives of achievement without losing the connections between themselves and their communities. Morris (2002) emphasizes the importance of the connections between the communities and the teachers as well as the principals. Based on the exploration of a school with bonds to a Black community, Morris (2002) suggests that the teachers and the principals in that school can consistently provide education connected to the students' families; additionally, they can interact with Black communities, and then, they can build schools with bonds to Black communities. The reinforcement of the connection between Black school and

Black community is described as a factor affecting the level of interest in academic achievement shared by Black students, parents, and teachers in Walker's (1996) study of a Black segregated school in a Southern state. Walker (1996) explores the contributions of Black segregated schools to Black communities and finds that Black schools play the roles to teach knowledge, history, and value of Black people and communities to next generations. In the Black school, Black parents, students, and teachers can construct their philosophy of education. This finding is also supported Perry (2003), who explores the development of perspectives of education in Black communities by exploring self-narratives and Mungo (2013), who studies the narratives of African American elites who attended segregated schools during Civil right movement era.

However, it is unclear whether Black communities for education can actually contribute to their academic achievement, such as the increase of students' grades on their final examinations. For example, Irvin, Farmer, Leung, Thompson, and Hutchins (2010), who explored the activities in the schools, the communities, and the churches, in which African American students in the South participated, find that only the church activities positively relate to the students' academic achievement. In other words, the community activities did not always positively influence the students' academic achievement.

Though some studies, such as Akom's (2003) exploration of Black and Islamic high school girls' clubs and Stiler and Allen's (2006) study on an after-school program in which students learn about African American history and culture, support that African American students are encouraged emotionally by participating in African-American centered communities. Though it is not a program only for African American students, in Bhattacharyya, Nathaniel, & Mead (2011), African American high school students participating in that science-and-math-related summer camp, in which African American students are most of program participants,

have chances to navigate math-and-science related content s as well as having friendship with their peers and teachers. After participating in the camp, students have difference career choices, deepen knowledge about science and math and show improvement in science and math ability. Though the organizations that African American students participate in are not institutions only for African American students, they can show high level of performances in African-American community-like environments. However, in that study, the parents' involvement in students' choices of careers and enhancement of excellence in math and science domain differ according to students' gender. It seems to be students' participants in African American communities may contribute to the increase of test scores on schools and the improvement of performance in schools. However, this hypothesis is not decisive. It is, therefore, helpful for students to live in small communities within schools or classrooms because they need to know about excellence in African Americans' gender.

To summarize, scholars refer to the contributions of Black communities as repertoires in order to encourage African American students to construct their understanding about them in relation to the students' achievement in school. However, many factors other than the students' African American identities influence the enhancement of Black students' academic excellence in school. For example, the location of residence and students' and parents' gender may influence the benefits that the students earn by participating in the summer camp. However, influence of them on students' academic achievement seems to be still obscure.

Thus, it is hard to define how Black communities within or outside of their schools always help Black students excel in school. The reason that the gap between African American students' and European American students' achievement in the South is the lowest is not obviously explained. The reason that the scores of African American students on the NAEP tests

tend to be higher or close to the average of African American students' scores at national level on the tests also does not seem to be found, yet.

Discussion

Based on this review of all those empirical studies, the findings about Blacks students' experiences of academic achievement can be summarized as follows: First, as for the forward and backward dimension, students may have both positive and negative possible selves, which affect their current experiences of academic achievement. However, given the condition that their parents can support them, they can be positively motivated by their possible selves. Also, when their peer groups accept their future possible selves, they tend to keep their motivation to realize their future dreams. In sum, their expectations about their future do not exclusively explain how and why particular students excel in school. Other factors besdies possible selves and future expecations, such as their relationships with significant people, like their parents and their peers, need to be examined in order to understand their achievements.

Second, regarding the inward and outward dimension, the interactions between the students and the people significant to them, such as their parents, teachers, and peers, can have both positive and negative influences on their academic achievement. However, compared to Euro-American students, African American students tend to be underrated in their schools and have the burden to prove their academic abilities and knowledge.

Third, regarding the situated dimension, the regional characteristics of the South, which include the high percentage of Black people in the population and the high rate of poverty, may or may not influence Black students' construction of academic achievement. Considering those difficulties, it might be assumed that Black students in the South struggle more seriously than those in the North, the Midwest, and the West. Challenging that assumption, however, is the

achievement gap between White and Black students that is narrower than those in any other region. The difference of school climates regarding the racial structures of schools does not provide detailed explanations on the role of communities in facilitating students' academic progress. In fact, the hypothesis that the communities related to the students' racial groups can significantly contribute to their achievement in schools does not seem to be clearly supported by evidence. However, based on that hypothesis, scholars, such as Murrell (2002), argue that African American-centered education has to be given to students and their communities in order to help students improve their academic excellence.

The regional differences, especially the higher percentage of African American in the region in general and in the schools, may affect the students' perspectives of achievement and make them act differently regarding their achievement; however, it is unknown, yet, whether the culture of the schools is more supportive for African American students than it used to be. Theoretical explications may be help to understand the achievement of African American students in the South. CRT is provided as a theoretical frame to explore the narratives of achievement, told by African American students in the South. Specifically, Yosso's (2005) theory of cultural wealth will be used as a frame of this study. However, before doing so, I want to review the original theory created by Bourdieu and then, develop the theory of cultural wealth.

Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital

In order to explain Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, I will explain the concept of field; and then, I will deal with the definition of capitals and doxa. Those concepts are the key concepts I will use for the analysis of the narratives of the participants in this study.

Field and Cultural Capital

A field can be regarded as a domain in which people communicate with one another

based on the following definition suggested by Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992):

> In analytic form, a field may be defined as a network, or configuration, of objective
>
> relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence
>
> and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents, or institutions, by
>
> their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of
>
> power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at
>
> stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other position (domination,
>
> subordination, homology, etc.). (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97)

In that phrase, a field is regarded as a place that people have different social positions and

have relationships with other people. The characteristics of relationships differ according to the

positions of people in the field. The positions are defined not subjectively but objectively

according to the powers that people have in the field. The powers possessed by people are

associated with people's occupations, authorities, and/or institutions in the field and/or in broader

society. A person who may have a dominant power may be placed in a dominated position when

he or she moves from one field to another. Also, a person may have a strong power associated

with his or her position in broader society, which may influence various fields in that society.

Thus, the distribution of power is a factor actually determining the placement of a person in

fields or in broader society; also, the distribution of power is implemented according to the

position of that person. In sum, as Bourdieu (1977) mentions, people's obligations are associated

with the positions and powers (Bourdieu, 1977); therefore, they compete with one another to

have better positions with more power controlling the field (Wacquant, 1992). In other words,

people pursue "cultural authority in the artistic field, scientific authority in the scientific field, sacerdotal authority in the religious field, and so forth" (Wacquant, 1992, pp. 17–18). However, the positions associated with strong power are in scarcity. Thus, people compete with one another to obtain powerful positions. For example, scholars want to become frontrunners of their fields by introducing their new theories, research methods, and/or findings to the fields. Artists and writers want to make trends to dominate the fields. By doing so, they can gain reputations and power. Also, they can expect earn larger amounts of money than their competitors.

Thus, while pursuing the same goal, people may compete to have the power affecting that goal. Wacquant (1992), who are the coauthors of *Introduction of reflexive sociology* with Bourdieu in 1992, explains the competition of the fields by using the metaphor of "a battlefield" (p. 17). A field as a battlefield because it is "a space of conflict and competition" (Wacquant, 1992, pp. 17–18). In order to survive in the field by obtaining power to dominate the field, people have to win the battle. However, unlike real battle fields, in which there are no rules and regulations, there are both visible and invisible rules and restrictions in the field. Grammars in the field of literature, trends in the field of arts, and the curriculum standards in schools are the rules that people have to follow. Thus, even though Bourdieu does not give clear definitions of a field, the characteristics of fields can be summarized into the place dominated by "a patterned system of objective forces (much in the manner of a magnet field)" (Wacquant, 1992, p. 17); and then, "it[the patterned system] imposes on all the objects and agents which enter in it" (Wacquant, 1992, p. 17). When people do not follow the rules and the people also have no power to change rules or suggest a change in the rules, the people may not be visibly accused of the violation of rules. However, because they do not follow the patternized system, they may lose

the benefits that they might have had when they followed it. Even they may be left behind in the field because they did not catch up with the rules and regulations expressed in trends in the field.

Among the rules and restrictions, those which are not perceived by people can be categorized into doxa. In Bourdieu's theory, doxa is defined as a perspective embedded in a field. Like air, doxa is too natural for people to perceive it. Bourdieu, (1977) explains doxa as follows:

> When there is a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization (as in ancient societies), the natural and social world appears as self-evident. The experience we shall call doxa, so as to distinguish it from an orthodox or heterodox belief implying awareness and recognition of the possibility of different or antagonistic beliefs. Schemes of thought and perception can produce the objectivity that they do produce only by producing misrecognition of the limits of the cognition that they make possible, thereby founding immediate adherence, in the doxic mode, to the world of tradition experienced as a "natural world" and taken for granted". (Bourdieu, 1977)

According to the citation, people's perceptions are subjective principles; however, they reflect the organizations and the stratification of societies. Thus, they are also influenced by an objective order created in broader society. For example, when people think that many people are in the middle class, but actually the research shows that a higher percentage of the population is in the working class. The people are in doxa, or in a discourse that takes it for granted that many people are in the middle class and therefore, they misunderstood. Because doxa is so natural, people do not recognize its presence. However, that correspondence is based on people's misinformation about the percentage of people in working class families. Thus, Bourdieu says, "the adherence expressed in the doxic relation to the social world is the absolute form of

recognition of legitimacy through misrecognition of arbitrariness, since it is unaware of the very question of legitimacy" (Bourdieu, 1977). In the situation where many working-class people misunderstand that they are in the middle class, the policies beneficial only to middle class people are easily supported and legitimated by working-class people than when they think they are in the working class and therefore, they need more benefits for them than now from their national or state governments.

However, sometimes, the ideologies against doxa may be introduced. In that example, some people may argue that actually the working class is in the majority in the broader society. In this example, the argument against doxa is heterodoxy. Heterodoxy is a belief reflecting the mistrust in doxa. The doubt that most people in broader society are in the middle class is an example of heterodoxy. Opposed to heterodoxy, some people may still support the idea that many people are in the middle class, which is an example of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is defined as "straight, or rather straightened, opinion, which aims, without ever entirely succeeding, at restoring the primal state of innocence of doxa" (Bourdieu, 1977).

Interestingly, orthodoxy appears to oppose heterodoxy only afterwards when heterodoxy appears. Orthodoxy is introduced as a means to defend doxa. Orthodoxy is therefore defined as "a system of euphemisms, of acceptable ways of thinking and speaking [of] the natural and social world, which rejects heretical remarks as blasphemies" (Bourdieu, 1977). Heretical remarks are, of course, heterodoxies.

It is not easy to criticize doxa (or orthodoxy), because people are too familiar with doxa and even internalize it as result of growing up in the culture embracing the doxa. Thus, in a field where particular doxa legitimates status quo in the field, people have to play their game to win

powerful positions. Habitus are cards that people can use for playing games. By using a metaphor of game, Bourdieu, (1993) explains habitus as cards of games as follows:

> The field of power is a field of latent, potential forces which play upon any particle which may venture into it, but it is also a battlefield which can be seen as a game. In this game, the trump cards are the habitus, that is to say, the acquirements, the embodied, assimilated properties, such as elegance, ease of manner, beauty and so forth, and capital as such, that is the inherited assets which define the possibilities inherent in the field. These trump cards determine not only the style of play, but also the success or failure in the game of the young people concerned, in short, the whole process Flaubert calls *educational sentimentale*. (pp. 148-150)

In this citation, habitus is described as "the acquirements, the embodied, assimilated properties, such as elegance, ease of manner, beauty," which are human dispositions internalized in human bodies (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 150). Habitus are assets that people can use both consciously and unconsciously to win the prizes, such as powerful positions, in fields. In Bourdieu (1984) states that the tastes of food, music, and fine arts are also examples of habitus. Thus, habitus is not a preposition embodied in people but their gestures, behaviors, dispositions, and preferences which are introduced by the habitus holders both in conscious and unconscious manners.

One of the key characteristics of habitus is that it can play of role of indexes with which people's socioeconomic classes can be identified. In Bourdieu (1984), which is a report on the classification of French society regarding people's cultural dispositions as well as their income, Bourdieu (1984) finds that people' habitus differ according to their socioeconomic classes regardless of the level of their positions in their fields. For example, working-class people tended

to select the pictures in which traditional items were drawn, such as twilight, in a realistic way when they were asked what pictures were preferred. Compared to them, people in the middle and upper class tended to select pictures expressing challenging items, such as cars, in abstract ways (Bourdieu, 1984). Compared to working class people and middle-upper class people, Bourdieu (1984) found that middle-upper class people tend to avoid pictures expressed in instant sentimentalism; instead, they prefer pictures drawn in abstract, which require people to reflect the meanings of the picture based on their knowledge about fine arts (Boudieu, 1984). The similar differences of tastes among people from working-classes, middle classes, and upper classes can be found in the field of music, drink, TV program, and dresses. Though positions taken by people are different according to fields, the similarity of habitus within the same socioeconomic classes can be identified both between and across fields. In other words, the tastes of teachers, who come from middle-class families and have middle-class jobs have similar habitus to those of people who hold white-collar jobs in business fields and those of nurses in medical fields. Also, people can figure out one another's socioeconomic classes by looking at each other's ways of wearing dresses and prepositions of food, music, and fine arts.

Bourdieu explains that people in the similar positions in their fields have also akin habitus by people's learning in schools. In other words, In other words, Bourdieu selects education as an important factor affecting the construction of habitus of people those who earn similar salaries and have similar types of obligations in their fields. Based on this idea, Bourdieu, (1974) categorizes people's socioeconomic classes as the lower, middle, and upper classes. People who occupy lower positions, such as "the agricultural professionals, workers, and small trades-people, which are, …, categories excluded from participation in 'high' culture" are placed in lower classes (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 57); Those who are in "the intermediate position" , occupied

"employees of industry and business" and "intermediate office staff" are placed in middle classes (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 57); and, those who occupy "the higher position" such as " higher office staff and professionals" are categorized into upper classes.

These classes tend to be inherited to the next generation (Bourdieu, 1974) and one of the reason of the inheritance of classes, suggested by Bourdieu (1974), is the unequal distribution of cultural capital. To speak in detail, the transformation of habitus to cultural capital is different according to the power structure of field and the habitus possessed by individuals. In the fields of schools, according to Bourdieu & Passeron (1990) and Bourdieu (1974), pedagogical actions taken in schools, such as teaching curriculum content and communicating among students and teachers mostly reflects the culture of middle-upper classes, and therefore, students trained there internalize the culture of middle and upper classes. At the same time, pedagogical actions reflecting dominant cultures also require students with different cultural background from those of dominant classes to be familiar with the dominant culture embodied in school culture (Bourdieu, 1974). Thus, students tend to have the same types of tastes, or habitus, as a result of training in schools even they come from lower-classes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1984). For example, when students learn how to interpret the meaning of fine arts by learning about the history of arts in schools, the learning internalized in students is used as indexes identifying the socioeconomic classes of individuals (Bourdieu, 1984).

Habitus are diversely recognized according to the doxa of fields. Some recognized habitus may not be regarded as valuable, because they do not contribute to the production of items evaluated as high in that field. For example, in the field of literature, an author's preferences of writing styles, themes, plots, and characters, which are consistent with those of many readers, are habitus convertible to money in the field of literature. In that field, the author's

preference is converted into a cultural capital. Cultural capital is defined as assets which are "convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47). Unlike economic capital, which appears in the form of money and is, therefore, consumable immediately, cultural capital is not able to be spent like money immediately. Instead, it is accumulated in three forms and then, it is anticipated to be converted into money in future. The three forms are: (1) "embodied state"; (2) "objectified state"; and (3) "institutionalized state" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47).

Among the three forms, the embodied state refers to a cultural capital existing in the form of "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47). That type of cultural capital can be redefined as habitus which is anticipated to be useful in particular fields. I will explain this type of cultural capital again after describing the second and the third forms of cultural capitals. Second, a cultural capital in an objectified state is an item used to reflect the culture of particular societies, such as language, values, norms, practices, and/or characteristics of particular cultures with it. "Pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc." are examples of this type of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 47). The third form of cultural capital is a capital existing "in the institutionalized state" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 47). This refers to cultural goods that contain "original properties" with them (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 47), such as "educational attainment" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 47). In other words, a college diploma is an example of cultural capital in the institutionalized state when college graduation is a recognized certification for endorsing professional jobs to college diploma holders (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47).

Despite the diversity of the forms of cultural capitals, there is a common characteristic among cultural capitals, which is a delayed conversion of cultural capitals to economic capitals. As for the acquisition and the usage of cultural capital in a form of embodied state, Bourdieu

(1985) explains "it[a cultural capital] always remains marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition which, through the more or less visible marks they leave (such as the pronunciations characteristic of a class or region), help to determine its distinctive value" (pp. 48-49). Like pronunciation, the embodied cultural capital shows the characteristics of communities, such as a socioeconomic class and a region. In other words, by the cultural capital, such as pronunciation, the socioeconomic class or region of the capital holders can be identified.

Under particular conditions, the pronunciations of particular socioeconomic classes and/or regions are regarded more valuable than those of different socioeconomic classes and regions. For example, Bourdieu (1991) shows how the language of middle-classes, or bourgeois, living around Paris in France, have been recognized as standard French, because French revolutions lead by bourgeois in Paris have successfully contributed to the construction of a new government in France. While bourgeois have possessed power, they authorized their language by defining it as standard and successfully distinguished theirs from the language spoken by pageantries in rural areas, mostly in southern area of France. At the end of the day, the language of middle-class people, which is also their linguistic habitus, can be easily recognized in broader French society; then, the language becomes a cultural capital, which is sometimes called linguistic capital. In other words, those who have the linguistic habitus of speaking the language of bourgeois in Paris can be recognized and then they have linguistic capitals, because they have the linguistic cultural capital; therefore, they can be converted into an economic capital when it can contribute to the holder's obtainment of a high-paying profession. Though the linguistic capital may not be immediately converted into money, it can be converted into an economic capital.

Another example that shows the contribution of cultural capital to students' achievement differentiated by their socioeconomic classes is suggested by Bourdieu & Passeron (1990). As the example of such habitus, Bourdieu et al. (1990) give an example of the habitus of knowing an expression originated from ancient Latin and Greek language. According to Bourdieu et al. (1990), children from middle-upper class families in 1960s internalize the use of Latin and Greek expressions as their capitals while they are exposed to their parents' conversations and the books and newspaper articles in their houses. Those expressions are also included in textbook materials used in schools. Thus, the habitus of knowing about those expressions can actually help middle-upper class students learn well and be high achievers in their schools. Finally, they are invisibly privileged in schools by learning what they already learned in their families. Though the knowledge about Latin and Greek expressions may not ensure the children's success in schools, at least the children are expected to be successful in schools more easily than the students who have no idea about those expressions and have to learn them for the first time in schools; then, they may have more possibilities to go to universities and have high-paying jobs compared to the students who are not familiar with Latin and Greek expressions. However, the influence of habitus which middle-upper class students bring from their home on their academic achievement is not usually known to people. Thus, people are likely to assume that the high achievement of middle-upper class students only results in their efforts and talents rather than the inherited culture of those students.

Interestingly, the knowledge about the ancient language expressions may not be a cultural capital in U.S. schools. Those expressions may help students memorize some academic vocabularies; however, the usages of those words are less than those in French schools in the

1960s when Bourdieu & Passeron (1990) conducted their research. Also, it can be concluded that the habitus of speaking and understanding may not be converted into capitals in the U.S. schools.

The other two forms of cultural capital also have potential to be transformed into money, though it takes time for them to be changed into economic capital. About cultural capital in an objectified state, Bourdieu (1984) explains the two ways that it can be converted into economic capital. First of all, the direct transformation of capital in the form of an objectified state from materials to money is by selling them. "The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, painting, monuments, instrument, etc., is transmissible in its materiality" (p. 50); therefore, "A collection of paintings, for example, can be transmitted as well as economic capital" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 50).

However, for the most part, objectified items can become converted into economic capital only when they are associated with embodied capital, such as the possessor's ability to comprehend the meaning of the objectified items. Bourdieu (1984) explains the expansion of the usage of objectified capital when it is associated with embodied capital, or knowledge about how to use the objectified capital, by saying:

> to possess the machines, he only needs economic capital; to appropriate them and use them in accordance with their specific purpose (defined by cultural capital, of scientific or technical type, incorporated in them), he must have access to embodied cultural capital, either in person or by proxy. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 50)

People may earn money by selling objectified capital: consequently, when they use the capital to produce another item, they may earn more money. For example, a writer may sell his or her book; then, if the writer can use this book as a reference of his or her written works, which can be recognized in the field of literature, the books can be used for the writer (possessor) to

earn a larger income than he/she would with no produced outcomes. For sure, by the combination of embodied capital, objectified capital can contribute to the obtainment of future economic capital.

In addition to capital in the embodied and objectified forms, capital in an institutionalized form can also contribute to the possessor's obtainment of future economic capital. One of the examples of institutionalized capital is a certification to apply to particular positions (Bourdieu, 1986), such as lawyers. The certification of a lawyer is expected to bring big money to its possessors. Even though the certification appears on a printed paper, it has the potential to generate money for the possessor; therefore, the certification is clearly a form of cultural capital. However, the certification is not given to all the people, only those who are qualified and certified by related institutions.

Schools are such institutions that can give people certifications (or diplomas). Because a diploma is given to students who reach or exceed a standard measured objectively by tests, schools can be regarded as fair systems for measuring students' abilities without bias. However, by investigating the distributions of cultural capital among students, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) demonstrate that schools take on the role of justifying the inheritance of the upper-middle class from one generation to the next. In this process of inheritance, the conversion between habitus and cultural capital in schools takes a significant role. In other words, with the concept of cultural capital, Bourdieu explains how upper-middle class children can obtain middle-class jobs by achieving well in high school, successfully going to universities or grands-écoles, and finally gaining bachelor's or upper degrees.

Apparently, students' educational attainment seems to be the result of their hard work to achieve well in schools. However, when the culture of French schools is investigated, which

Bourdieu (1984) analyzed, it can be found that the success of students from upper-middle class is not only attributed to students' efforts and hard work but also to their habitus, which can be converted into cultural capital that facilitates them to succeed in schools. As an example of such habitus, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) give an example of the habitus of knowing an expression originated from ancient Latin and/or Greek languages. According to Bourdieu et al. (1990), children from middle-upper class families in the 1960s internalized the use of Latin and Greek expressions as capital when they were exposed to their parents' conversations and books and newspaper articles in their houses. Those expressions were also included in textbook materials used in schools. Thus, the habitus of knowing about those expressions actually helped middle-upper class students learn well and achieve high in school. Finally, they were invisibly privileged in schools by learning what they had already learned in their families. Though the knowledge of Latin and Greek expressions may not ensure children's success in school, such children are at least expected to be more likely to be successful in schools than the students who have no idea about those expressions and have to learn them for the first time in school; as a result, those students may have more possibilities to go to universities and, consequently, get high-paying jobs compared to the students who are not familiar with Latin and Greek expressions. However, the influence of habitus that middle-upper class students bring from their home on their academic achievement is not usually known to people. Thus, people are likely to assume that the high achievement of middle-upper class students only results from their efforts and talents rather than the inherited cultural capital of those students.

Interestingly, knowledge about ancient language expressions may not be a cultural capital in U.S. schools. Those expressions may help students memorize some academic vocabularies, but the usage of such words is less common than in French schools in the 1960s, when Bourdieu

and Passeron (1990) conducted their research. Thus, the habitus of speaking and understanding may not be converted into capital in U.S. schools.

To summarize, the cultural capital of middle-upper class people can contribute to their children's academic achievement in diverse ways. However, their habitus can only be converted into capital under the environments in which that habitus is useful to produce valuable items. Thus, according to the characteristics of a given environment, a habitus may or may not be regarded as valuable. In addition, according to the type of habitus, the holder of the habitus may or may not be privileged or underprivileged because of the possession of the habitus. In Bourdieu's theory, the doxa of a field defines valuable items; then, the habitus that can contribute to the production of the items is regarded as cultural capital. A habitus, which may be a cultural capital in one doxa, may not be able to be converted into cultural capital in another doxa.

Besides cultural capital, Bourdieu (1986) suggests the concepts of economic capital and social capital. Economic capital refers to the money that can be converted into tools, which are in turn used to produce goods and items, which are then sold. Thus, economic capital is a means to increase itself in the future. Social capital refers to a social network in which one's membership can be identified (Bourdieu, 1986). Also, in the network, the member's obligations and rights can be identified (Bourdieu, 1986). Those memberships, obligations, and rights can be converted into money in the future if they contribute to the attainment of jobs and/or the enhancement of performance in the work field. As for social capital, like cultural capital, it may or may not be regarded as capital according to the characteristics of the doxa embedded in different fields.

The three forms of capital—economic, social, and cultural—form the primary categories of assets that people can use for increasing money; also, except for economic capital, cultural

capital and social capital may nor may not be validated in different fields according to the characteristics of those fields. Thus, in order to understand why particular capitals in one field may not be recognized in another field, researchers have to explore the doxa of the fields as well as figure out the values of the capitals. In other words, the structure of the fields needs to be investigated to understand capitals (and habitus).

The structure of fields can be investigated by exploring another type of capital besides the three main types of capital. Bourdieu (1986) calls this type of capital symbolic capital and distinguishes it from the other types of capital based on the material world, such as money (for economic capital), habitus (for cultural capital), and social networks (for social capital). Unlike those, symbolic capital is based on invisible systems consisting of symbols in particular societies. In the next section, in order to speculate the effect of a doxa on people in a given field, I need to review symbolic capital and its relationships with doxa and fields.

Fields and Symbolic Capital

In Bourdieu's theory, *symbolic capital* is distinguished from other types of capital because it may not be converted into economic capital in the future. However, it gives people the power to dominate in a field and therefore causes those who have symbolic capital to gain the power with which they can dominate the field. According to Bourdieu (1986), having symbolic capital means "the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honorability" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 291). For example, a diploma of famous university is regarded as a proof that shows up the holder's academic knowledge and ability even the holder does not prove his or her ability and knowledge, yet.

Language is representative symbolic capital in Bourdieu's theory. Language is not a valuable item that makes people who speak it earn money in the future; however, it can be used

as a weapon with which people dominate a field. For example, a well-crafted slogan in a presidential campaign can dominate the election by connecting a candidate's promised policies to the slogan. People may have good images of that candidate only because of the slogan, without speculating the strengths and the weaknesses of the policies and the possibility that the candidate can realize the policies in the future. The slogan, which is a type of symbol, dominates the election. Thus, possession of a powerful symbol can empower the possessor to take action to win the game in a field. Regarding the effect of a symbol as capital, Bourdieu (1986) explains as follows:

> Symbolic capital, that is to say, capital-- in whatever form-- insofar as it is represented, i.e. apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge or, more precisely, of misrecognition and recognition, presupposes the intervention of the habitus, as a socially constituted cognitive capacity. (p. 56)

Either based on understanding or misunderstanding about reality, in people's perception, symbols are associated with knowledge, *habitus*, or abilities. Some of the symbols, such as a mascot, are recognized in particular fields (e.g., the Georgia Bulldogs, a symbol of the University of Georgia in northern Georgia). In northern Georgia, the mascot is a symbol of a famous flagship university. As such, a student in a shirt with the mascot on it may be regarded as an intelligent person. However, the mascot may not be recognized in northern states such as Minnesota. The value of a symbol varies according to the field.

The language spoken in daily life also plays a role in reinforcing the status quo, as well as politicians' slogans. Bourdieu (1991) explained the power of language that dominates fields by using the history of constructing standard language in France. After the French Revolution ended, the bourgeoisie, which was the new dominant group in broader society that eliminated royal

families and nobles, defined the language spoken by middle classes in Paris, which was also spoken by the bourgeoisie itself. As a result of defining a standard language, the dialectics spoken by gentries in rural areas or pageantries in southern France became non-standard language. The non-standard language became recognized as incorrect and inappropriate in business or academic fields, as people who could speak the standard language were recognized in business or academic fields. Currently, the language spoken around Paris is still referred to as the standard that people in academic and business fields have to follow. Since defining standard language, people are "tacitly to accept the official definition of the official language of a political unit" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 45), and therefore, the language "imposes itself on the whole population as the only legitimate language, especially in situations that are characterized in French as more *officielle*"[4] (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 45). In other words, if a person does not speak or write in a standard way, the person may be misunderstood as unable to speak or write in a formal/official way.

In addition, the correction of the standard language can be conducted only by powerful people in the particular fields. In the field of literature, "authors who have the authority to write, fixed and codified by grammarians" and "teachers who are also charged with the task of inculcating its mastery" may make some corrections to the standard language (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 45). For example, famous authors, specifically poets, can use grammatically experimental expressions; likewise, teachers with authority may tolerate some grammatical errors of students. However, those corrections are temporarily allowed to only those who have authority in their fields. Most followers in the field, such as new authors or new teachers, do not have such authority and have to follow the rules of standard language or they may be misunderstood and ignored. As Bourdieu (1991) mentioned, "the language is a code" used as "a cipher enabling

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[4] This French word can be translated into *formal* in English (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 45).

equivalences to be established between sounds and meanings"; however, the usage of language is beyond a means to decipher statements; it is "a system of norms regulating linguistic practice" (p. 45).

Thus, in the system of language of fields, which contains only specific connections of meanings to sounds that are standard, *doxa* become constructed. Particular types of thoughts, which can be easily expressed by standard language, are regarded as standard and accepted by the majority of people. However, it is a fantasy that all people in broader society are speaking the same language in the same way. In fact, even when people speak English, their background, such as race and socioeconomic class, can cause them to speak the same language differently. Thompson (1991), who introduced *Bourdieu's Language and Symbolic Power* in the editor's introduction section, explained Bourdieu's ideas by defining as follows: "The completely homogenous language or speech community does not exist in reality: it is an idealization of a particular set of linguistic practices which have emerged historically and have certain conditions of existence" (p. 5). Because of the idealization, those who speak differently from the standard tend to be ignored and underprivileged and those who can speak that language have privilege.

Under this situation, ideas that are hard to express in standard language, such as ideas suggested by minorities (e.g., people of color and working-class families) are often misunderstood by people speaking the standard language. Regarding *doxa*, only ideas that can be expressed in the standard language will be included in *doxa,* which will become taken for granted by people in the majority.

Unfortunately, Bourdieu generally used the distinction between the majority and minority caused by language to explain the gap between people from mid-upper-class families and people from working-class families. Except for the research on the indigenous tribes in Algeria,

Bourdieu did not tend to consider race and racism as major factors causing the climate in which only the dominant groups' languages were regarded as standard and valuable in broader society (and even in schools). This can be explained by exploring a theory about racial differences, critical race theory, which I will explain in the next section.

Critical Race Theory

Based on the reviews in the previous section, factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and the characteristics of their residency in the South, are complicatedly affecting the content of the narratives about students' academic achievement. Critical race theory will be used as a theoretical frame to investigate the narratives of academic achievement.

Critical race theory (CRT) offers a way to analyze, conceptualize, and understand the lives of people of color by considering race as the main factor influencing their lives (Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Zamudio et al., 2011). In particular, in the field of education, critical race theory provides "a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom" (Solorzano et al., 2002, p. 25).

Referring to the roles of critical race theory in the field of education, which critical race theorists have discussed and defined, Solórzano et al. (2002) summarize the characteristics of CRT as these five prepositions: (1) the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms for subordination (p. 25); (2) "the challenge to dominant ideology" (p. 26); (3) "the commitment to social justice" (p. 26); (4) "the centrality of experiential knowledge" (p. 26); "the transdisciplinary perspective" (p. 26). The first characteristic means that race and racism as well as other forms of oppressions, such as gender-based discriminations, are forms of subordinations

affecting the lives of people of color. In order to know about the experiences of people of color, their stories about their lives need to be collected, investigated, analyzed, understood, and retold. The understanding and retelling about the experiences of people of color can be conducted from diverse perspectives developed out of various scholarships. The purpose of telling and retelling the stories about people of color's experiences is to challenge the dominant ideology and make commitment to social justice.

A masternarrative is a story that includes dominant ideology. It is defined as a story containing particular ideologies that are regarded as truth and/or facts acceptable in the broader society (Solrózano et al., 2002; Zamudio et al., 2011). A story of people of color, who realize American dream, is an example of a masternarrative. That story can be often understood without justification because people are familiar with the dominant ideology, American dream.

Unlike masternarrative, the stories of people of color are not easily acceptable by people from dominant groups because those stories are not familiar to them (Taylor, 2009). The stories usually contain people of color's emotional reactions to their experiences of discrimination in the broader society, such as their anger; therefore, they may not be understood by the people in the majority, who may not have experienced similar situations. The stories of people of color, which are not easily known to or accepted by people from dominant groups, are counternarratives. Counternarratives convey different ideologies from the dominant ideologies included in masternarratives. Solórzano & Yosso (2002) explains the characteristics of counternarratives as follows:

We define the counterstory[5] as a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The counter-story is

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[5] Critical race theorists use master[counter]story and master[counter]narrative interchangeably. Thus, in this study, both stories and narratives are used to point out the same meanings.

also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial

privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on

race, and further the struggle for racial reform (p. 32).

Because of the mismatch between masternarratives and counternarratives, the people in

the majority have difficulty regarding the counternarratives as trustworthy in the field of research

and in the broader society (Zamudio et al., 2011).In addition, people of color have difficulty in

challenging the masternarratives because they have grown up within the dominant groups in the

broader society and have learned those narratives since they were very young (Parker & Lynn,

2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Most of all, masternarratives are often included in fairy tales,

school textbooks, and mass media, which people have been exposed to since they were very

young (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Zamudio et al., 2011). Thus both people from dominant group

and people from racial minority group tend to take it granted that the ideologies, such as

meritocracy and egalitarianism, are true. Also, they may be unable to imagine alternative

narratives because they are too familiar with the masternarratives. That is the reason that it is

hard for people to discard their trust in masternarratives and take counternarratives as new truth.

Even people of color are so familiar with masternarrative and will not believe that

counternarratives reflect the realities. Meritocracy and egalitarianism are examples of ideologies

embedded in masternarratives. Meritocracy is a belief that people always receive a payoff from

their efforts. Egalitarianism is the idea that people have the same opportunities to succeed in the

United States regardless of their race and socioeconomic background.

The problems caused by the acceptance of masternarratives are as follows: first,

masternarratives contribute to the justification of the prejudices toward and the discrimination

against racial minorities (Zamudio et al., 2011). Masternarratives make people familiar with the

images of the minorities included in the masternarratives, which often reflect prejudices of people of color. second, they even make the people from a minority group trust the masternarrative, underrate their group, and become hurt because they are in the minority group (Zamudio et al., 2011). People of color, therefore, internalize the prejudices as true facts while they are exposed to the masternarrative (Zamudio et al., 2011). Thus, it is not easy for them to remove their negative prejudices of their racial group. It is also hard for them to have a more positive understanding of their racial group than they used to have.

To help people of color remove the prejudices that they internalize, critical race theorists have encouraged people of color to tell their own stories. By doing so, they expect that people of color can develop healthy identities and be proud of their racial group. Specifically, CRT scholars recommend that people of color tell/write their stories in the forms familiar to them. For example, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) recommend that Hispanic people use a Hispanic traditional form to tell their stories, such as "storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuéntos, testimonios, chronicles, and narratives" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26). Those methods are expected to help Hispanics express their ideas better than when they use the methods generated out of White, male, and middle class traditions.

About the argument that race and racism are the centricity of the oppressions experienced by people of color, some people may question whether oppression based on socioeconomic classes and gender rather than on race tends to generate and reify stratifications in the broader society. Responding to this question, critical race theorists use the concept of intersectionality to research people of color's narratives by using it as a major concept. "intersectionality" is defined as "the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientations, and [of] how their combination plays out in various settings" (Delgado & et al., 2001, p. 51). For example, the

more severe punishment of Black male students than that of White male students and that of Black female students exemplifies how intersectionality influences the lives of people of color. Black boys tend to be disciplined more harshly than White boys, White girls, and Black girls when they commit the same faults (Monroe , 2002; Taylor & Foster, 1984). By approaching from the perspective that intersactionality has to be considered, the different experiences of Black boys from White boys or Black girls can be understood.

In sum, CRT has resulted from a movement in scholarship to explore the narratives of people of color. The purpose of the exploration should be to empower people of color to construct their own narratives, which can be an alternative narrative opposed to the masternarratives, or ideologies, which include the prejudices of people of color. Also, CRT contains the idea that race is not the only factor negatively affecting the daily lives of people of color, but jointly affects them. Race is combined with other factors affecting people of color's lives, such as their socioeconomic background, gender, and sexual orientation, which uniquely and personally shape their lives.

These principles of CRT have been developed into various practical theories by combining them with sociological theories beyond the scholarship of CRT. This principle is pointed out by Solórzano et al. (2002) as the characteristic of taking the transdisciplinary perspectives to understand the narratives of people of color. One of the theories generated in non-CRT scholarship and affecting the development of CRT is Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. A critical race theorist, Yosso (2005), redefines Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital as cultural wealth. In order to explain the concept of cultural wealth, I will first describe Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital briefly.

Based on Bourdieu's (1986) explanation of the three types of capital as economic, social, and cultural capitals, cultural capital can be defined as a *habitus* and as a cultural product that may be converted into economic capital in the future. In this paragraph, *habitus* means the propositions about people's behaviors, attitudes, tastes, and opinions, which are so embedded in individuals that people do not tend to recognize the propositions that are working on them. The items produced by particular cultural groups, the ways of speaking, the writing gestures, the tastes about music and the arts, and even the modes of thinking are all categorized as cultural capital. In Bourdieu (1977), the meaning of habitus is explained as follows:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus* [italic in original], systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" [double quotation mark in original] and "regular" [double quotation mark in original] without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor (p. 72).

According to the citation, the structure, which is the stratification of people's socioeconomic classes in broader society, generates habitus. Habitus is "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (p. 72). It is disposition applicable across situations because it is structured, or become patterns of behaviors and attitudes of a group of those who are placed in a same socioeconomic class. In

Bourdieu (1984), the tastes of fine arts and music are various according to people's socioeconomic classes. For example, pep lei working class tend to like artworks and songs which deliver immediate beauty by harmony and delightful tunes. Beautiful scenes of pictures and waltz of Johan Strauss II are the arts and songs preferred by people in working classes when they are asked to answer their preferred pictures and songs. Unlike them, people in middle and upper class prefer pictures requiring viewers and audiences to reflect the meaning of them rather than pictures and songs deliver beauty and harmony that people can receive without reflection. Thus, a picture demonstrating a hand of an old female laborer is only preferred by people from middle and upper classes because they think that the picture delivers the message of lives embedded in hard works symbolized by the old female laborer's hand. Unlike them, people from working class reacts that the hand is ugly and is not beautiful at all.

Besides the difference of tastes of pictures, music, drink, and dress reflect the different preference according to socioeconomic classes. Bourdieu (1984) finds that those different preferences of people according to their socioeconomic classes are caused by the inheritance of parents and the learning the ways of comprehending arts in school. For example, Bourdieu (1984) explains middle and upper class students, who go to academic schools (rather than vocational schools) and higher education institutions, can learn the comprehension of the meanings of artworks and songs. Thus, they tend to prefer artworks and songs which they can comprehend them with the codes for interpreting the meanings of those artworks and songs. The learning in schools cause the different modes of thinking and feeling that people have according to their socioeconomic classes. In school, Bourdieun (1967) argues that students learn the culture of middle and upper classes, and therefore, student who graduated colleges, universities, and

grande-école become familiar with middle upper class culture even though they come from working class families.

This finding implies that students from middle upper class are privileged in schools because the culture of their school matches their family culture. In other words, unlike working class families who have to become familiar with the culture of middle-upper class families embedded in school, students from middle-upper class family learn about their culture; they do not need to struggle with learning middle-upper class culture in school. Thus, knowing about middle-class culture can be useful and contribute to the achievement of students in schools. In other words, that culture can be converted into economic capital, or money. Thus, only middle-class culture tends to be recognized as containing cultural capital in Bourdieu's theory.

Because of that danger that only middle-upper class students' family cultures are regarded as valuable, Yosso (2005) criticizes Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. Yosso (2005) demonstrates the reason that Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital is criticized as follows:

> For example, middle or upper class students may have access to a computer at home and therefore can learn numerous computer-related vocabulary [words] and technological skills before arriving at school. These students have acquired cultural capital because computer-related vocabulary and technological skills are valued in the school setting. On the other hand, a working class Chicana/o student whose mother works in the garment industry may bring a different vocabulary, perhaps in two languages (English and Spanish) to school, along with techniques of conducting errands on the city bus and translating mail, phone calls, and coupons for her/his mother . . . This cultural knowledge is very valuable to the student and her/his family, but is not necessarily considered to carry any capital in the school context. (Yosso, 2005, p. 76)

Yosso (2005) points out that the cultural knowledge and the values of minority students may not be regarded as cultural capital because they are not as useful as those of ~~the~~ students from middle-class families. In order to prevent the disregarding of minority groups' cultures, a new concept must replace cultural capital. Thus, Yosso (2005) has introduced the concept of cultural wealth, which people of color share. Cultural wealth means "the total extent of [an] individual's accumulated assets and resources" (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). According to Yosso (2005), cultural wealth consists of the assets and the resources accumulated in particular cultural communities. Individuals in the communities also inherit and possess the cultural wealth. Because cultural wealth can be used as assets, Yosso (2005) uses the term *capital* instead of the term *wealth* when categorizing six types of cultural assets. The six types of cultural capitals are "aspirational capital," "linguistic capital," "familial capital," "social capital," "navigational capital," and "resistant capital" (Yosso, 2005).

First of all, aspirational capital is defined as "the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers" (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). Despite the climate that prevents students from focusing on studies, such as climates in which racism is tacitly existent, students and their parents maintain their hopes to realize them in future. Specifically, Yosso (2005) regards aspirational capital as resilience. Yosso (2005) states, "this resiliency is evidenced in those who allow themselves and their children to dream possibilities beyond their present circumstances, often without the object means to attain those goals" (p. 78). In this statement, this resiliency can be identified by finding that people of color continuously chase their dreams despite the negative influence from their present circumstances. The meaning of resiliency can be identified clearly by investigating the usage of the concept in the field of educational psychology. In that field, the concept is often used as a factor affecting students'

academic achievement. A definition of resilience frequently used in that field is Maste's (1994) definition. According to Maste (1994), resilience can be defined as "successful adaptations despite risk and adversity" (p. 3). Those who have high level of resiliency may recover rapidly from the negative influence of environments on their success, such as racial discrimination. Thus, resiliency becomes regarded as cultural wealth and then, is renamed as aspirational capital.

Linguistic capital is defined as "the intellectual and social skills attained through communication expressed in more than one language and/or style" (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). The influence of linguistic capital has been studied by various scholars in the field of sociology of education since Bernstein (1971) explored the influence of the difference between middle-upper class people's language and working class people's language. To explain the distinction between middle-upper class people's way of speaking and that of working-class people, Bernstein (1971) introduces two different types of language codes, "elaborated code" and "restricted code" (p. 58). An elaborated code is the language that "the speaker will select from a relatively extensive range of alternatives and therefore the probability of predicting the pattern of organizing elements is considerably reduced" (Bernstein, 1971, p. 58). A restricted code is the language in which "the number of these alternatives is often severely limited and the probability of predicting the pattern is greatly increased" (Bernstein, 1971, p. 58).

The two codes are different in terms of the probability that listeners differently interpret the meaning of words spoken by speakers. When speaking with elaborated codes, speakers use words that decrease the difference between the meaning in their spoken words and that in the listeners' interpretations by selecting applicable words across various contexts. Languages spoken in the academic field are representative examples of elaborated codes. They are used across contexts within the fields and therefore, people not in particular contexts can understand

the words, which were used to explain the events in specific contexts, such as the experiments conducted in particular contexts. If the experiments are described in the standard language of the scientific field, it can be understood all the people in the scholarship across their specialties.

Unlike elaborated codes, speakers select words from the alternatives which are only used in limited contexts. For instance, *that restaurant* which is spoken among a family who went to the same place for a summer vacation is an example that can be categorized into restricted codes. The family knows what the speaker means when they hear only *that restaurant* because they have participated in a limited situation, ~~which is~~ the last summer vacation. However, those who did not participate in the vacation may not understand what was meant.

Bernstein (1971) finds that students from the middle-upper class tend to speak elaborated codes and students from the working class tend to use restricted codes. In schools, text knowledge contains many scientific concepts which can be applied to diverse contexts and therefore, also can be categorized into elaborated codes. This different use of language causes the gap in scores on tests in schools. Middle-upper class students score higher than working-class students. In sum, in schools, middle-upper class students are privileged in that they learn the language with which they are familiar. Based on this finding, scholars have explored the difference between European American students and students of color. Against this finding, Yosso (2005) emphasizes that the communication skills that students of color learn from their communities are also valuable assets helping students achieve highly in schools.

Familial capital is cultural knowledge nurtured among family or kin, which carries a sense of community history, memory, and cultural institutions (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). In other words, it is a support system of students in communities of people of color. The support of African American communities for students' education when schools were segregated and Black

schools receive less funding from districts than White schools could be examples of familial capital (see Walker, 1996).

Social capital means the networks of people and community resources; [and then,] these peer and other social contacts can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society's institutions (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). I have already mentioned this in the section discussing Bourdieu's theory.

Navigational capital is the skills of maneuvering through social institutions (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). An example is a set of strategies to navigate through racially hostile university campuses, which draw on the concept of academic invulnerability, or students' ability to sustain high levels of achievement, despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk to do poorly at school and, ultimately, to drop out of school (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). This asset apparently seems to be associated with the concept of resilience as aspirational capital. However, having this capital provides strategies beyond having hopes and making effort because a student can navigate to what he or she needs for success. In other words, the student can take actions to achieve success at least when he or she possess information about how to overcome his or her difficulties.

The last type of capital is resistant capital: the knowledge and the skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). This form of capital is originated from critical theory explaining the class-based gap in student achievement between students from middle-upper class families and those from lower class families. Yosso gives an example of African American familie who teach how to react racism by introducing Ward's study. According to Yosso (2005), in a study conducted in 1996, Ward found that African American mothers teach their daughters become "resistors," who can define them as "intelligent,

beautiful, strong and worthy of respect to resist the barrage of societal messages devaluing Blackness and belittling Black women" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). This type of resistance is different from that examined in traditional studies on students' resistance such as Wilis (1977). In Wilis (1977), working-class male students resisted schools because they think their schools forced them to act like girls. Thus, they ignore high achievement and choose to hold working-class jobs. However, holding working-class jobs means that theydo not escape from their impoverished status like their parents. Thus, their resistance results in students' voluntary return to impoverished working-class communities. Different from the finding of Wilis (1977), Yosso (2005) believes that the resistance of people of color can result in high achievement for students of color and their recovery of self-esteem.

The strength in using the concept of cultural wealth suggested by Yosso (2005) is that it emphasizes that all cultures have valuable assets. Also, the six types of capital can be used as a means to analyze the assets of a particular culture. In this study, I will use the concept to identify and analyze the cultural assets possessed by the research participants' families.

Despite the usage of Yosso's (2005) theory, I do not agree with Yosso's (2005) argument that Bourdieu's theory regards only the cultural assets of the upper-middle class as valuable. Instead of underrating the worth of the cultural assets of particular minority groups, Bourdieu points out that the cultural assets possessed by majority groups, such as the ability to use expressions originating from ancient languages, tend to be exclusively regarded as valuable in schools. By identifying that tendency, Bourdieu can argue that the dominance of particular groups of people in non-economic fields, such as schools, causes the legitimated reproduction of socioeconomic classes. In other words, by defining cultural capital as valuable assets in the particular fields rather than all types of assets possessed by particular groups of people, Bourdieu

can criticize the function of school as an institution to reproduce the economic and social classes. Thus, I think that Bourdieu's original definition of cultural capital is more useful in explaining the achievement of the research participants. The research participants are African American students, a group usually regarded as less privileged than Europeans because the strength of their culture is not usually regarded as valuable in schools, which are often defined as White-middle class centered places.

However, I also use Yosso's concept of categorization of cultural wealth because it can help in determining what cultural wealth possessed by students can be converted into cultural capitals in their school climates.

I will explain the combination of the two ideas in the next section for discussion of the reviews in the chapters.

Discussion

This review demonstrates that African American students' narratives of achievement must be analyzed from the perspective of CRT. CRT is a theory used to consider race as a significant factor influencing the students' experiences of achievement and, therefore, can help in understanding the influence of the dominant ideologies of the broader society. The dominant ideologies may be embedded in the doxa of the various organizations in which the students are participating, such as their schools. The doxa may be identified by analyzing the masternarratives embedded in the students' narratives.

Before I move to the discussions on my combination of Bourdieu's cultural capital with Yosso's cultural wealth, I will summarize the relationships among the doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, masternarratives, and counterarrativees. I need to distinguish the four concepts from one another because they come from different theories, which will be combined into an idea for

this study. Mostly, the reason that I distinguish them drives from the unclear conceptualization of masternarratives and counternarratives in the field of CRT.

In fact, I do not agree that counternarratives can be constructed and vocalized only by people of color. Also, I do not agree that counternarratives can be expressed only in a format of storytelling, which is a familiar method to express one's thoughts in some communities of color. So, first of all, I will discuss the definitions of masternarratives and counternarratives and then explain them in the context of doxa, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy.

Masternarratives and Counternarratives

The concepts masternarrative and counternarrative have been criticized because of their ambiguous definitions. As mentioned earlier n the section discussing CRT in this chapter, both masternarratives and counternarratives are stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Zamudio et al., 2011). However, it is unclear that masternarrative and counternarratives are stories because they reflect the experiences of people of color or they are spoken and written in the format of a story. First of all, the following is Solórzano et al.'s (2002) explication of masternarrative, citing Delgado & Stefancnic (2003):

> Because "majoritarian" stories generate from a legacy of racial privilege, they are stories in which racial privilege seems natural. Indeed, White privilege is often expressed through majoritarian stories; through the "bundle of presuppositions, perceived wisdoms, and shared cultural understandings person in the dominant race bring to the discussion of race" (Delgado & Stefancnic, 2003 cited in Solórzano et al., 2002, p. 28).

> According to Delgado et al. (2003), masternarratives, or majoritarian stories, are referred to as the stories in which racial privilege is regarded as natural by people in the broader society. Thus, masternarratives are referred to as an ideology, which is naturally embedded in broader

society and even not perceived by people. So, masternarrative is a doxa. It is not recognized until people perceive the cases inexplicable by doxa.

Because masternarrative is *doxa*, it makes people have assumptions regardless of their color. According to Solórzano et al. (2002), a majoritarian story, or masternarrative, "distorts and silences the experience of people of color," because they tend to make "standard formulae" (p. 29). Thus, people who accept it naturally tend to "make assumptions according to negative stereotypes about people of color" (Solórzano et al., 2002, p. 29), if people of color's stories do not fit to the formulae.

The reason that a masternarrative becomes *doxa* is that people have been exposed to masternarratives while they are growing up. Thus, counternarratives must have a means to provide the examples that masternarratives cannot explain. Counternarratives are defined as stories containing the untold stories of people of color (Solórzano et al., 2002; Zamudio et al., 2011). They are tools "for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (Solórzano et al., 2002, p. 32). For example, by providing many counternarratives of the failures of immigrants who work hard and cannot earn enough money to support their families well, an American dream, a type of masternarrative, may be doubted. People of color are encouraged to tell their stories differently from the values embedded in masternarratives. In particular, they are encouraged to tell or write about their experiences in traditional formats that are familiar rather than what people from majority groups find familiar (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). For example, in some scholarship essays, scholars of color may report the narratives of people of color written or spoken in the ways developed by the communities of people of color. Solórzano et al. (2002) gave examples of the ways narratives developed in Hispanic communities, such as *cuéntos* and testimony.

To summarize, the characteristics of counternarratives are as follows: first, counternarratives are the stories that people from majority groups hardly tell and hear; second, they are styles in which people tell and write their stories; third, they are the experiences of people that audiences and readers hardly can understand because they are unfamiliar to audiences and readers. Unlike counternarratives, masternarratives are the stories that people from majority groups can easily understand because they have frequently been exposed to the stories by diverse media, including mass media. In some cases, because of the unfamiliarity, , the cultural background of the counternarratives often has to be explained to people from the majority; however, the masternarratives do not need additional explanation, because most people already know about them. Fourth, counternarratives tend to be told or written in the form that people of color are familiar with. Thus, in order to understand counternarratives, readers or audiences who are not from particular groups of people of color may need prior knowledge about the format of the narratives told/written by people of color. Also, they need prior knowledge about the lives of people of color to understand the meanings of stories told as counternarratives.

However, though it is possible to summarize the characteristics of masternarratives and counternarratives as the previous paragraph shows up, there is still ambiguity in the definition of masternarrative and counternarratives. Farber & Sherry (2009) point out the ambiguity as follows: First, Farber et al., (2009) point out that the narrators rather than content of narratives can be an identifiers of masternarratives and counternarratives, and this characteristic confuses the difference between masternarratives and counternarratives. If a person of color uses a traditional style developed in his or her community to tell about his or her story of success because of his or her efforts, and if the story can be easily comprehended both by people from dominant groups and by people of color, is the story a masternarrative or counternarrative?

Should the story be classified into a masternarrative because people from dominant groups can show sympathy for the story, or should it be classified as a counternarrative because the person of color tells his or her experience in the style that people of color are familiar with? These two questions also lead to another critique of the definitions of the two concepts, which were suggested by Farber et al., (2009): the style, the content, and even the value of narratives cannot exclusively define either masternarratives or counternarratives. Though I agree with the critique from Farber et al. (2009), only in this study, considering the definitions of narratives as experiences in this study, I think the two concepts, masternarrative and counternarrative, are still useful, because by using the concept, the research participants' perceptions of the stories that many people believe as truth can be explored. Considering that narratives are experienced in this study, masternarratives and counternarratives can be defined as the experiences expressed by narrators. However, the narratives are not randomly created by people. Both masternarratives and counternarratives are associated with the epistemology that people from majority group's trust. Masternarratives can be redefined as the experiences of participants reflecting *doxa*, and orthodoxy as an expression of *doxa*. Counternarratives can be referred to as expressions of the research participants' experiences reflecting heterodoxy (or the opponent ideas to *doxa*).

Regarding the style, I do not care about the styles of narratives because I will mainly use the styles of interviews as a means to collect the narratives of participants in this study. In addition, I do not agree with the argument that the stories were told or written in the format developed in particular communities of people of color, because in the scholarship of qualitative research, diverse experimental methods, such as writing articles in poem, have been performed From the perspectives of qualitative researchers, it is not agreeable that current scholarship does not accept counternarratives only because they are expressed in the format that only people of

color can understand. For example, poems are often used as means to collect research participants' reactions to the researchers' interview questions (Faulkner, 2007), as a format of field notes for a phenomenology study (Furman, 2007). The collected poems are included as evidence in academic journals. Unlike the argument of critical race theorists, alternative methods like constructing poems are broadly used in academic fields and, therefore, the format of people's presentation cannot be the criterion to distinguish masternarratives and counternarratives. For this reason, in this study, masternarratives and counternarratives are distinguished only by the values included there. Also, masternarratives and counternarratives are individuals' experiences, which are distinguished from *doxa*, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy. *Doxa*, orthodoxy, and hetrodoxy originated from a broader society and are types of grammar expressed in diverse methods, into which masternarratives and counternarratives are classified. For example, if a participant argues that students of color around him or her are underachieved mainly because they are lazy, the argument can be classified into masternarratives. If a participant says that the social climate of schools tends to judge African American students based on prejudices, his or her narrative can be classified as a counternarrative. The prejudices used to justify masternarratives, or the prejudices rejected when the counternarratives are told, which are also embedded in the masternarrative and the counternarratives, are *doxa* or orthodoxy because they function like grammar used to construct masternarratives or counternarratives.

In addition, I will assume that in a narrative of a participant, there may be both masternarrative and counternarrative content. In other words, even a person of color, or a research participant in this study who is African American, can tell both masternarratives and counternarratives. It is a realistic assumption that a person may tell a masternarrative or a counternarrative according to the contexts in which they are placed. The participants of this

study, therefore, are anticipated to construct their own narratives of achievement or underachievement, reflecting their masternarratives and counternarratives. By identifying masternarratives and counternarratives of the participants, the participants' cultural wealth and cultural capitals are also anticipated to be identified.

In addition, the orthodoxy and the heterodoxy are not clearly defined in Bourdieu's theory. Bourdieu argues that orthodoxy can be identified when people perform heterodoxy. In other words, people may take an oppositional perspective when being confronted with someone's argument, including heterodoxy, and therefore the oppositional perspectives become orthodoxy. However, despite the perception of heterodoxy and orthodoxy, that person may not express well what orthodoxy is by word. In other words, that person may say, "something wrong," but cannot point out what wrong is in the heterodoxy. Also, it is obscure how orthodoxy and heterodoxy are perceived and expressed by people, which are usually embedded in *doxa*, a field that people do not perceive, yet, unlike masternarratives and counternarratives, heterodoxy and orthodoxy may not be expressed in words.

Thus, masternarratives and counternarratives can be defined as expressed orthodoxy and heterodoxy in this study. By defining masternarrative and counternarratives as expressed orthodoxy and heterodoxy operationally, this study is anticipated to clear the obscurity of the four terms. Although these operational definitions are not original, by redefining those concepts, an appropriate analysis of this study is expected to be conducted. The redefined concepts, *doxa*, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, masternarratives, and counternarratives are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1

A Structure of a Field

Masternarrative		**Counternarrative**	Perceived by people
Orthodoxy		Heterodoxy	Not yet perceived by people
Doxa in a field			
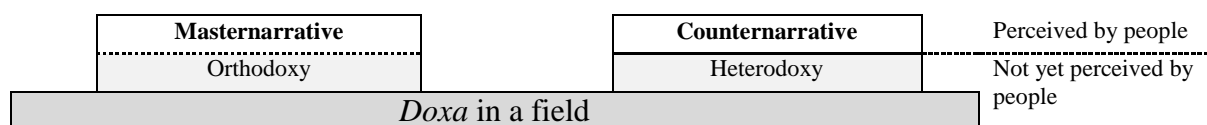
As demonstrated in Bourdieu's theory, a *doxa* in Figure 1 is not perceived but affects people's experiences. People take it for granted, like air, and then they do not yet perceive it. However, among *doxa*, people perceive what is awkward to them, which is heterodoxy. Among the heterodoxy, counternarratives are what people actually experience and can express in words. Orthodoxy is a correct one that appears as a respondent of a counternarrative. Sometimes, the orthodoxy is expressed as a form of a story or an experience defined as a masternarrative. Unlike narratives, or experiences, *doxa* are not yet organized. Like an invisible structure of a building, such as inside of a wall, which can affect the stability of that building, *doxa*, some orthodoxy, and some heterodoxy, which are not expressed in narratives, can affect the experiences of people invisibly.

Doxa is not the same across fields. In other words, the doxa of a scholar community is anticipated to be different from that of a practitioner community. Thus, actually, *doxa* is located in a field and may or may not be the same as a *doxa* in another field.

Now, I will explain the cultural wealth and cultural capital. First, cultural wealth appearing in a field is introduced, and then, cultural capital, which is cultural wealth regarded as valuable in another field, will be explained in the next section.

Cultural Wealth and Cultural Capital

The cultural wealth suggested by Yosso (2005) will provide the means to understand how students have acted in order to succeed academically. However, I do not think that all students can use their wealth efficiently because the value of wealth is estimated differently according to the particular doxa of their schools. In other words, only some wealth among the six types of cultural wealth can be converted into cultural wealth that students can actually use to achieve highly in their schools.

Thus, the relationship between cultural wealth and cultural capital can be described as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The Conversion of Cultural Wealth to Cultural Capital.
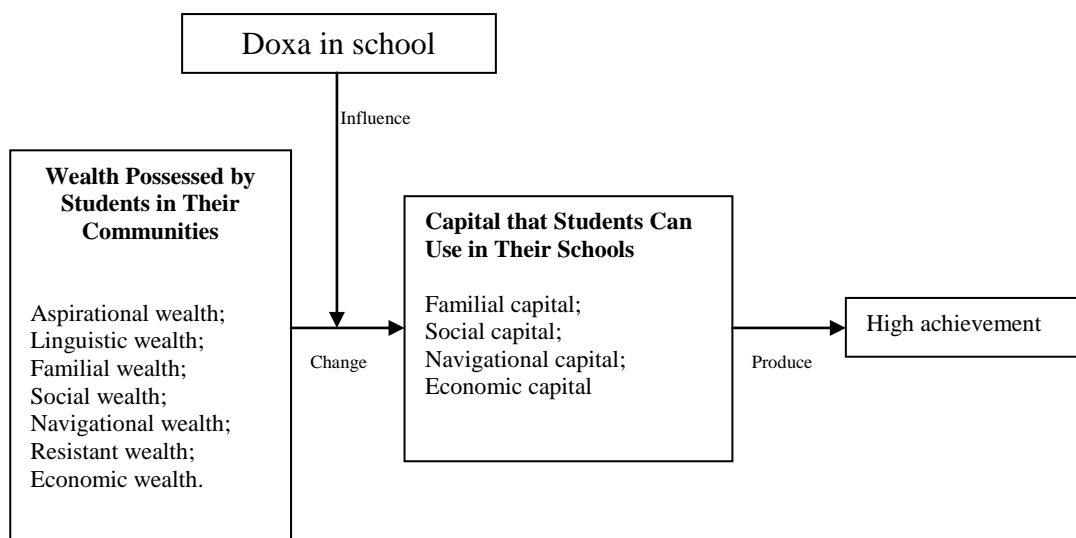
In Figure 2, people bring wealth from their community. The left rectangle reflects the wealth that people bring from their communities. The center rectangle represents the wealth that can be converted into capital in their schools. The types of capitals are not meaningful because

the types of wealth that can be converted into capitals are different according to the doxa of each school. Under the influence of the school's doxa, it will be determined which wealth can be regarded as capital. This capital will be used to achieve highly in school, as the right rectangle demonstrates. In Bourdieu's theory, habitus is an asset which may be converted into a capital under some conditions. However, instead habitus, I will use wealth because habitus is defined as people's internalized cultural practices in particular groups, such as tastes food and drink, tastes of art and music, ways of wearing, ways of speaking and writing, and gestures, The assets, such as social networks, may not be regarded as capitals in future. Thus, instead of Bourdieu's original concept, habitus, I will use wealth, suggested by Yosso (2005). Along with the definition of wealth, Yosso (2005) provides the types of wealth in detail. Thus, the concept will allow me to identify which wealth of participants' families can be converted to capitals in their schools.

Though it is not described in Figure 2, in this study, the wealth in participants' families and communities, the doxa in their schools, and the capital in their schools are assumed to influence the participants' academic achievement. Also, it is supposed that the wealth, the doxa, and the capital are influenced by the doxa of broader societies, such as the culture of the South or that of the U.S. In sum, Figure 2 shows that the doxa of broader society as well as the doxa, the wealth, and the capital in participants' families or schools influence the masternarratives and the counternarratives expressed by students.

This theoretical frame in Figure 1 and Figure 2, constructed from CRT and Bourdieu's theory, will be used as a temporary frame to analyze the data in this study. However, the theoretical frame may be modified while analyzing the students' narratives of achievement. The modified one will be demonstrated in Chapter 6, a chapter for the discussions for analyzed narratives of participants, if necessary.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

As the previous chapter mentions, the following is a set of research questions that are actually used in this study. The questions have been constructed on the basis of the three dimensional narrative inquiry spaces suggested by Clandinin & Connelly (2000). The spaces consist of three dimensions, which are the temporality of events, the relationship between the self and others, and the situation. Besides the situation, both the temporality of the events and the relationship between the self and others are divided into two pairs of directions, which are the forward and the backward directions and the inward and the outward directions. Thus, four directions and one dimension (i.e., the situated dimension) can be used as theoretical frames guiding the following research questions:

(1) The inward direction: How do African American students describe the self in their narratives of academic achievement?

(2) The outward direction: What messages regarding academic achievement do the students hear from the people significant to them, and how do they connect the messages to their academic achievement in various fields?

(3) The forward direction: What do students expect to gain from education, and what image do they draw as a future self?

(4) The backward dimension: What past events do they select as significant ones influencing their current lives with regard to their academic achievement?

(5) The situated dimension: How do race, gender, and socioeconomic classes in the fields,

such as the Southern culture, influence students' academic achievement ?

The first question about the inward question is related to the students' view on selves. The second question pertains to the students' relationships with their significant others. The third question is asking about their expected attainment from education and their possible self in the future. The fourth question explores the past events that students regard as significantly influential on their academic studies. The fifth one is related to various contexts of the field, in which they will use their wealth to excel in school.

Those five questions will be answered by exploring the participants' narratives through the use of narrative inquiry. Specifically, among the methods of narrative inquiry, I apply the method suggested by Clandinin et al. (2000), which has often been used in the field of teacher education. Currently, the method tends to be used in the field of critical racial studies in education. Thus, I apply this method to this study, using critical race theory.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry, the research method used for the study in this thesis, is a method for examining the human experiences appearing in a narrative, because a narrative is a means for people to construct their experiences (Clandinin et al., 2000). Narratives consist of separate events that narrators intentionally connect to let the audiences or the readers of the narratives understand the events as connected (Polkinghorne, 1988). While organizing their experienced events on the basis of their understanding, the narrators include their own experiences in the narratives. Thus, by conducting narrative inquiries, narrative researchers describe the experiences in the narratives, collect the narratives of the narrators (or participants), and include the narratives of the participants in a research paper (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991).

The process of a narrative inquiry, as recommended by Clandinin et al. (2000), is as follows: First, the researchers visit the fields in which the research participants are acting and collect the research participants' narratives from diverse sources of information. The information can be gathered by using interviews, observations, daily conversations, documents, and so on. The sources have to be organized as field notes in which the researchers write their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. The resources of information such as transcripts, observation notes, documents, and memoranda about the resources are examples of the field notes constructed by the researchers.

Second, with the use of those field notes, the researchers can write field texts on the basis of the sources that they have collected from the research fields (Clandinin et al., 2000). Field texts are constructed out of diverse and separate field notes, which sometimes include conflicting information. By repeatedly identifying characters, events, and situations, the researchers can construct their field notes. Clandinin et al. (2000) do not recommend any specific format for writing the field texts. Thus, diverse formats of written texts are usable for constructing the field texts. I noted by hand while I am participating and observing students and then, organize the notes on my computer. Here is an example of a note. All the names identifying individual participants are changed into pseudonyms. The messages from students, step members of the program, the director, and people who interact with the research participants are mainly recorded in that field note. The field note is used as subsidiary information, which will provide background knowledge useful for me to understand the interviews with the participants. The table 1 shows up an example of a field note that I recorded.

Table 3

An Example of a Field Note

September 7, 2013 in the University

…

Among the three interviewed participants, there was a student named Jeremy, a student coming from Germany, and another male student. The male student and Jeremy have been friends since last year when the male participated in the YSC. Currently Jeremy is a 9th grader. He always wear either a uniform or suit. When they had no uniforms they wear suits. They were always neat, as far as I know, compared to other male students in the program.

Julia is with other female students. As long as I know, they always stick to one another. She is an eighth grader. A skinny girl in my opinion. Not very talkative in public but talks frequently with her peers around her, like Kate.

Anyhow, the director of the program asked students about the subjects where they need help. Spanish, Math II, III, Algebra, Reading, Social Studies were addressed. When students answered Spanish, the director let Spanish-speaking students raise their hands, and talked about peer-teaching. Also, he asked students to raise their hands according to their school level After he assigned most of the staff members to the elementary level and to middle and high school students, he talked about peer teaching. I guess that this year, the director did not have enough staff members to support the program. There was a new guy, an old member of the program, and current college students. The director let him help staff members in the elementary school level but when I asked him about his major he answered computer science. I told him that he could teach science and he answered math. I do not know how the director places people in the appropriate slot.

After talking about subjects, the director addressed many directions, such as "we are visitors in the high school and the university" and how they need to use the buildings of the school properly. He also talked about how to dress properly in the program, such as no sagging for boys and no too-tight pants for girls. He also talked about ear damage caused by headphones, and he also told them that they did not come to the program to listen to music. He also discussed the snack time policy.

…

In the table, the messages from the director is one of the main sources, such as his

statement, "we are visitors in the high school and the university," and the dress codes of the

program such as the prohibition of wearing sagging pants for boys and tight pants for girls. Mainly people's messages toward the participants are written in the notes.

Third, the researchers compose their research texts from the field texts (Clandinin et al., 2000). The field texts still contain conflicting content and values. The role of research is to organize the conflicting texts into a consistent text that will be potentially presented and/or published. Thus, the final version of the research texts is a final research paper. In the following section, I will explain the process of research, that is, from collecting the field texts to composing the final research texts.

Data Collection

In-depth interviews and the collected observation notes are the data for this study. Table 4 demonstrates the relationships among the resources, the field notes, and the research questions.

Table 4

The Sources of Field Texts and Related Questions

Resources	Description of resource narratives	Relevant research questions
In-depth interviews with individual participants.	At least three sets of in-depth interviews lasting about one hour with individual participants; Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions.	(1) Inward; (2) Outward; (3) Forward; (4) Backward; (5) Situated.
Interviews with participants' mothers.	One-time interview with people that student participants select as meaningful in their narratives of achievement; Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions.	(2) Outward; (4) Backward; (5) Situated.
Observation notes on the program.	Researcher's observation record, which are generated out of the researcher's observations of the YSC.	(2) Outward; (5) Situated.
Field notes on the study.	Researcher's field notes, which are generated out of the researcher's observations of the YSC Saturday school and the interviews with the participants and their significant people.	(1) Inward; (2) Outward; (3) Forward; (4) Backward; (5) Situated.

Mainly two different methods of interviews are used as Table 4 shows up. One is the in-depth interview with the participants and with the significant people selected by individual

participants. All the participants selected their mother as the most important person in their education. Therefore, besides the four student participants, their four mothers were interviewed. The interviews with these significant people were used as sources providing background information about what the participants told.

In-depth interviews were conducted three-times following Seidman's (2006) suggestion. According to Seidman (2006), three interviews corresponding to three different purposes are recommendable. The first interview is conducted to explore the participants' background. By exploring their background, the researchers can "put the participant's experience in context by asking him or her to tell as much as possible . . . in light of the topic up to the present time" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17). While interviewing the participants for the first time, the researchers can invite the participants in the context of research and also decide what they will ask to know more about the participants. In other words, by exploring their background, the researchers can narrow down what they will ask the participants. The second interview is conducted to "concentrate on the concrete details of the participant's present lived experience in the topic area of the study" (Seidman, 2006, p. 18). By doing the second interview, the researchers have to "strive" and "to reconstruct" the myriad details of the participants' experiences in the area being studied (Seidman, 2006, p. 18). Because the researchers can learn detailed information from the participants, which is related to the main topics, the second interview is, actually, the main interview. The third interview is conducted for "reflection on the meaning" of the first and the second interviews. By means of doing the third interview, the researchers can create meaningful connections between the participants' backgrounds that emerged during the first interview and the participants' narratives of experiences that they told during the second interview. All these interviews have to be conducted to create a deep understanding about the narratives told by the

research participants. In this study, the students were interviewed in-depth three times. Unlike Seidman's (2006) recommendation that the interval between the individual interviews should be one or two weeks, most interviews with the research participants at the beginning, were conducted in the middle and at the end of the 2013 fall semester. First of all, the interviews were scheduled to reflect the students' ideas about achievement, which were anticipated to undergo changes before and after their midterm and final examinations of the semester. Second, because the participants' schedules also had to be considered, it was hard to follow Seidman's (2006) suggestion that the interviews be conducted every other week.

In order to help the students connect their past interviews to the current interviews, I retold what they had last previously said at the beginning of each interview. All the interviews were conducted based on the pre-structured protocols of open-ended questions. Basically, the same questions were supposed to be given to each participant; however, according to the contexts of the interviews and the participants' answers in the previous studies, the questions were skipped or slightly changed, or new questions were added. Individual interviews varied from 30 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on the students' schedule and their concentration in the interviews. All the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Along with the interviews with student participants, the interviews with the significant others assigned by the students were conducted as one-shot interviews. All the students selected their mothers as the significant people; therefore, actual interviews were conducted with their mothers. Individual interviews lasted about an hour. Because the purpose of interviewing their mothers was to understand the answers that emerged during the interviews with the participants, the interviews with their mothers were conducted only once. The interviews with their parents were implemented between the second and the third interviews with the student participants in

order to ask them questions based on the answers of the student participants. The interviews with

the participants' mothers were also conducted with a pre-structured protocol, constructed on the

basis of the first and the second interviews with the student participants. Like the interviews with

the student participants, the interviews with their parents were also audio-recorded and

transcribed. The protocols used for the interviews are in Appendix I and Appendix II.

Besides interviews, the field observation notes of the YSC program were collected. The

research participants went to the program every Saturday and attended the academic sessions

from 9 a.m. to one p.m. In the YSC program, the students participated in vocabulary, reading,

writing, and math sessions and also participated in leadership sessions.

In the YSC program, the students were exposed to their teachers' and peers' thoughts

about academic achievement. In particular, at the beginning of each Saturday session, all the

YSC participants came to the program and gathered in a classroom to listen to the director's

messages along with the announcements. In the messages, sometimes, the director talked about

achievement; and sometimes the director praised the students who had earned high grades on

their progress reports, issued by their schools every academic term. In addition, during the

announcement time in the morning, the YSC students would bring their progress reports to the

director who praised or advised them in front of other students. In the YSC, the students are

anticipated to become familiar with (or become resistant to) the message about achievement,

delivered by the director. Thus, the messages in the Announcement session are mainly recorded

in the researcher's personal notes.

As well as the messages in the Announcement session, the messages in the Leadership

session are also manually recorded. The Leadership session is another session in which the YSC

participants are often exposed to the discourses regarding achievement. All the YSC participants

come to the Leadership session as part of a group pre-divided according to their school years, and read books focusing on character education or participate in activities regarding academic excellence in particular subjects, such as biology experiments. Sometimes, all the YSC participants at the middle and high school levels take the Leadership class at the same time. Because the students are often exposed to various messages regarding academic achievement, when character education was implemented, I stayed in the classroom during the Leadership session and observed the four research participants. These observations were neither audio-recorded nor video-recorded, because it was enough to write the messages about achievement regarding this study. The research purpose is not to explore the interactions among the students or the interactions between the students and the teachers but to examine the messages that the participants heard in the YSC. Thus, only the messages that had been written down in the researcher's notes were used for the data analysis.

Based on the interviews and the observation notes, the narratives of the individual research participants were constructed as field texts. Finally, by the repetitive analysis of the field texts, the field texts were developed into research texts.

Clandinin et al. (2000) do not suggest detailed methods of how to move from field notes to field texts and from field texts to research texts. Instead, Clandinin et al. (2000) emphasize a holistic approach to the texts by repeatedly reading them to further understand them. However, without any theme or perspective, it is hard to move further toward the holistic understanding of texts. Thus, in order to find some themes, at the level of constructing field texts, I used a constant comparative method. The method is one that generates themes by labeling individual lines of texts, compares the labels, and classifies those labels into new labels (or categories).

Clandinin et al. (2000) also suggest a method that researchers can use to write the narratives of individual participants by identifying the characters, the events, the background, and the shared knowledge among the characters appearing in discrete field texts. Clandinin et al. (2000) summarize the research method:

> With narrative analytic terms in mind, narrative inquirers begin to code . . . their field texts. For example, names of characters that appear in the field texts, places where actions and events occurred, story lines that interweave and interconnect, gaps or silences that become apparent, tensions that emerge, and continuities and discontinuities that appear are all possible codes. As narrative researchers engage in this work, they begin to hold different field texts in relation to other field texts (p. 131).

In the quote, the first analysis is to code the character, the place, the scene, the plot, the tension, and the contexts, which are the components of narratives, all appearing in individual field texts. After coding them, researchers can create the narratives of the research participants. However, besides the idea that researchers can identify those components comprising narratives, Clandinin et al. (2000) do not assign any coding techniques to analyze field texts; however, they do not disagree about the use of coding techniques.

Thus, I use a constant comparative method. Charmaz (2006) defines it as "a method of analysis that generates successively more abstract concepts and theories through inductive processes of comparing data with data, data with category, category with category, and category with concept" (p. 187). By comparing data, researchers can find similarities and differences, and then, can make abstract concepts and categories out of the similarities and the differences. Here is an example of the constant comparative method, given by Charmaz (2000):

For example, compare interview statements and incident within the same interview and compare statements and incident in different interviews. Making sequential comparison helps. Compare data in earlier and later interviews of the same individual(s) or compare observations of events at different times and places. When you conduct observations of a routine activity, compare what happens on one day with the same activity on subsequent days(p. 54)

In this research, first, a holistic reading of the four participants' interview transcripts provided initial themes, such as race, school grades, and academic achievements. With those themes, I went back to the transcripts and organized the individual lines of the transcripts into the themes. While doing so, I modified the themes to categorize more lines. By repeating them, some themes could be found. After that, I looked into whether the themes also reflect the ideas appearing in the interview data with significant people and in the observation notes. Considering themes, I organized the field texts of individual participants, which are the narratives of the four participants. The field texts were also compared to the interviews with the participants in order to determine whether the field texts reflect correctly the interviews with the participants.

Based on the field texts, this research paper, or what Clandinin et al. (2000) call a research text, was created. Chapters Four and Five include the field texts of the individual participants, but these field texts underwent many modifications in the process of constructing them into research texts. The research text is the final one that will be reported and, as such, will be incorporated into a written document. The themes reoccurring in the field texts become the findings in that document, which provide suggestions to the readers of this study to consider.

A key issue of this method of analysis involves how to validate the connections between the participants' narratives, on the one hand, and the research papers or research texts, on the

other. In narrative inquiry, however, instead of seeking validity and reliability, trustworthiness is

pursued. The definition and explication of the concept, trustworthiness, will be introduced in

next section.

Trustworthiness and Ethics

In the field of qualitative research, the concept of trustworthiness tends to be used instead

of the concepts of validity and reliability, which are rooted in quantitative studies. Specifically in

narrative inquiry, trustworthiness is used more frequently than both validity and reliability.

Polkinghorne, (1988) explains why trustworthiness is used in narrative inquiries:

> I have been proposing that validating knowledge claims is not a mechanical process but,
>
> instead, is an argumentative practice. The purpose of the validation process is to convince
>
> readers of the likelihood that the support for the claim is strong enough that the claim can
>
> serve as a basis for understanding of and action in the human realm. Narrative research
>
> issues claims about the meaning life events hold for people. It makes claims about how
>
> people understand situations, others, and themselves" (p. 476)

In this quote, validating knowledge is not an argument that the narratives are real and that

the events in the narratives are likely to happen. It differs from the concepts of validity and

reliability defined in quantitative research. In quantitative research, validity is defined as the

measurement of the construct that researchers want to know. Reliability is defined as the

possibility to obtain the same results from repetitive investigations. Unlike quantitative research,

the purpose of narrative research is to understand the human experiences expressed in stories

(Polkinghorne, 2007). Thus, it is a standard to validate a narrative study on the basis of whether

the human experiences described in the narratives are trustful. The accuracy of the temporal

orders of events in the stories is not a criterion because even participants can select events and

tell them in a reverse timely order according to the participants' perception of the importance of those events. In this situation, if the events described in the story are likely to happen and particularly if they are supported by evidence, the story is regarded as trustful.

However, it is doubtful that only the likelihood of the events told by the narrators can ensure the trustworthiness of narratives. For example, in legal courts, the stories of plaintiffs and those of defendants are often in conflict; however, based on people's common sense, both stories seem right. By using common sense alone, people cannot judge the trustworthiness of the stories told by both sides. Additional evidence has to be considered to judge the stories.

For this reason, Riessman (2008) suggests that evidence studies should be provided to support the narrators' experiences in the researched narratives. According to Riessman (2008), the following elements or facets have to be included in trustful narrative research: (1) historical truth and correspondence, (2) the coherence of the participant's narratives and the investigator's interpretative works with him; (3) pragmatic use; (4) the possibility of political use and ethical use.

The first facet means that there must be a consistency between the participants' narratives and historical facts. If the events of a narrative are inconsistent with historical facts, then the trustworthiness of the narrative can be suspected (Riessman, 2008). The second facet claims that there must be a coherence between the participants' narratives and the researchers' interpretation of the narratives (Riessman, 2008). In this facet, the inconsistency does mean that the researchers' interpretations are not acceptable. Because the researcher's interpretations are constructed out of all the participants' narratives, the individual participants may not feel that the stories are not theirs. The gap between the researchers' research texts and the participants' narratives are unavoidable.

As for the inconsistency, Clandinin et al. (2000) emphasize that researchers and research participants must negotiate and collaborate with each other. In order to negotiate with the research participants, Clandinin et al. (2000) suggest that the researchers invite the research participants to engage themselves in the process of the research.

The third facet means the likelihood that the cases introduced in research papers actually occurred in the real-lives of people (Riessman, 2008). The narratives of the events that are not likely to have happened can hardly be trusted. This facet has already been mentioned in the discussion about the concept of trustworthiness in narrative inquiry (Polkinghorne, 1988). The fourth facet refers to the possibility of political use and ethical use as criteria to evaluate the quality of narrative inquiries (Risseman, 2008). It means that narrative researchers have to consider how their studies will be used.

The four facets can be used as the standard that this study has to follow. Though trustworthiness tends to be regarded as "focusing on tangible outcomes of the research rather than demonstrating how verification strategies were used to shape and direct the research during its development" (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002), narrative researchers have suggested their own strategies to increase the trustworthiness.

Among the four facets, the first and the fourth facets can be improved by the researchers. As for the first facet, the researchers can compare the known historical fact(s) and the narratives told by the participants to correct the inconsistency(ies) among them. In order to do so, in this study, the content of the four participants' and their parents' narratives has been compared to the known facts. For example, the four participants' and parents' narratives about gifted programs are compared to the explication of the gifted programs on their school website. The participants

may have incorrect information, and then the right information as well as the participants' knowledge about the information is included in this thesis in parallel, if necessary.

The fourth facet is related to the future usage of narratives studies. This study applies critical race theory as a theoretical perspective to analyze and interpret the stories about Black students' achievement or underachievement. It is expected that this narrative research will widen the understanding of Black students' lives as students, which may be untold beyond the discourse on the academic achievement gap. In sum, the first and the fourth facets of the trustworthiness of narrative studies can be satisfied just by doing this study.

Unlike the first and the fourth facets, the second and the third facets have to be achieved by making additional efforts. The second and the third facets are related to the conflicts between the narrators, that is, the narrative research participants in the fields, and the narrative researchers. Also, they are related to the tensions between the research participants' narratives and the research texts. To handle those conflicts, Loh (2013) suggests that narrative researchers use member checking, peer validation, and audience validation. Member checking means that the research participants review the final paper or some descriptions of its themes in order to have opportunities to provide alternative interpretations of them (Loh, 2013). Peer validation is the review conducted by peers who are doing research in a field similar to that of the author of a narrative research paper (Loh, 2013). By undergoing their reviews of the literature review, the research methods, the structure of the research paper, and the findings, the author of the paper can obtain the trustworthiness from the scholarship to which he or she also belongs (Loh, 2013). Audio validation is a validation from potential users and readers of the research paper (Loh, 2013).They are likely to have background knowledge of and/or interest in the research paper and may actively read it. If their agreement is obtained, the paper can be expected to be highly

valued. Clandinin et al. (2000), like Loh (2013), recommend that research participants be engagaed in this study by sharing pieces of the field texts or research texts with them.

This study used peer checks. Actually, at the transcription level, I tried to use member checks by asking the research participants to check the transcriptions. During their participation in the YSC, the research participants looked at the transcriptions but did not take them seriously. They did not give me back the transcriptions but just left the classroom. Also, it was hard for me to give this article back to their parents because basically, the study conveys the students' stories instead of their parents' stories. Thus, instead of using member checks, I chose to use a comparison check between the research participants' stories and their parents' stories. When the same stories appeared, I selected the students' stories. Also, by sharing this comparison check with my colleagues who are familiar with narrative inquiries and multicultural education, I received advice about my interpretations.

Beyond obtaining trustworthiness, this research has also employed methods to protect the students' and their parents' privacy. Any data identifying the research participants was replaced by using pseudonyms or was removed by following the directions of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university to which this researcher belongs. Before being invited to participate in this study, the research participants and their parents heard the explanations of the purpose of this study, the methods used to contact them, the protection of their privacy, and their right to withdraw from this research without any disadvantages at any time.

Research Participants

The original plan for recruiting students involves introducing my research during the program orientation, and then, if I need more students, I plan to send a letter via U.S. postal mail to the program participants and their parents for additional recruitment. Also, I recruited eight

students for my research, because the level of academic achievement (high achievers and under achievers), their families' income level (middle and low income), and their gender (male and female) are considered as important factors affecting African American students' narratives of achievement and underachievement. I took two categories from each component, and then, with the categories, I made eight different joint categories from the factors of academic achievement, parents' income level, and gender, because two categories of achievement were multiplied by two categories of income level and by two categories of gender. However, actually, at the orientation of the YSC, I recognized it may be hard to recruit six students there. During orientation, I saw less than 30 people including both the program participants and their parents. Usually, the program has more than 50 participants; that is why I had expected to recruit many students. However, at that time, the parents of the six students consented to participate in this study, and also, the number seemed to be as high as I could expect. Thus, even though I had planned it in the IRB, I did not send additional recruitment letters via U.S. mail to parents and their students.

Among the YSC participants, six students agreed to become research participants in my study, and four among them continued participating until the end of this study. A student did not want to participate in this study any more after finishing the first interview. In the case of the other student, the parent did not want to allow the student to participate in this study any more. Thus, I finally had one male high school student and three female middle school students. Among them, the male student and two female students could be categorized into high achievers, because they took high academic courses in their schools, such as Advanced Placement (AP) classes, honors classes, and advanced classes. The two middle school students being placed in high academic track were eighth graders and were best friends.

All the research participants were recruited from the YSC. As mentioned in the previous section that describes the YSC, the YSC has basically functioned to improve the academic and social excellence of the students. Also, most of the students continue to return to the YSC for several years, so it is anticipated that they will be interested in improving their achievement in schools. Also, the YSC is a program to which Black students and their parents repeatedly return. The program could be regarded as an African American community to help their students excel academically. Among the four participants, the male student and the two female students who were taking high-academic track courses have been in the program about 4 years. The student who was not placed in a high-academic track attended the program as a first-year participant. In fact, because I also have worked in the program about 8 years, I thought I could recruit students easily. However, though I had been working for the program for a while, I usually worked as a research assistant rather than a tutor who often interacted with students while tutoring. Thus, to most of the students, I was such an unfamiliar person that they could easily accept my recruitment. Also, as I previously mentioned, two students among the six initially recruited students quit this program. Thus, I worked with fewer students than I expected.

The four participants who participated in this study at the end were primary participants in this study. Besides them, I had four secondary participants who were the four research participants' mothers. In order to expand the background knowledge of the four primary participants' narratives by listening to stories about them from their significant family members, during the first interviews, each of the four primary participants were asked to select important people who influenced their achievement. All the primary participants were selected as the secondary research participants. No students selected teachers, friends, and so on, interestingly. Thus, I selected their mothers as the secondary participants in this study. Fortunately, all the

mothers allowed me to interview them. Thus, finally, I could have four primary participants, or student participants, and four secondary participants, or the students' mothers.

The purpose for choosing the secondary participants was to understand the four students' narratives or more about their narratives by exploring the narratives of the people who know them well. Also, in order to answer the inward and the outward research questions, the perspectives of the people who influence the research participants need to be explored. Thus, besides the four participants, the people most significant to them, that is, their mothers, were recruited and interviewed.

In the next section, I will introduce the four participants' background information in detail as well as the information about their mothers. I will focus on the description of the four participants' backgrounds, because they are the primary participants of this study, and the information from secondary participants is only used for understanding the narratives of the four primary participants.

The Four Participants' Backgrounds

Jeremy, Tiffany, Julia, and Bella participated in this study. Table 5 summarizes the data about these four participants.[6]

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[6] Jeremy and Bella are the names that two of the participants selected as their pseudonym. Tiffany and Julia were also asked to choose their pseudonym, but when they did not choose theirs, I assigned them each a name.

Table 5

The Four Participants' Information

Name	Gender	Grade	Family's Income and Family Structure	Academic Track
Jeremy Nice	Male	9	Living in a house and living with both parents. His father is a manager of a grocery store, and his mother is a high school teacher.	Taking an AP and honors classes. Taking a regular math class.
Tiffany Jones	Female	8	Living in a townhouse with both parents. Her father works in a body shop, and her mother works as a nurse in a hospital.	Taking advanced courses and a regular math class.
Julia Len	Female	8	Living in a house with her mother. Her mother works in a management position in the research department of an institution.	Taking advanced courses and a regular math class.
Bella Williams	Female	6	Living in an apartment with her single mother. Her mother works as a cashier in a high school.	Regular classes.

Among the four participants, Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia took the high-academic track courses, which are the AP courses, Honors courses, and advanced classes in their schools. Because of their placement in the high-academic track courses, they can be categorized as high achievers. However, the standard of high achievement is still confused because of their grades. Tiffany and Julia earned A's and B's in their classes. Jeremy struggled in his AP classes. His grades were dropping during the semesters when I conducted the first two interviews with him. However, in the third interview, he said that his grades in one course had increased from F to C and in another from C to B. He seemed to adapt to his AP classes. Bella had not been placed in the advanced classes, yet. Most all of her test scores were dropping during this research. Her in-class formative test scores were usually below 70. Thus, unlike the other participants, she was hardly categorized as a high achiever.

Jeremy. Jeremy, who was in the ninth grade, is the only high school student among the four research participants. He said that he wanted to become a video journalist. In order to do so, with his parents' help, he obtained information about that job on the internet. Also, he learned what video journalists do in a career development class last summer. In order to realize his dream, he hoped to attend college in the North. He did not want to go to college in the South because he wanted to experience another world beyond the South.

When he was young, his father often went to his school to observe him in his classroom. Also, his mother actively participated in the events of his school and the PTA. Both parents spent much time searching for the information on his educational goals and future careers. However, both parents had not majored or minored in the fields related to journalism.

His father had graduated from a two-year college in Michigan, had moved to Georgia, and was working as a grocery store manager while this study was being conducted. Because his father could be off work during the weekdays if he worked on Saturday and Sunday, he would often visit Jeremy's school to see what Jeremy was doing in his school. His mother had graduated from a four-year university in Florida. She was working as a teacher in a high school near her house during the semester that she was participating in this study.

Jeremy was in the first semester of his high school and was taking AP and honors classes. In order to focus on studying, he had joined no club though his mother recommended participation in a club to him. However, despite his effort to focus on his studies, during that semester, his scores on classroom tests were falling, and his grades in both his AP and honors classes had deteriorated. He was about to earn F's and D's. However, he made the effort to raise his scores and his grades and then succeeded in recovering B's and C's at the end of the

semester. For him, academic achievement is to earn straight A's. Thus, he did not achieve his goal; yet, he thought that he had succeeded because he had increased his grades.

Tiffany. Tiffany was an 8th grader when she participated in this study. She moved from Florida to the Southern state of Georgia with her family when she was in the first grade. When she moved to her new elementary school, she underwent bullying and isolation, which were instigated by her peers. So, she struggled with peer relationships during her elementary school years. In her middle school, however, she succeeded in having good relationships with several people who shared academic interests similar to hers.

Her family consists of her mother, her father, and her younger sister. Her mother was working in a hospital, and her father worked in a body shop. Her mother graduated from a four-year university. Unlike her mother, her father had not graduated from a university. He entered a flagship state university with a four-year full scholarship, but he quit attending the school. According to Tiffany's mother, he had dropped out of the university because he had become burnt out there. However, because he still remembered the content that he had studied during his middle and high school years, he could tutor her in some of the content of her subjects, including mathematics in which she was struggling.

Tiffany wanted to become a neurologist. She was impressed with a neurologist whom she had met through her mother. In order to become a neurologist, she knew that she needed to excel in math and science. She thought that she had to go to medical school after graduating from an undergraduate university in order to become a neurologist. She wished to go to New York University.

While she was participating in this study, she took an advanced science class in her school. In that course, she learned to think creatively by conducting her final project for the

course. She said that she was challenged and was required to think creatively in the advanced

classes. According to her, those creative and challenging assignments could not be experienced

in the regular classes. Besides advanced science, she took advanced English literature and

advanced Spanish. She expected to transfer her advanced credits to high school according to the

regulations of the district.

Unlike other core classes, she was taking a regular math class in the semester that she

was participating in this study. She hoped that she would be able to take AP or advanced math in

high school by improving her math grades to prove her aptitude.

Julia. Like Tiffany, Julia was also an eighth grader when she participated in this study.

She and Tiffany had been best friends since they had attended elementary school. They often

talked to one another by phone every night. They attended the same church. They said they were

best friends even though they were attending different middle schools.

Tiffany lived with her mother in her mother's house. Her mother was working as a staff

member in a research organization. Like Tiffany, Julia took advanced classes in English

literature and Spanish; however, she was placed in a regular math class in the semester during

her participation in this study. In order to raise her math grades, her mother had hired her a tutor

since she was in the fourth grade. Among the four participants, she was the only student with

paid tutors.

As an obtainment of her study, she expected to become a lawyer. She wanted to graduate

from Harvard Law School and open her office in Harlem, New York. She wanted to have her

specialty in criminal justice. Before studying law in law school, she wanted to major in African

American history as an undergraduate because she liked it. However, in her middle school,

African American history was rarely taught to the students. Thus, she was usually exposed to the

content about Black history in her family. By watching television and reading books, she had learned about African American history. She hoped to study African American history in a university.

   Bella. Bella was the youngest among the research participants. She was in the sixth grade. She lived with her mother and a younger sister. Her mother worked as a cashier in a high school. Her mother left home at the same time that Bella and Bella's sister went to school and also came back home at the same time that they returned home. Bella's mother told me that she had given up better job that paid her more than the cashier job because she wanted to stay with her daughters after school. They were living in an apartment with two bedrooms and two bathrooms. Bella's mother had graduated from high school and had attended a four-year university. However, in her sophomore year, she quit attending. She hoped that Bella could finish college to find a better job than hers.

   Despite her hopes, her daughter Bella academically struggled in school. Bella's grades were falling in the semester when she participated in this study. She took no advanced classes in her middle school. She was only taking regular classes and was also receiving grades below C in those classes. However, her mother could not hire Bella a tutor because of their family's economic difficulties. Her mother was a single mother with Bella and her younger sister.

   Because she had no tutors, Bella had to ask her mother or a third party to help her. However, her mother could not answer all the questions that Bella brought to her. Thus, she often struggled with understanding the handouts offered by her teachers by herself. She suffered from Type 1 diabetes. She often visited the nurses even during classroom time because she easily felt tired. Thus, she frequently missed what her teachers taught, which was the one reason that her grades were dropping. While she was participating in this study, she recorded C or below C

in her courses. Her mother pushed her to finish homework and prepare for her make-up tests in order to recover her grades to A's and B's. She contacted Bella's teacher by email or telephone to know how to help her raise her low grades.

Apparently, her falling grades seemed to be caused by her diabetes, but she looked healthy as long as she could get the insulin shots on time. She even played basketball in a basketball club two nights a week. In that club, her mother also worked as a voluntary assistant coach.

By studying, she hoped to become a veterinarian. She chose it as her dream job because she wanted to protect abused animals and also earn a lot of money. However, she did not know how to become a veterinarian until I gave her a handout including the information about becoming veterinarian, which I found on the Internet. Her mother also did not know until I showed the handout to her. Therefore, unlike Tiffany who studied to become a neurologist, Bella did not connect her studies with her dream job, yet.

The Context of This Study

Before describing each of the participants, in this section, the context in which they live and attend school will be introduced. First, the characteristics of the region and the county, in which all the participants live, will be described. Second, the Young Scholars Club (YSC), aimed at fostering young students' academic and social excellence, will be discussed. From that organization, all the participants were recruited. Thus, as well as the region, that program must be introduced.

The four research participants were recruited from a program for the enhancement of young students' academic and social excellence, which is called the Young Scholars Club (YSC)

in this study. In there, actually, I have worked from 2005 to 2013 as a graduate assistant and as a volunteer.

Among them, two participants, Tiffany and Julia, live in the same county. Jeremy lives in a county about an hour away from the program by car. Bella lives in a county about 30 minutes away away from the program by car. Before introducing them, as background information, the regions and the counties in which they are living will be described first. That information will provide a backdrop of the four research participants' socioeconomic background and cultural wealth.

Region and County

The four participants live different counties. Jeremy lives in a suburban area of a metropolitan city. Tiffany and Julia live in a suburban area of a college town. Bella lives in a rural area. The demographic characteristics of their schools reflect those of the counties where they are living. Table 4 shows the demographic characteristics of their schools. All the school information was retrieved from the annual report of each school, posted on the school website.

Table 6

The Participants' Counties and Schools in 2013-2014

Participant's name	Region	Free or reduced price lunch program participation eligibility	Black students among school students	High academic track in school	Title I School
Jeremy Nice	Suburban area of a metropolitan city	44.07%	38%	Gifted program; Honors and AP classes	No
Tiffany Jones	Suburban area of a college town	71.95%	53%	Gifted program; Advanced classes	Yes
Julia Len	Suburban area of a college town	91.31%	53%	Gifted program; Advanced classes	Yes
Bella Williams	Rural area	63.07%	9.5%	Gifted program; Advanced classes	Yes

Source: data can be retrieved from the participants' schools[7].

Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia are living in suburban areas. However, Jeremy's school and Tiffany's and Julia's schools have different demographic characteristics. Tiffany and Julia are living in the same county although they attend different schools.

Except for Jeremy's school, the schools that the participants attend are all Title 1 schools. The Title I-A Program is a part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This act sends federal funds through the state department of education, such as the Georgia Department of Education, to public schools with a high percentage of students in poverty. As Table 3 shows, more than 50% of the students in Tiffany's and Julia's schools are participating in the national free or reduced price lunch program. In their schools, Blacks are demographically a majority.

Bella is living in a rural area. Her school is categorized as a Title I school, just as Tiffany's and Julia's schools are. However, unlike their schools, demographically, most of the students in Bella's school are White. Bella is attending a school in which Blacks are demographically a minority.

The schools located in communities with many low-income families have been known as equipped with fewer courses on the academic track (Chambers, 2009). Also, the salaries and the level of the degree held by the teachers are higher in the rich counties than those in the poor counties (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011). However, unlike the findings of those studies, Tiffany's, Julia's, and Bella's schools have several high-academic track courses, which are called "advanced classes" in their schools.

On the weekdays, they attend different schools in different counties; and then they come to the same program every Saturday. Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia had been in the program about

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[7] I will not write the location of the websites because the participants' personal information may be released by doing so.

five years at the time they participated in this study. Bella was in her first year in the program.

Their backgrounds differed, but they were exposed to the same messages at the same

organization every week. Thus, the context of the program also has to be described in this

chapter.

The Young Scholars' Club (YSC)

The YSC is a program that aims to nourish children's and adolescents' academic and

social excellence. Though the program admits children of all racial and cultural backgrounds,

more than 80% of the approximately 60 students were Black students in fall 2013, when I was

conducting this study. The program was usually held in the college of education building at a

southern state university. However, during fall semester, the university is officially closed on

Saturday whenever it hosts a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) football game.

Thus, when the university hosted an NCAA football game, the YSC was held in a high school

located about seven miles from the university.

The program was established as an organization for helping Black male high school

students take academic and social excellence into their schools. After several years, the parents

of the YSC participants requested that the director accept their daughters into the program.

Responding to their requests, the program accepts both male and female K-12 students regardless

of their race. In fall 2013, when I was conducting this study, about 60 male and female K-12

students were participating in the program. More than 80% of students were Black students.

Besides them, some Hispanic, White, and Asian students were attending the program. During

Fall 2014 and Spring 2015, 42 students recorded the program more than 50% of attendance rates.

Among the 42 students, 38(90.48%) students are African American, two students (4.75%) are

Hispanic, and two students (4.75%) are biracial. Thus, the YSC seems to bea community for African American students.

The YSC has several components: the Weekend Academy (WA)[8], the campus tour, and the Test Preparation Program (TPP).[9] Among them the WA and the TPP are programs associated with the students' academic achievement. All the program participants had to attend the WA every Saturday. The WA usually started at 9:00 a.m. and ended at 1:00 p.m. At the beginning of the WA, the director of the YSC provided the schedule for that day. Sometimes the director praised the program participants whose school grades recorded A or whose grades had significantly improved. In contrast, sometimes, students whose recorded grades were below C or had dropped were asked why their grades had fallen in front of the other students.

After the director's announcements, all the YSC students attended four sessions: the vocabulary session, the critical reading and writing session, the leadership session, and the free study section. Students who wanted to get a math tutoring could participate in math tutoring during the free study session. Those who were not in the math tutoring session were usually doing homework or reading by themselves. However, students were often talking with one another when I observed the sessions.

The middle and high school students were divided into three groups according to their school grades. The sixth and seventh grade students comprised one group, the eighth and ninth grade students comprised another group, and the third group consisted of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students. They were rotated among the vocabulary, the reading and writing, and the leadership sessions from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; and afterwards, they participated in the free study session.

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[8] A pseudonym is used in order to protect the participants.
[9] A pseudonym is used in order to protect the participants.

Besides the WA, the Test-Preparation Program (TPP) was designed to enhance the students' academic achievement. As a subprogram of the YSC, it functioned to help high school students prepare for final tests or work on final projects. In the TPP, the high school participants stayed at the university or the high school until midnight to prepare for tests and finish projects. Only high school students were invited into the TPP, though actually they are required to participate in it. The TPP are held a couple of weeks before the students take the final exams each semester. At the end of the spring TPP, a graduation banquet was held. At the banquet, the colleges where the graduating participants would go to were announced. Also, the students with outstanding academic and social excellence received awards. During the last three years, almost all of the graduating participants, who were more or less five students every year, went to college. Their accomplishments were celebrated and awarded at the banquet. Next year, most students returned to the programs, in general. During my research period, most of the YSC participants were returning the next year. Because most of them had repeatedly returned for several years, the YSC participants and their parents knew one another well.

Based on the information that I have provided so far, the YSC can be regarded as an African American community built for furthering African American students' academic achievement. Though Hispanic members are enrolled in the program[10]; for every year, African American students had comprised more than 80% of its membership, and their parents had also helped the program. Even some students who had graduated returned to the program and worked as volunteer staff members. Their parents also served as volunteers with their students.

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[10] In fact, two Hispanic students from a family were returning to the program every year. Besides them, approximately five Hispanic students were Hispanic students among more than 50 program participants every year.

My Narrative of Achievement

I was the first-born daughter in a middle-class family in South Korea. Both my parents were educated in college and graduated. My dad graduated from Korean Military Academy in the 1960's. At that time, the school was the best college in South Korea, a developing country, because the national government provided full scholarships with free housing and meals to all the enrolled students in the academy. He was educated in that academy for four years and served in several military camps for several years. After finishing his service, he worked as a public official in a department of the Korean national government and then as a vice president of a company established by the Korean national government.

My mother graduated from a three-year nursing college, which was also a competitive school because most graduates from that college could find job in hospitals at that time and had the chance to go abroad to earn more money than in South Korea. After graduating from her school, she worked in the largest university hospital for two years and went to Germany. There she worked as a nurse for three years and then came back to South Korea.

Despite their high positions in South Korea, my parents did not have money for hiring tutors. Actually, they came from families that had collapsed because of the Korean War in the 1950's and a civic revolution in the 1960's. My father's families were rich until the Korean War, but they lost their inherited assets during the Korean War. Also, my grandfather, who had majored in agricultural science in a university in Japan, ran for a county governor position several times, but he had never been elected. Because of the campaigns, he lost almost all of the family assets, including his house. He disappointed himself, also lost hope, and never worked again, even for his family, for the rest of his life. My father's family became poorer and actually even struggled with providing my father his education. If my father's brothers and sisters had not

been elementary and secondary school teachers and supported him, my father might have not finished secondary education. My paternal grandmother died because of a disease, just after the war.

My mother's family was also rich but lost their family property in 1960 during a civil revolution, called the April Revolution. Just after the Korean War, the South Korean president became a dictator by several illegal changes of constitutions. It was available because the South Korean society was in turmoil because of the war. However, the dictator was expelled as the result of the civil revolution. After the revolution, people pulled out almost all of the public officials working in high positions, including my maternal grandfather. He was architect who had been educated in the Japanese Military Academy located in Manchuria. He was one of few people who could plan the reconstruction of cities that had been destroyed during the war; however, he was expelled from his position after the revolution because he was suspected of accepting bribes from construction companies. He never held a job after that. My maternal grandmother was an elementary school teacher, but she could not earn enough to make ends meet. Thus, she worked as a hair designer because the work enabled her to make more money than school teachers earned at that time.

To summarize, my both parents were the second generation to graduate from universities and colleges and also came from families that had been in the upper classes in the South Korean society. However, because of the sudden change in Korean society, due to the revolution, their families lost their positions. Despite the change of positions, both families held their cultural capitals, such as literacy and college diplomas. With the cultural capitals, both of my parents could succeed in school, obtain a college diploma, and earn middle-class positions in the South Korean society, again.

So, I grew up in a middle-class family with the tradition of going to college. In my house, many children's books were available. My mother posted vocabulary cards written in Korean and traditional Chinese on the walls of most rooms and changed them when she recognized that I had memorized the vocabularies. Also, a math practice paper for kids was delivered to my house every day. By solving the math problems on it every night I could learn arithmetic in advance. Thus, my level of Korean literacy and math literacy were always beyond my age level. Actually, I read fifth-grade level books before I entered elementary school and solved math problems at the second grade level before I entered elementary school. Due to the early education, I became an outstanding student in my elementary school, displaying academic excellence. In addition, I was a student who could play the piano the best at my age in my school because of my mother's early piano education. As I previously mentioned, my mother had lived in Germany. She took it for granted that I needed to learn to play classical music; however, my peers did not learn to play that instrument at a young age. In fact, I began playing the piano when I was in kindergarten. Therefore, I was recognized in music as well as in the academic domains in school. I was also recognized in middle school when my school teachers recommended that I prepare for the science high school. However, even though I was in the middle class, my parents did not know how to prepare for such special schools. The schools screened students by using a special entrance examination implemented before a national high school entrance examination. The questions on the special entrance examination asked about the content that students usually learned in high school. Because I had no information about the levels of questions, I could not prepare for that examination. The school only admitted the top 60 among hundreds of examinees. I was not in the top 60; therefore, I could not enter the school. Later, I learned that usually students who prepared for the science entrance examination were tutored by personal tutors.

From them, they learned high school curriculum content in advance. I felt that my family and I were left behind because I knew that my parents had no money to hire tutors for me, even though my parents earned a stable salary. They had to support their parents as well as feed me and my two sisters.

Thus, I studied again for a month, took the national high school entrance examination, and then entered the best high school in my neighborhood. My level of achievement at my new high school, measured by the Korean Scholastic Examination, which was a college entrance examination, was not as high as at the science high school; however, the high school was also nationally known for the students' high achievement. I was also an outstanding student there and successfully went to one of the best universities in South Korea.

At that university I majored in social studies education; however, I had no reason for choosing that major. In fact, at that time, the one thing missing in my life as a student was a goal of achievement driving me to study. In fact, I had no idea what I would do after graduating from the university. Even when I applied to that university, I had no idea what major was the best one for me. I applied to any major that looked interesting to me but, nothing intrigued me. Studying was just a habit and nothing else. It was the activity that was most familiar to me since I was young. Thus, I just randomly applied to a major. Afterwards, I went to graduate school because I was recruited by the professors in my department. In fact, I did not think seriously about the meaning of continuing my studies in graduate school. Also, when I graduated, a huge economic crisis hit the entire nation. Many people lost their jobs, and the schools did not hire new teachers. I recognized that I would not be able to find a job easily, even though I had graduated from a top university in that country. Actually, I did not want to experience a career break. Thus, I had no idea but to go to graduate school. I completed both my master's and Ph.D. program there and

passed the comprehensive examinations. Thus, what I only had to do was to submit my proposal and write a dissertation. However, suddenly, I wanted a bigger one. I wanted to go abroad and study in a new environment. I assumed that the schools in the United States could provide me better knowledge. In fact, I had never thought about how living in the U.S. would go. My parents, in particular, my mother, did not like my idea, based on her experience of working in Germany. She warned that I would be discriminated against in the United States. However, her warning was too late because I had already received admission from the University of Georgia into a graduate program. I thought that I could complete my Ph.D. course in a few years because I had already passed the comprehensive examinations in a South Korean university. However, after all, no one at the University of Georgia acknowledged my previous educational career in my country. I had to start at the beginning.

The level of reading in the courses did not make me struggle. During the first semester, I learned more about Dewey and Foucault, whose writings I had already read in South Korea. However, the language barrier was higher than I had expected. Though I understood all the reading, I could not articulate my thoughts to the professors and the students in my graduate school classes in the United States. I started being left behind and had to change my advisor several times. I recognized that something was wrong in my life as a student and even as a person; however, I could not specify the negative things that had happened to me.

While reading books and articles on students' underachievement in school and applying their situations to my own experiences in the United States, I slowly understood why I could easily adapt to the schools in Korea. I already had much cultural wealth before going to school, such as academic wealth and even the wealth of music literacy. Also, I recalled that my mother,

who was a nurse, always emphasized that I dress neatly and be well-groomed in order to make a good impression on my teachers.

These personal experiences have led me to become interested in the meaning of achievement and the narratives of achievement, which young students construct. Also, I could understand why underachieved students around me struggled academically in their classes; then, I became interested in exploring the meanings of achievement that students have constructed. While I was studying in graduate school, I was working in the YSC. To speak frankly, all the students participating in the program were not as academically capable as I was when I attended my elementary and secondary schools. Some students looked left behind. I wondered why some students had achieved well and why some were not succeeding.

Of course, many studies have explicated why some students have underachieved. The scholarship of educational psychology refers to students' lack of motivation, low self-esteem, the low level of expectations about their educational attainment, which students and/or their parents have, and academic self-concept; and the differences of intelligence in diverse domains have been introduced as factors affecting students' academic achievement in various school curriculum subjects. The field of the sociology of education has mentioned students' poverty, gender discrimination, and racial discrimination as factors influencing students' academic achievement. However, it is hard for me to find what meanings of achievement students have constructed and how those meanings work in their awareness of or ignorance of academic achievement. To speak briefly, I want to hear what the students say about their achievement. I wonder what meanings of academic achievement they have constructed and what drives the students to study. Some of them may study in order to succeed in the future. Some of them, like

me, may study because studying is a routine of their daily life. I wonder what meaning led the

students to achieve or underachieve in academics.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS I

This chapter will discuss the narratives of academic achievement that the four

participants constructed. In particular, this chapter purports to answer the questions about the

forward and backward directions and the inward and outward directions of narrative inquiry

space. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the directions reflect the relationships between the future

and the past, and the interactions between the self and others, which appear in the four

participants' narratives. Thus, in this chapter I will focus on how those directions appear in their

narratives after telling their stories.

Four Students' Stories of Academic Achievement

This section will mainly explain the four participants' perceptions of academic

achievement. The participants wrote diverse thoughts about the meaning of academic

achievement, but at the end of the day, they tend to equate high scores on tests with academic

achievement.

Jeremy Nice: "Doing Good" until Going to College

Jeremy defines academic achievement as active participation in both academic and non-

academic fields. In the first interview with him, Jeremy mentioned that academic achievement is

"making all A's, participating a lot, really participating in my classes, and not only being in

classes but also being in different activities such as sports and school clubs" (J. Nice, personal

communication, September 7, 2013). Apparently, in the interview excerpt, he regards academic

achievement as progressing well in both academic and non-academic fields.

In order to achieve well in both academic and non-academic fields, Jeremy decided that he must be "doing good" (J. Nice, personal communication, September 7, 2013). "Doing good" consists of a set of behaviors and attitudes, which are "good behavior," "staying out of trouble," "making friends," "having a balance of working[work] and playing[play],"and "just really staying focused on what you need to be done[doing] and knowing what things are OK and not OK." To summarize, Jeremy includes both work and play and both academic and non-academic activities in the category of "doing good" (J. Nice, personal communication, September 7, 2013).

However, Jeremy does not regard achievements in all the fields as equal. His priority is in the academic field rather than in the non-academic fields. He clarified his priority as follows:

Being a committed student, that does kind of take away from the fun time. It definitely does because you have to be more focused on your studies and what's [you] wanna do you when you grow up and how[what you] do you[to] get to that. That's definitely some sacrifice of your fun, going out with your friends, you know, you know, just it takes you a little away from fun. (J. Nice, personal communication, September 7, 2013)

In the interview excerpt, studying is Jeremy's first priority and having fun with his friends is his second. He may sacrifice his relationships with his peers to focus on his studies even if he likes hanging around with his friends. What makes Jeremy do so? What does he expect studying will bring him? "Because I really need [to] make good grades" (Personal communication, September 7, 2013), Jeremy said.

The reason that Jeremy must keep his grade high is to stay in the AP and honors classes. In his school, the Advanced Placement (AP) courses and the honors courses are two types of classes on the high-academic track. Students can be placed in the AP or honors courses by obtaining high grades, being recommended by their teachers, or requesting their placement to

their teachers. Jeremy said that he requested that his teachers place him in the AP classes. Thus, he was taking AP Human Geography in the semester that he participated in this study. Along with the AP classes, he was taking honors classes. The only regular class that he was taking was a math class.

After being placed in the AP and/or the honors courses, students have to keep their grades high to stay in them; otherwise, they will be sent back to the regular classes. In order to avoid being sent back to a regular class, Jeremy said, "You have to really keep your grade up" (J. Nice, personal communication, January 10, 2014).

What benefits motivate Jeremy to make the effort to stay in the AP and honors classes? The first benefit of taking the AP and honors courses is that the students can receive higher expectations from their teachers than the students in the regular classes. This excerpt from an interview with Jeremy provides the evidence that teachers express different expectations of the students in the AP and honors classes than of the students in the regular classes.

Work is definitely different. Their [Teachers'] expectations are on a whole new level. They expect you should be on top of your work. Even if they give you stuff at the last minute, they expect you to have it done. Things have to be turned in at the beginning of class, not daily. The rules are probably given a little more to [the students in the] honors or gifted classes because they're expected to be . . . leaders, not . . . followers. (J. Nice, personal communication, October 12, 2013)

In this interview excerpt, Jeremy compares the teaching in the regular classes to that in the honors classes. According to him, the teachers in the AP and honors classes expect their students to behave at a higher level than the students in the regular classes. The adults' higher expecation of the students is predicted to increase the students' higher educational attainment

regardless of race and gender (Mello et al., 2012). Also, the teachers' high expectations are predicted to protect students from the influence of their parents' negative expectations about their future (Wood et al., 2007). It is unclear whether Jeremy and his classmates in his AP and honors classes actually excel because they receive higher expectations from their teachers. However, their placement in the AP and honors classes is anticipated to influence them positively.

The second benefit of taking the AP/honors classes is that the students in them can learn more content than the students in the regular classes. First of all, the honors and regular classes, as Jeremy explained, differ in their amount of content:

In honors classes, you have to review what you learned last year, and you have to go [in]to [it] deeper and [go] further into that and into the next year's work. Well, in the regular classes, they just teach [you] what you'd have to know. They don't really try to get ahead. They just get to the work like[that] you need to be[know] at that time. (J. Nice, personal communication, October 12, 2013)

According to Jeremy, the honors class teachers expect the students in their classes to remember what their former teachers taught them in the previous semesters. So, the honors class teachers do not repeat the content that their former teachers expected them to learn. Instead, they teach the students the advanced content while the regular class teachers have to repeat the content that the students' former teachers taught. Unlike the students in the honors classes, the students in the regular classes are expected to forget the content that they had learned. The students in the honors classes, therefore, learn more than the students in the regular classes.

The differences between the environments of the AP classes and the regular classes were pointed out by Jeremy. According to Jeremy, the AP classes are even more academically

challenging to the students than the regular classes and even the honors classes. In Jeremy's AP

Human Geography class, the students were challenged to complete creative homework. While I

was conducting the third interview with him, he asked me to help him check the format of his

essay for AP Human Geography. His essay was about the industries of breakfast foods.

According to the teacher's guidelines about the essay project, students must write about the

industries of the food included in their daily breakfast. The essay had to be organized in a

scientific way and formatted by applying the Modern Language Association (MLA) style. While

writing the essay, he, therefore, had the opportunity to become familiar with academic writing

because he had to follow an academic format and use academic language. Jeremy said that

writing a scientific essay was only given to AP class students as homework. If he had not been in

the AP class, he might not have gotten any opportunity at all to write a scientific essay.

According to the website of Jeremy's school, an AP class is defined as "an Advanced

Placement course certified by The College Board as a college-level class taught in high

school."[11] In those classes, high school students are exposed to college-level, challenging

content. Thus, the students are anticipated to have better chances to learn the content more

extensively and intensively than the students in the honors and regular classes if they take the AP

classes every semester. To summarize, being placed in the honors and AP classes gives the

students opportunities to learn more content knowledge than the students in the regular classes.

Specifically, the AP classes provide the students the benefit to learn about academic writing at

the college level. Students can receive a higher quality of education than the students in the

honors and regular classes.

Another benefit of taking the AP and honors classes is that the students can get additional

points on their final scores. The students who take the AP and honors classes can earn some

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[11] I will not provide the accurate website address in order to protect Jeremy's information.

bonus points. Thus, in some cases, a student whose final scores are 89 points, grade B, may finally earn A in his or her AP classes when the bonus are added.

The fourth benefit of taking the AP and honors classes is related to the students' application to state universities and state-based scholarship programs. State–based scholarship programs and state flagship universities require or strongly recommend that the applicants have credits in the rigor courses. In Georgia, the students who apply to the Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) scholarship program must submit a list of their high school courses that match "the academic rigor course categories." For the application in 2017, when Jeremy is predicted to graduate from high school, the program applicants must take "a minimum of four full credits from the academic rigor course categories listed below prior to graduating from high school" (Georgia Student Financial Commission, 2014, p. 10). According to the program application guideline, the categories of the academic rigor courses are defined as follows:

    a. Advanced math, such as advanced algebra and trigonometry, math III, or an equivalent or higher course taken at an Eligible High School or taken for degree level credit at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution;

    b. Advanced science, such as chemistry, physics, biology II, or an equivalent or higher course taken at an Eligible High School or taken for degree level credit at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution;

    c. Advanced foreign language courses taken at an Eligible High School or taken for degree level credit at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution; or

    d. Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or Dual Credit Enrollment courses in Core subjects. (Georgia Student Financial Commission, 2014, p. 10)

The cited requirements specify that HOPE scholarship applicants must have four full credits from the AP, honors, or advanced academic classes. In other words, without taking the high-academic classes, the four students have limited chances to receive the HOPE scholarship.

The last benefit is mentioned by Jeremy's mother. According to her, the grades that he has earned in high school will be reviewed when he applies to professional jobs as well as to colleges. The following is his mother's explanation of the importance of school grades:

> On the high school level, even though he's a freshman, every grade's counted. So it's going to be counted now in the same way that it is going to be counted in his senior year. So I think it is important for him to understand the difference between the ways[the grade levels], between elementary and middle school grades, the different ways that they are counted [in the elementary and the middle schools] versus the way that they are counted in high school. And the potential further down the road, I think, like, I mean, even if you won't[don't] decide to go to [obtain] further education, you have to think like[that] the scores in high school will [have an] impact. . . . [For example] it is required that teachers take certain teacher exams . . . Those are some of the things that will come back much later to have affected[to affect] when he cannot go back and repair them (Ms. Nice, personal communication, October 26, 2013).

Jeremy's mother said that he would not be able to repair any low grades in high school after going to college. Thus, she wanted him to be concerned about keeping his grades high. In addition, she said, "it[scholarship] makes a difference in terms of his post-secondary options. Every, every dollar he can save us will be certainly beneficial, not just for us, but it will be beneficial for him even more." (Ms. Nice, personal communication, October 26, 2013). She thinks that Jeremy's high grades will benefit him if he can successfully be accepted into

scholarship programs because of his high grades. By receiving scholarships, he will be able to save the money his parents would have used to pay for his tuition and spend it for his career development. For example, a scholarship can give him a lot of freedom to choose his internship. If he can save the money he would have used to pay for his tuition by earning scholarships, he will be able to apply for competitive internships that will be helpful for his future career development but give him little or no payment.

To summarize, by taking the AP and honors classes, students can have four benefits: First, they can receive higher expectations from their teachers than the students in the regular classes; second, they can learn challenging content; third, they can earn bonus scores on their final grades; and fourth, they can having opportunities to apply to flagship state universities and scholarship programs by taking these classes since they are considered rigor courses. For these reasons, Jeremy wants to stay in the AP and honors classes by keeping his grades high.

However, Jeremy's grade in AP Geography was neither A nor B during the semester when he was participating in my study. About his grades, he said, "I struggle in a few classes" (Personal communication, September 7, 2013); and then, he made the effort to earn high scores on his tests and his homework. First of all, he gave up the opportunity to join some clubs. He said, "I wanna do [that], but I'm having trouble with my grades now. I'm thinking if I do that, if I get in a club and [am also] in charge of my grades and in charge of [learning at] school, I feel like I'm not gonna make any better for myself" (Personal communication, January 10, 2014). Though he categorized both academic and non-academic behaviors as "doing good," he sacrificed his participation in non-academic activities in order to raise his grades.

Second, as well as avoiding non-academic activities, he kept away from those people whom he regarded as academically unhelpful to him. Some peers were categorized as those people. About that categorization, he said:

Since, if you[you're] gonna[going to] be a committed student, you have to get used to saying what's up. So, I have to, you know, you know, say like, "No, I can't go out. I've got a bit to read and have a lot of studying to do for my AP class and with things like that." So that's, that's kind of what I have to do, and how I would be answer them. (J. Nice, personal communication, September 7, 2013)

His list of "doing good," mentions the behavior of "making friends." However, making friends does not mean that it is good for him to spend all his time having fun with his friends. Sometimes he must avoid those peers who could distract him from focusing on his studies, because his priority is studying. Jeremy told about his relationships with his peers, as follows:

I get teasing. [It]teasing doesn't really bother me because they know, because I have, I have to [study a lot], they know that I have so many important things to do, and [that] my parents are very strict. So even though I do get teased sometimes, it doesn't really bother and affect me. And they don't really try to like tease me, tease me. They just mess. They just mess around. (J. Nice, personal communication, October 12, 2013)

Teasing or bothering does not seem to matter to Jeremy. However, his peers do not usually support his achievement. Jeremy's case differs from those in the latest studies on Black boys' peer relations. As aforementioned in Chapter 2, the latest studies, such as those of Allen (2012), Harper and Davis III (2012), and Stinson (2010), report that Black male students make an effort to excel in school and that they can also maintain their relationships with their peers. However, unlike the students appearing in those studies, Jeremy tends to avoid being in trouble

by becoming involved with his peers. His case is close to that of the high achievers who, Fordham et al. (1986) found, must select one of two alternatives. One alternative focuses on studying while ignoring (or being ignored by) their peers and the other one which focuses on maintaining their friendships with peers at the cost of obtaining excellent school grades. Actually, Jeremy argued that he has many friends and that he is not alone; however, he did not point out anyone. Also, according to his mother, he is well disciplined and usually helps with house chores, studies, and does his homework. Also, he told me that he often enjoys listening to the radio. He may not be entirely isolated in his school; however, regarding academic achievement, he does not seem to have peers who will help him or talk with him about his future plans. Every Saturday, he would meet some peers in the Young Students Club (YSC); however, he is living in a county an hour away from the YSC and does not regularly meet with them during the week. Except for his teachers, he does not have someone with whom he can study and talk about academic achievement. In terms of his studies, he may not be entirely isolated, but he does not seem to have school mates with whom he can talk about his achievement. Fortunately, in the semester when he was participating in this study, he had good relationships with his teachers so that he could ask them about the subject content that he did not understand during class without hesitation. He hesitated to ask teachers about what he did not understand early in the semester.

The lack of someone in his school with whom he could talk about his achievement caused him to have some difficulties in adapting to his new high school during his first semester. In his third interview, when he was asked why his grades fell during the first semester in high school, he answered, "I didn't take seriously because before I then never really tried to study and didn't ask for tutoring. I wasn't used to that; so I had, [in] that semester I had learned to" (Nice,

J., personal communication, January 10, 2014). If he had had someone close to him in his school, who knew about what systems in his school he could use to help him adapt to high school, he might not have experienced such a sudden decrease in his scores during the first semester.

Because he has made the effort to excel in school he has sacrificed having fun in various domains. He sacrificed participating in club activities and doing an internship because he would like to "do good" in everything. He recognized that it would be hard for him to keep his grades up while doing an internship and engaging himself in club activities. In particular, he wanted to join some sports clubs, such as the football club; however, he had postponed his participation in all club activities until his grades stayed high. He said that his goal is "doing good" in all the domains, but, actually, his "doing good" seems to consist of only the activities related to obtaining high grades in school. His meaning of "doing good" has been reduced to academic achievement-oriented behaviors.

Also, in order to ensure that he is "doing good," he must avoid some behaviors. In other words, for him, "avoiding trouble" is one of the behaviors of "doing good". "Staying out of trouble," which he mentioned in the first interview, is an example of the behaviors that he must be diligent about doing. When I asked him to give examples of what are the troubles that he must avoid, he answered that it meant using drugs and committing violence.

His answer is similar to the findings about the negative side of Black high achievers' possible selves. According to Frazier (2012), Black male students who are high achieves and come from middle class families have both negative and positive possible selves. The negative possible self reflects the image of people who sell drugs and/or become exposed to violence on the street. Apparently, they have nothing to worry about and only have to focus on their studies; however, they are still afraid that they might get themselves into a bad place at a bad time; Like

them, Jeremy lives in a suburban area of a metropolitan city, where high achievers take AP classes in his school, and is supported by his middle-class parents (J. Nice, personal communication, September 7, 2013). According to Ritterhouse (2006), that concern of African American people, who are in middle- and upper-class positions in the South, originates from the racial etiquettes that oppressed Black people during the Jim Crow era. About race, I will have a chance to talk more in Chapter 5.

To sum up, Jeremy has taken away almost all activities irrelevant to earning high grades. He has sacrificed his peer relationships and his desire to participate in club activities and an internship so that we would not be distracted from his studies. He might not like hanging around with friends and joining clubs. Actually, he said that he did not like joining clubs such as student affairs that he used to work for in middle school. He was tired of working in that. Thus, he did not want to serve in such clubs in high school, again. However, it is evident that he likes to have fun with his friends and that his efforts to excel academically include sacrifices, considering that he again and again questioned me about student college life on campus. When we talked about colleges, he did not ask about how to choose a major or what academic achievement required in college. Instead, he repeatedly asked me about how much fun students had in college. Though he took it for granted that he would go to college, he did not seem to have much interest in a particular major. He seemed to be interested in how to enjoy campus life. Along with that, he wanted to go to a university outside of Georgia because he wanted to leave his home state and then travel outside of the state. He wanted to have diverse experiences by going to an out-of-state college. I wondered how he could pay for the out-of-state tuition if he attended an out-of-state college. However, the increased tuition did not seem to matter to him.

In fact, his parents told him that he did not have to concern himself about money while he was preparing for and finding a profession. Also, they wanted him to be able to participate in scholarship programs, not because they could not afford his tuition but because they wanted him to have extra money. If he could save the money that he would have used to pay for tuition because he had scholarships to pay for tuition, then he could use that money for his living expenses while working in a non-paid internship that would be a good career asset on his resume.

What career does Jeremy's mother want Jeremy to develop? She said that she was not concerned about his choice. She even said that he could select a part-time job at McDonald's. However, she emphasized that a "post-secondary education" is important for him to obtain in order for him to prepare for any kind of future (Ms. Nice, personal communication, October 26, 2013). Interestingly, Jeremy said that he had never thought about what he would do after becoming a video journalist. He just said that he feels that he is fit to do that job. Thus, in his understanding, the connections among jobs, the future, and college are not strong. Also, as I previously mentioned, he first expects to have fun when he goes to college.

Unfortunately, his hard work to earn high scores on tests and high grades has not yet brought him satisfactory rewards. When I asked him about his grades during the last interview, he expressed his regrets:

> It really was, it was really kind of disappointing. I was disappointed with myself because I know I could've done better. But I was sort of lazy in the beginning, in the beginning of the year. So I had to, I had to kind of try more, I tried, I tried even more, better during the middle of the year, and then towards the end. There were so many little things to be

graded. I didn't get it to be made as a chance I wanna to. (J. Nice, personal

communication, January 10, 2014)

Yet, Jeremy did not lose hope at that time. He was still willing to work hard because he

had been able to find some bright spots in the results of his efforts. His parents supported him.

Also, he had learned how to work with his teachers while struggling during the first semester in

his new high school. He told about his improvement as follows:

But I definitely improved in the class I was struggling in. I have improved in my life,

math, and language arts. I earned better grade by going from a C to a B, and [from] an F

to almost [a] A, [a] B, it is. So, although I did not get the A I wanted, but I did improve.

(J. Nice, personal communication, January 10, 2014)

I do not think that Jeremy was lazy. Instead, I believe that he saw some improvement in

his grades and will keep "doing good" unless he unexpectedly loses all his belief that his effort

will pay off in the future.

Tiffany Jones: Future Driving Me to Study

Tiffany changed her definition of academic achievement between the first and the second

interviews. In the first interview, she defined academic achievement as "what you fully

understand in every class that you have taken and then you can work with that subject a lot

easier" (T. Jones, personal communication, September 18, 2013). In the second interview, she

defined academic achievement as "being able to use the things that you learned in school and

actually . . . use them and realize more about a situation such as [the one you are] going through

now and [use the things you learned to] help you get somewhere" (T. Jones, personal

communication, November 21, 2013). Unlike the first interview, her definition of academic

achievement includes applying what she had learned to real situations beyond just understanding

curriculum content. Apparently, she regards academic achievement as the process of both understanding knowledge and applying that to solve problems in real situations.

However, Tiffany did not just understand and use the knowledge; she also believed that her education would enable her to obtain the profession that she wants to have. She said, "I study because I really wanna get a good paying job. I wanna be a nerve surgeon when I get older. So, that makes me and drives me to be a better student" (T. Jones, personal communication, September 18, 2013). Based on this statement, it can be concluded that becoming a neurologist is her final academic achievement.

I asked her why she wanted to become a neurologist. To this question, she gave two answers. First, she has a role model who is a neurologist. Second, she wants to help children with brain diseases. However, she did not provide concrete information about what she will do after becoming a neurologist, such as working in a hospital or owning her own special clinic.

Despite her obscure plan about her life after becoming a neurologist, she has a strong desire to become a neurologist, Tiffany thinks that she must study at a university with a high reputation in the field of medical science. She even told me that she can eat Ramen noodles every day in order to pay all the money that she needs for her undergraduate education at a university and her studies at a medical school. New York University is the one that she selected because the school has a high reputation in that scholarship field. She had not selected a state university in her home state. In order to obtain admission to attend that school, she thought that she had to earn high grades in math and science courses. She explained why she needed excellent grades:

Oh, I'm gonna have to do better and definitely get better in my math and my science classes because I'm taking high school science now; and but, in that math, I have to get

better grades, and I swear that's the only thing that motivates me because I really, really

wanna be a brain surgeon. (T. Jones, personal communication, September 18, 2013)

To earn high grades, Tiffany was using a special method, which is to take as many

advanced classes as possible in order to learn the content knowledge at the high school level in

advance. By doing so, she believes that she can focus on learning the knowledge that she had not

learned in her middle school. Also, since some of the advanced class credits that she takes in her

middle school can be transferred to her high school, she will not have to take the same courses

again in high school. For these reasons, taking as many advanced classes as possible is Tiffany's

other goal that she needs to achieve in middle school. By taking the advanced classes, she can

learn the content at the high school level in advance. While participating in this study, she was

taking three advanced classes: Advanced language arts, Advanced Science, and Advanced

Spanish. Among those classes, the credits of science and Spanish could be transferred to her high

school transcript. Thus, she would not have to take those two classes in high school and could

spend extra time in studying the knowledge in other subjects.

How can Tiffany build the strategy? It seems to have developed because of the

difficulties that she experienced in the sixth grade. Tiffany explains it as follows:

My studying, I hope [that] my studying will give me good grades. Now I really want to

focus on good grades because in my earlier year of my middle school, it was very hard

for me, [hard] too, because I got all these different teachers and all these other people in

the same school with me. But now I'm an eighth grader, and I'm about to be going to

high school, and I'm just really focusing on grades. (T. Jones, personal communication,

September 18, 2013)

According to the quote, Tiffany struggled with adapting to the varied teaching approaches of the multiple teachers that she had for different courses in her middle school. This difficulty caused her not to focus on her teachers' instructions, and led to the decline of her school grades. She successfully adjusted to her new school only after she had become a seventh grader.

While participating in this study, Tiffany was in the eighth grade. The following year, she would become a ninth grader and would experience the transition from middle school to high school. She does not want to experience difficulties similar to those that occurred during her transition from elementary school to middle school when she makes the transition from middle school to high school. In order to avoid such difficulties, she wants to take as many credits as possible in middle school, which can be transferred to high school. She made these comments:

> If I get to know as much information about math and science as I can now, it should be easier when I get older. So I would like to be able to say, "Hey, I remember from middle school." It's a little bit easier. (T. Jones, personal communication, September 18, 2013)

However, in fact, it was not easy for Tiffany to join the advanced classes. She first had to qualify to take the advanced classes by passing the threshold of the Criterion-Reference Competency Test (CRCT).[12] In order to qualify to take the advanced classes in her school, she must earn high scores on the Criterion-Reference Competency Test (CRCT). The CRCT is a standardized test offered by the state government to measure the students' academic achievement. The following is an explanation posted on the state government website:

> The CRCT is designed to measure how well students acquire the skills and knowledge described in the state mandated content standards in reading, English/language arts,

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[12] The CRCT was retired in 2013–2014. The educational government website explains the retirement as follows: "The CRCT program was retired after the 2013–2014 Summer Retest administration. The Georgia Milestones Assessment System has replaced the CRCT beginning with the 2014–2015 school year" (Woods, n.d.).

mathematics, science and social studies. The assessments yield information on academic

achievement at the student, class, school, system, and state levels (Woods, n.d.).

Additionally, it states these requirements:

All students in grades one through eight take the CRCT in the content areas of reading,

English/language arts, and mathematics. Students in grades three through eight are also

assessed in science and social studies according to the state law, as amended by the A+

Education Reform Act of 2000 (Woods, n.d.).

Based on the two above excerpts, students have to take the CRCT every year or every

other year. The state government collects and compares the scores and uses them as the means to

evaluate the efficiency of individual public schools. In 2013, students took the CRCT on the days

that their local school system designated in April or May 2013.[13] Usually, the CRCT lasts for

five days. Students take one content area of the CRCT per day. Each content area test lasts about

70 minutes and consists of multiple-choice questions (Woods, n.d.).

Tiffany was qualified to take advanced Science, Language arts, and Spanish by exceeding

the threshold scores of the CRCT; however, she did not yet qualify to take advanced math, when

she participated in this study. Thus, she was taking the regular math class. She hoped that she

would be able to qualify to take the advanced math class the following semester.

Along with taking courses at the high school level earlier, Tiffany has another reason to

keep her grades high. She thinks that she needs high grades in math and science in the high-

academic track in order to go to medical school. Specifically, she wants to attend New York

University (NYU), whose medical school has an excellent reputation. She said, "Because I need

to go to NYU, I need good grades. I need to start now. I need good grades and [to] do some

[things to] starts[start] now" (T. Jones, personal communication, November 21, 2013). In order

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[13] However, because of a budget issue, the examination was cancelled (Woods, n.d.).

to be accepted into NYU Medical School where she wants to study, she needs to have higher grades in the advanced math and science courses.

To succeed in earning high grades and to survive in the advanced classes, Tiffany has to study hard. Interestingly, she does not think that the CRCT and the tests in her classes can measure students' real academic knowledge, abilities, and skills. Instead, she regards a test as a means to measure students' memories. She said, "tests may . . . measure a person's memory rather than intelligence, how smart [a] person is, because . . . schools, in general, test his memory. [Schools] test memory, not just test themselves" (T. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013). When she was asked about what the benefit of a test is, she said, "I don't know," and then she mentioned some of the benefits of taking tests:

> I think all the students, among students I think, we can show up to one another and show who knows more than other people, and I guess to parents when they need to see those kids' tests. They know that, they, it, whether they've done well or whether they've done bad, that they know how they compare to the other kids and how much, how much other kids do now. (T. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013)

Based on what Tiffany mentioned, she obviously does not like tests. However, since she needs higher grades, she makes an effort to earn high scores. In particular, she was in a regular math class when she participated in this study. Thus, she had to increase her scores on the math tests. To earn high scores on the math tests, she sometimes asked her father to help her study as well as studying by herself. She anticipated that she would join the advanced math class the next semester or the one following the semester that she participated in this study.

Despite Tiffany's overall hatred of the CRCT and in-class tests, she does not dislike all types of tests. She thinks that a test is all right if it can challenge her intelligence. Actually, she

likes that kind of test. For example, during the time that she was participating in this study, she was completing a project for the final exam in her advanced science class. The project required that each student present a topic related to the lives of the people in the United Kingdom during the 17th and the 18th centuries. Because she is interested in medical science, she decided to explore a representative disease during that period and the medication used for treating the disease. While she was constructing her scientific essay and preparing for its presentation, she felt that she was academically challenged. She struggled for a couple of months as she searched for the appropriate information and constructed an outline for writing the essay. However, she finally finished the project and then recognized that she had constructed more knowledge than what she had memorized to prepare for taking the standardized tests on that topic. She liked the creativity that she had used to complete the project:

> I liked the project because I got to put some of my creativity into it. The test is standardized, and everyone has to be [writing] the same thing. But in the project I did, it was, I got to be unique and original. So that made it more fun and engagement[engaging], I guess. (T. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013)

According to the quote, Tiffany like that she could finish a project in which she had applied her creativity. She could launch and complete that project instead of taking a standardized test because she had been placed in the advanced class. According to her, the assignment of a project is not typically given to the students in the regular classes. Thus, if she had not exceeded the threshold of the advanced class qualification, she would have had no chance to conduct such creative projects. Doing creative projects rather than taking tests that measure students' memories is a benefit that students in the advanced classes can have.

However, in order to earn that benefit, students have to earn high scores on standardized tests, first.

Besides working on creative projects, the students in the advanced classes can learn in classroom environments that are better than those in which the students in the regular classes learn. Tiffany explained the differences between the ways that the teachers of the advanced classes and the teachers of the regular classes managed the students:

In my regular classes, [the teachers] tell them [the talking students to] move, but that doesn't help the problems. In my advanced classes, [the teachers] kick them[such students] out of the classroom for disturbing any better. (T. Jones, personal communication, November 21, 2013)

In terms of class management, the students in the regular classes distract one another from paying attention to the teacher, but the teachers do not handle that issue well. Unlike the teachers in the regular classes, the teachers in the advanced classes do not let the students talk. They will expel the students if they behave and talk as the students in the regular classes do. Also, in terms of class size, Tiffany said that each regular class taught by one teacher consists of 30 students. Compared to the regular classes, according to Tiffany, the ratio of the students to the teacher was only 12 to 1 in the advanced classes. The small size of the advanced classes allowed the teachers to provide individual teaching to each student.

Because Tiffany had gained high scores on the standardized tests, she can learn advanced content in a better educational environment. She knows that these benefits have resulted from her placement in the advanced classes. Thus, she has been making an effort to raise her math grades in order to be placed in the advanced math class.

To summarize, Tiffany wants to be placed in the advanced classes and studies hard to stay in them. Besides her strategies to learn high school-level content earlier, her placement in those classes gives her benefits. Tiffany knows the exclusive benefits given only to students in the advanced classes. Thus, she needs high scores on her tests in order to be placed and stay in them. Of course, she anticipates that her placement in them will help her to go to college and become a neurologist, which is the ultimate reason for her to study hard.

Like Jeremy, in order to earn high scores on tests, Tiffany tries to keep away from most of her peers. Since she is also afraid that her peers will distract her, she has focused on studying by maintaining her distance from most of her peers. Like Jeremy, therefore, she controls her peer relationships. However, besides the academic issue, she has another reason for choosing her peers carefully. In her elementary school, she experienced her peer's accusations against her without clear reasons. She was bullied after she was recognized in a spelling bee contest when she was an elementary school student. Her mother had told her that she was being bullied because she is a "shining diamond" (T. Jones, personal communication, November 21, 2013). However, she thought that her peers had bullied and ridiculed her because of her crooked teeth. When she was younger, she said that she could not read aloud properly because of the uneven arrangement of her teeth. She thinks that she had been ridiculed because her irregularly arranged teeth made her read inaccurately, but then, she earned an award from the spelling bee contest. From her peers' perspectives, she was not the person who could earn the award. None of her peers believed that she had the academic ability to win a spelling bee contest. She told me that she cried at that time.

However, in middle school, Tiffany has learned two ways to handle her peers. First, she can escape her peers' accusations by being placed in the advanced classes. She said, "If I had a

spelling bee now, people would say I achieved because I'd care, I am fully accomplished now. Not to care about what people said to me, but because I'm in advanced classes. I don't need people's approval" (T. Jones, personal communication, November 21, 2013). By being placed in the advanced classes, she can avoid her peers' accusations and have her academic ability acknowledged. Second, she intentionally chooses her friends from the classmates in her advanced classes and from the organizations outside of school, such as her church and the Weekend Academy.

Julia is such a friend whom Tiffany has selected. The two students have known each other since they were in elementary school. Though they do not attend the same middle school, they often call one another at night and meet in church every Sunday. Like Tiffany, Julia has been placed in the advanced classes. They regard each other as their best friend.

Julia Len: Dual Meaning about Achievement

Julia defines academic achievement as "learning." In the first interview, when she was asked what learning was, she answered that it is "visualizing the ideas." The phrase comes from a teacher who works in the YSC. In that program, a type of memorization accomplished by drawing key ideas and the relationships among them was introduced to the students as a visualization skill. By visualizing the key ideas, Julia expects to comprehend the textbook knowledge that she is supposed to learn.

When Julia was asked what her main goal is, she provided an answer similar to her definition of academic achievement. Her main goal is "to comprehend it more [and to] think about it more" (C. Len, personal communication, September 7, 2013). For her, she seems to define achievement not only as the obtainment of high scores but also the acquisition of as much content knowledge as possible. When she was asked about the purpose for studying, she

answered, "to learn more and be better, understand more, and comprehend it" (C. Len, personal communication, September 7, 2013).

What does she want to learn? According to her mother, she has been interested in learning about Black history since she was five years old. She wants to major in Black history in a university. Also, Julia thinks that studying is the development of social skills and reading skills. She said that she planned to acquire social skills and reading skills when she was asked about what studying hard would bring her. She answered that studying hard would provide her with study skills. By equipping herself with study skills, she expected to develop good study habits. Thus, she answered, "you can get any credits that you want, [and then] you can progress yourself" when I asked about the benefits of improving her study habits (C. Len, personal communication, December 3, 2013).

By earning skills and progressing herself, what does she want to do? She said that her dream is to become a lawyer. To become a lawyer, she has to go to college and law school. She knows it. Specifically, she wants to go to Harvard Law School. She wants to major in Black history as an undergraduate and study law in a law school. Though she likes Black history, she has few opportunities to learn about Black history. In her middle school, Black history is taught as a small content segment in social studies. Thus, she has learned about Black history by reading the books that her mother has bought her and watching documentaries on the History Channel. She hopes to learn Black history by majoring in Black history at the undergraduate level and study law after graduating from an undergraduate school.

Curious about why she had not selected historian as her job, I asked her about that three times in the three interviews with her. In the first interview, she answered that lawyers were expected to earn a lot of money. In the second interview, she answered that she argued well. In

the third interview, I changed the question to what she would do after becoming a lawyer. She answered that she wanted to open her office in Harlem, New York. She did not give a clear answer why she wanted to open her office there (and not in her home state) and also what she would do in that office. She told me that she would deal with cases in the domain of criminal justice because she liked to view television shows such as Criminal Mind and the CSI series. Thus, her future plans after becoming a lawyer are also a little obscure.

In order to go to college and law school, she thinks that she must earn good grades. She defines good grades as all A's. When she was asked what good grades are, she clearly answered, "A's" (C. Len, personal communication, December 3, 2013). She wants to achieve A's by studying hard.

However, she has not been a 4.0 student. Though she exceeds the standard in the CRCT every year and takes advanced classes in language arts and Spanish, she is still struggling in math. Her tests scores on math are below the threshold to be placed in the advanced math courses.

To help her earn high scores on her math tests, her mother has hired a math tutor for her since she was in the fourth grade. However, when I interviewed her, she was still taking a regular math class. She wished to be placed in an advanced math class the following semester. She and her mother hoped that she would be able to pass the threshold in the near future. According to Julia's mother, her math scores have been improving ever since the tutor had been teaching her. Thus, her mother expected her to be placed in the advanced math class at the beginning of the following semester. Like Jeremy and Tiffany, the placement in advanced courses, specifically math courses, is a hidden goal that she had to achieve.

The benefit of taking the advanced classes is that Julia can transfer the credits of some advanced classes to her high school. In the semester that I interviewed her, she was taking language arts and Spanish advanced classes. The two classes provided credits that she could transfer to high school. Thus, she did not have to take the same courses in high school. Like Tiffany, she wanted to do so because she could save time in focusing on academic subjects that she struggled with by taking some advanced courses at the high school level.

Besides a credit transaction, the fast learning pace is the strength of the advanced classes. According to Julia, students can learn more content in the advanced classes than in the regular classes because students always pay attention to the teachers. In the regular classes, the teachers generally spend time yelling at the students to keep quiet, and then they lose time for teaching the content. Thus, the learning paces differ between the two types of classes. In the end, the students in the advanced classes learn more. Unlike Jeremy's and Tiffany's honors or advanced classes, the learning content in Julia's advanced classes does not challenge her. However, at least, Julia can learn more in the advanced classes.

Beyond the credits and the fast pace, which are external benefits given to Julia, taking the advanced classes provides her self-esteem. Her mother explained the relationship between her self-esteem and the placement in the advanced classes as follows:

She [Julia] didn't get in the advanced classes until now [that] she was[had] grown up to [and was in the] eighth grade. We've been trying to get her in there since elementary school, and she got tested. [When she was tested in the] First grade to go to the Gifted Program,[14] she didn't pass. For she didn't have her score high enough up, and the teacher would be upset and mean. Then, [when as a] third grader, she tried in the third grade the same thing, her teacher was upset, her teacher was upset, for she didn't get in there. So

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[14] This title has replaced the real name of the program in order to protect the participant's personal information.

when she got to middle school, she was, she was still in a regular class, but her test scores

did get up higher and higher every year. So as an eighth grader, she was put up, finally

put on in the advanced language arts [class]. So she should've been [there] a long time

ago in the advanced class. (Ms. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013)

The Gifted Program is a program established in almost all the public elementary and

middle schools in the Southern states. All the students who have exceeded the threshold scores

on the CRCT are automatically placed in that program unless the students or their parents refuse

to join it. The students who do not reach the threshold but are close to it can apply to be placed in

the program by obtaining referrals from their teachers, parents, or peers. The referrals are

supposed to be reviewed by the program committee members who determine the students'

placement in the program. When Julia applied to the program at her elementary school, her test

scores were not high enough for her to be automatically placed in it. Her teachers who had taken

it for granted that she would pass the test did not recommend that she participate in that program.

Thus, she could not participate in it. She took the tests several times but failed them. Her low

score on the math test was one issue. Her mother hired tutors to help her raise her test scores.

However, she was not invited into the program when she was in elementary school.

Only after becoming an eighth grader, could Julia be placed in the advanced classes. The

classes were Advanced Language Arts and Advanced Spanish. She was studying to be placed

also in the advanced math class while she was participating in this study. Her placement in the

advanced classes, therefore, resulted from her and her mother's conjoint efforts. Thus, for Julia,

her placement deserves to be praised. She pointed out that the determination of her placement in

the advanced classes was the best moment in her life. She said, "My best moment would

be[occurred] at the end of the seventh grade. I went to be in the advanced classes, the science

advanced class and the language arts advanced class, and I was happy to be able to participate in them" (C. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013).

She was successfully placed in the advanced classes, but her studying harder and more than the others did not finish, yet. She had to survive in the advanced classes in which she was the only Black girl. In order to survive in her advanced classes, she thinks that she must prove her academic knowledge and ability to her White teachers and peers. In other words, she must "step forward" in order to be recognized among the White students (C. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013).

All these situations still drive Julia to carry the burden of studying more. Her mother explains her burden to survive in the advanced classes as follows:

Julia worried that in the advanced class Black[s] are treated differently while[than] in the regular class, especially [getting a] lower grade. But, I think she will do fine, because she will keep up with [the] rest of them. She doesn't wanna[want to] be left behind. So I think she will keep up with the rest, with anybody else. (Ms. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013)

In order not to be left behind, she has to keep studying and getting high grades. She thinks that she can be treated like the other students by keeping up with the rest of the students who are White. Thus, as she told me, she had to prove herself against the prejudices about African American students' academic abilities.

In order to achieve her goal, like Jeremy and Tiffany, Julia keeps away from peers who may distract her from her studies and carefully chooses her friends. About her selection of peers, her mother said, "[she] picks up friends in along, along the way [so] that she really calls them friends" (Ms. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Also, her mother allows her to

invite friends whose parents are known to her mother. According to her mother, all of Julia's friends are like Tiffany who wants to enter college and whose mother is also known to her mother.

Based on the aforementioned stories, Julia regards her goals to be achieved by learning much content. However, in reality, her goals are to be placed in the advanced classes, to survive and remain in them, and to enter college. Among her goals, her placement in the advanced classes is a priority. By being in them, she can have a better quality of education there than in the regular classes. Also, she can have pride and high-self esteem because she is in the advanced classes. She wants to be placed in the advanced math class, which, she believes, will progress her toward applying to good colleges.

Thus, in the short term, for her, academic achievement is to earn high scores in order to survive in her current advanced classes, advanced Language Arts and advanced Spanish, and be placed in the advanced math class. For those reasons, she focuses on studying the content of those subjects though she wants to learn and study more Black history.

Bella Williams: Education as a Means to Live Well

Bella is a sixth grader. Among the students in this thesis sample, she is the only student who has never been placed in the high academic courses. In her elementary school, Bella has never been invited to participate in the gifted program. Also, during the semester that she was participating in this research, she was taking no advanced classes. Interestingly, when she mentioned to me that she had been placed in a gifted program, I believed her. However, her mother said later that she had never been in the gifted program. Probably, she had wanted to be placed there. Her mother also told me that she wished that her daughter were participating in it.

During this research, Bella's scores on her classroom tests were dropping. According to her mother, she had earned grades in the 90's on her classroom tests a couple of years ago. Since last year she has been struggling. In the semester that she was participating in this study, her scores on almost all of the tests were below 70.

Bella's mother was upset with Bella's grades. During the second interview, Bella showed me her report card with grades below 70. When I told her that she should have shown it to her mother first, she did immediately. Her mother yelled at Bella. She told Bella about the importance of school grades, the impact of school grades on her future, and the study methods to use, which are paying attention to her teachers and memorizing what her teachers have told her.

After the dispute between the mother and the daughter, Bella's mother told me that her daughter was too young to understand the importance of school grades. Apparently, Bella seemed to have no interest in achievement. She just defined achievement as "how can you make your goal, doing your work every single day, studying what you need to study, even though you don't want [to[, [you] just study, study, study" (B. Williams, personal communication, October 5, 2013). For Bella, she can achieve her goals by studying; however, unlike the other participants who aimed at earning high scores on tests, she did not connect her goals with her scores on school tests. For her, studying is a task that she must do even when she does not want to.

Rather than valuing the long-term effects for her hard work, such as raising her grades, she seems to expect to have an immediate reward, such as a play time. She commented about her studying:

I'm like, [taking] ten or fifteen minutes [to] study or [taking] five minutes something like [that]. Then you can own the play time but, and, and just you can study largely for yourself and pick up the books you read because books help you with your vocabulary,

your spelling, and [reading] helps you [to] be smarter. So you can do that, too, if you can

accomplish all [that] and just listen to your teacher like what I said. (B. Williams,

personal communication, October 5, 2013)

Apparently, she does not like to study. She seems to study only to have a long play time.

However, while she participated in my study, she could spend several hours doing her homework

and preparing for her weekly tests on each subject. She and her mother asked me to help her with

her homework, and I did help her with it after interviewing her. While studying with me, she

showed interest in solving math equations and even hurried me to give her more math questions.

Math is her weakest subject. She did not like studying math; however, while she was studying

with me, she enjoyed learning the content of that subject.

In fact, she has ideas about the benefits of studying, which differ significantly from those

of the other three participants. Bella defines the benefits of studying as "helping you with your

vocabulary, your spelling, and helps [helping] you be smarter." Among these benefits, the

meaning of smartness needs to be explored. Unlike a general definition of smartness as

intelligence, she does not regard it as a type of intelligence. She connects the concept of being

"smarter" to her life beyond entering college after obtaining good grades:

What I wanna[want to] do [is to] get [an] education and becomes a smarter, smarter

student and go to college, and good, get a good grade, and go to a college, and [live] for a

very long life. I can take care of myself. That's what I [would] really like to do. (B.

Williams, personal communication, October 5, 2013)

Bella combines getting an education, becoming smarter, going to college, and getting

good grades into a construct, which reflects her willingness to take care of herself. Finally, she

wants to take care of herself. Thus, her eventual goal is to take care of herself. In order to take care of herself, she needs to become smarter and earn good grades.

Apparently, this goal does not differ from that of the other participants in this study. For her, smartness is a concept connected with much knowledge. She said, "The meaning of smarter is that a person has a lot of knowledge" (B. Williams, personal communication, October 5, 2013). However, her statement, "people have a lot of knowledge," does not mean just intelligent people. She associates "people with knowledge" with those who have wisdom and can solve threats wisely. This association seems to come from her experiences of resisting her step-father who deprived her family of their possessions and assaulted them even after he and Bella's mother had already divorced.

> Let's say. If my dad's mean to mom, I like, always get out from my mom and my sister because he's basically mean to my mother. And I like, I just say directly, "Dad, it's not nice, and can you stop directly making angry?" And like, his like, "no . . . what to do." I like, you know, like, [that is] how kids are a little smarter than adult[s] now. That's how I guess. I say how I am, is, like. I'm not crazy, not very crazy, but a little, but crazy from protecting my family stuff as just [I] say that's end. And he gets my sister a lot of stuff and I, little, don't get [him to have] lots of stuff . . . I was smart, smacked, talking [to] him, because that was very mean that he did so, "why do you beat me?" And I told mom, and my mom was very mad, and they got into argument on that stuff, and my mom left him lots of time[s], and then they got together, and she left him again. So now they get separated. I don't see him very often. (B. Williams, personal communication, October 5, 2013)

I do not think that Bella had really protected her stuff from him. Maybe he did not take her family's possessions because her family's possessions were not valuable. The quote indicates that Bella believed she was smart enough to protect her stuff from an adult.

Based on that story about her resistance, she seems to believe that she might have more effectively coped with the difficult situations if she had had more knowledge. For her, education is a means to make her smarter. She says, "What I wanna[want to] do [is to] get [an] education and becomes a smarter. . . . I can take care of myself. That's what I [would] really like to do" (B. Williams, personal communication, October 5, 2013). For her, education is the means to make her smart enough to take care of herself. In order to take care of herself, she recognizes that she has to become economically independent; so she wants to become a veterinarian. She knows it is a high-paying job; however, the amount of salary is not the only reason that she wants to become a veterinarian. She told why she wants to become a veterinarian as follows:

> I wanna[want to] become a veterinarian because animals are so sweet, and I watched [a] TV show about animals [being] beaten every single night and abused just like kids getting abused every single day. So I just, like, want to become a veterinarian to take care of animals with new medicine, stuff like that. (B. Williams, personal communication, October 5, 2013)

In the quote, she relates "taking care of animals" to being a veterinarian. However, she also expects to take care of herself as well as animals by becoming a veterinarian. To those words, she added these comments:

> When I become a veterinarian, I [would] like to, like, when the job starts getting good, I want to try [to] adopt [kids]. If my job brought before getting good, like, I will leave my

college like my mom. And then, like after college, I can get a house and stuff, yup, and pay bills [for] stuff. Yeah. (B. Williams, personal communication, November 9, 2013)

After becoming a veterinarian, she wanted to adopt children, have a house, and pay bills. She related being a veterinarian to having a salary. In fact, she knows that veterinarians earn high salaries. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median income of a veterinarian was $84,460 per year in 2012 (United States Department of Labor, n.d.). In 2013, when I was conducting this study, the median household income was $51,915 (Noss, 2014).Thus, if she can become a veterinarian, she can have a higher income than those of a median household in the United States. With that salary, she dreams to adopt children as well as pay bills and buy a house. To summarize the last two quotes, she plans to adopt abused animals and orphans, who have no one who cares for them, and then protect them as she had protected her family members from her father's threats (in her figurative worlds).

Interestingly, in the latest quote, she mentioned that she might leave college early if she could make plenty of money from her job. In other words, she thinks that she does not have to graduate from college if she finds work and can earn money before she finishes college. She said, "I will leave my college like my mom if my job brought before getting good" (B. Williams, personal communication, November 9, 2013). For her, college is a means to get a job rather than a place to learn academic knowledge; therefore, she does not have to keep studying in college if she can earn enough money before graduating. Unlike Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia, entering college is not a task that she has to achieve. If she can become a veterinarian before going to college, she may not decide to go to college.

However, becoming a veterinarian requires obtaining a doctoral degree in the field of veterinary science. Thus, in order to become a veterinarian, she must graduate first from a four-

year college and then from a four-year veterinarian school and also pass the examinations to obtain a veterinarian license. She does not know what school degrees she has to complete in order to become a veterinarian; thus, she does not think that she ought to enter and finish college. Apparently, she is expected to ignore school grades because college entrance is optional to her. Also, she thinks that she can become a college basketball player as well as a veterinarian if she goes to college. In fact, her other dream is to play basketball in college. However, that dream is also optional. The desire to play basketball in college does not seem to guide her to study more in order to receive admission to college.

Apparently, she does not have clear ideas about the relationship between earning high grades and going to college; however, Bella wants to raise her grades like the other participants. During the semester when she participated in my research, she successfully raised her scores on a math test from the mid 60's to the mid 80's. She was happy with her achievement though her ideas about the connections between high scores and her future plans did not seem as clear as those of the other research participants. Bella's reaction to her high scores are consistent with the findings of Tyson (2006). According to Tyson (2006), younger students in elementary school learn the importance of academic achievement by looking at how the high achievers are awarded in school. Though they do not understand the benefits of high achievement beyond school, they learn the meaning of achievement in school at a young age. Bella has also learned the meaning of achievement in school. She likes her high scores and she even lied that she has been in the gifted programs. Her mother said, "Bella, right now, is not mature enough like I wished her would be" and "when I tell her how important schooling is, to me, I feel like it's not a really big deal with her right now" (Ms. Williams, personal communication, January 17, 2014). However, Bella regards high scores and high grades as important, though she does not connect them to her

future. In fact, for her, education is a bigger concept beyond earning high scores on tests. By education, she pursues smartness, which she can use to protect herself, abused animals, and kids; and then, by education, she wants to become independent and have a better life without depending on any person.

Thus, for her, school is a place in which she can grow to have a better way of life. Though listening to the teachers in her classes may be boring, she can earn a reward for her patience. She can expect to develop a smartness to care for herself by focusing on studying in school. She said, "School is not boring. School is, [in there], we can [pursue] education for a better life. So it's not boring." Though her goal of achievement is not as organized as the other participants, for her, studying and learning are pathways toward a better life.

Discussion

Based on the students' narratives, the four questions can be answered as follows: First, in response to the question of how they define themselves, all the students define themselves as high achievers. Since Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia have been placed in the AP, honors, and advanced classes, they define themselves as high achievers. Bella views herself as the protector of her family; therefore, she also thinks that she is smart. However, actually, Jeremy was struggling in his AP class. Tiffany and Julia were studying in advanced classes, but they had been not placed in advanced math classes, yet. Bella's classroom test scores had been decreasing to the 60's. According to their definition of achievement, namely, earning high numerical scores on tests and high letter grades on their courses, they are not high achievers in their classes.

It is unclear whether or not they are achievers. Rather than determining whether or not they have achieved well in their school, it seems to be a better idea to examine their definitions of achievement and the background ideas about why they had defined themselves as achievers or

had not. Thus, considering their diverse definitions of achievement, I provide Table 7, which

includes a summary of the various definitions of achievement that they told me. The definitions

contain diverse meanings. In particular, their definitions are mainly associated with their

expectations of obtaining an education.

Table 7

The Participants' Diverse Meanings of Achievement

	The ideal meaning of achievement	The actual meaning of achievement	The knowledge about how to be placed in the AP, honors, and advanced courses	The perspectives on going to college	The perspectives on jobs	The future after having jobs
Jeremy	Doing good.	Earning high scores on tests.	High test scores and grades.	Takes going to college for granted; but going to college is not connected with getting both high grades and jobs in his perspective; hopes to have fun in college.	Barely connects studying, earning money, going to college, and having a dream job; does not have to have a job only to earn money.	No clear plan
Tiffany	Applying the newly learned knowledge to various real situations.	Earning high scores on tests.	High test scores and grades.	Wants to study in pre-med at NYU.	Connects school grades, college, and jobs.	Wants to help children with a brain disease, but the overall plan after becoming a doctor is not clear
Julia	Learning.	Earning high scores on tests.	High test scores and grades.	Wants to go to college and major in Black history, and then go to Harvard Law school to become a lawyer.	Connects school grades, college, and jobs.	Wants to open a lawyer's office, but the plan is not clear
Bella	Becoming smart and living well.	Earning high scores on tests.	No idea.	Want to become a basketball player.	Barely makes connections among school grades, college, and jobs.	Wants to help abused children and animals and then adopt them.

In Table 7, the meanings of achievement that they provided me are introduced below the

heading of "the ideal meaning of achievement." Table 7 includes their ideal thoughts about what

achievement is. Jeremy, Tiffany, Julia, and Bella define academic achievement as "doing good,"

"applying the newly learned knowledge to diverse real situations," "learning," and "becoming

smart and living well," respectively. However, actually, all the students measure their academic achievement by their test scores. All the students pursue high scores on their tests in school.

About their future, all the students say that they will go to college by earning high scores on their tests; they take it granted that they can go to college after graduating from high school. However, only Tiffany and Julia can relate a college diploma to their future jobs. Jeremy and Julia do not relate a college diploma to their future jobs. Interestingly, the reasons that they do not associate a college diploma with money differ. Jeremy, whose both parents have jobs and apparently have no economic difficulties, heard advice from his parents that he should not choose a job only because of the amount of salary at the cost of experiencing fun in life. He also wants to pursue having a lot of fun in college rather than developing his academic abilities and professional skills. Bella also chose her future profession in order to earn money, but she does not associate a college diploma with the obtainment of a job. She comes from a low-income family; therefore, she regards money as more important than a college diploma. She even thinks that she can quit college if she can become a veterinarian before graduating from college. She does not know that to qualify to become a veterinarian she must graduate from college and veterinarian school, yet.

About their relationships with other people, all the students assigned their mothers as the most significant people for their academic achievements. They tend to refer to their peers as those who disturb and distract them from their studies. Also, their parents tend to control their peer relationships. However, except for Bella's mother, all the mothers mention that they do not have much concern about their children's choices of peers because their children have not committed problems so far. Among them, Tiffany has experienced being bullied by some peers. She has learned to ignore the students around her, who may distract her from studying.

Considering their diverse definitions of school achievement, such as Jeremy's "doing good," Tiffany's "application of what she learned to diverse situations," Julia's "learning," and Bella's "living happy as a result of education," all the students are anticipated to enjoy learning in school and to pursue the diverse goals that they want to achieve in school. However, for all the students, actually, the goal that they must achieve is obtaining high scores on their tests. In particular, Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia need high scores in order to be placed and stay in the classes in the high academic track. They know that only students in those classes can have a higher quality of education. Compared to them, Bella takes regular classes and has missed the opportunities to have a better education. It is unclear that the three participants' academic ability and knowledge are better than those of Bella. However, by being placed in the advanced, honors, or AP classes, the three participants are regarded as intelligent students who deserve receiving a high quality of education.

The placement in the AP classes reminds me of one of Bourdieu's concept, that of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital is "capital–in whatever form–insofar as it is represented, i.e., apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge or, more precisely, of misrecognition and recognition, presupposes the intervention of the habitus, as a socially constituted cognitive capacity" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 56). In this quote, symbolic capital is referred to as a type of capital representing people or items "in a relationship of knowledge," or conceptions and misconceptions. Though symbolic capitals are not immediately converted into money, they contribute to the construction of cultural capitals, with which people can use to earn money. The symbol of a famous school cannot be used to earn money right now; however, the symbol reminds people of the academic ability and then makes them guess that those who have items

with the symbols, such as notebooks, may have graduated from the school and have a high level of academic abilities.

In Jeremy's, Tiffany's, and Julia's schools, their placement in the AP, honors, and advanced classes is a symbolic capital and has the symbolic power to endow the students with the right to receive a high quality of education that the students in the regular classes cannot receive. In conclusion, the three participants unconsciously regard their placement in the AP, honors, and advanced classes as a symbolic capital and work hard to obtain that capital.

Bella's school offers advanced classes, too. Bella's mother wants Bella to be placed in the gifted program and then become placed in the advanced classes. However, because of Bella's low test scores, it is barely possible for her to be placed in them with those scores. What could happen if Bella is not placed in the advanced classes in the future?

Chapter 5 will explain why Bella's narratives are so different. In that chapter, the four participants' economic and cultural backgrounds will be investigated and analyzed to provide answers to the above questions. Along with that analysis, the research question about the situated dimension, which is the environment in which the students are living, will be addressed.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS II

This chapter will describe the four students' narratives of achievement by focusing on

both the forward and backward directions and the inward and outward directions, and will also

focus on the situations of each participant. I will discuss the participants' narratives about their

achievement and describe their situations, such as their demographic backgrounds. Then the

chapter will analyze the participants' narratives by using the concept of cultural capital, which

has been introduced by Bourdieu (1986), and also by using the concept of cultural wealth,

suggested by Yosso (2005), while criticizing Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital.

Four Students' Narratives of Wealth and Capital

The next four sections of this chapter convey the narratives of the four participants,

Jeremy, Tiffany, Julia, and Bella. Because Chapter 4 has already told about the meaning of

achievement that they constructed, this chapter will focus on the relationships among their

family, their cultural background, and their achievement.

Jeremy Nice: Progress Only by Effort

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Jeremy attributes his failure to earn all A's to his

lack of effort. For him, he can only earn high scores on his tests through his own effort. He said,

"I was disappointed with myself because I know I could've done better. But I was sort of lazy in

the beginning" (J. Nice, personal communication, January 10, 2014). He blamed nobody but

himself when he said that his grades were lower than he wanted. However, as a result of his

effort, he had improved his school grades to some extent. He said, "I definitely improved in the

class I was struggling in. I have improved in my life science, math, and language arts. I earned better grade by doing from a C to a B, and [from] an F to almost [an] A, [a] B" (J. Nice, personal communication, January 10, 2014).

However, Jeremy still stayed positive because he had been able to improve his grades through his own effort. In one subject, his grade changed from an F to a C, and in another, it changed from a C to a B. He thinks that his effort and better adjustment to his high school are critical factors that have caused his school grades to improve.

Apparently, Jeremy's explanation is plausible. He barely has any difficulties to distract him from his studies. His family supports him economically so that he does not have to concern himself about working to earn money. His father manages a grocery store, and his mother teaches high school students. Because his two parents have jobs with regular salaries and health insurance support, he does not have to be concerned about the economic issues that other families may have. For example, in Price's study (2001), the students from low-income families are often concerned about helping their families have the necessities of life by working after school hours or during summer breaks. Unlike them, Jeremy has no difficulty in buying his textbooks and accessing the Internet, which are necessary for preparing essays and studying for tests. He also wants to work in a grocery store as an intern during the summer. However, his purpose for working in the summer is not to earn money for living expenses but to have an internship experience.

His parents' support, such as buying books for him, helps him prepare for the tests in his AP class, which is AP Geography. Because the questions on the AP tests have to be answered by using reference books, students taking the AP courses have to provide references, which are not

even given by their teachers. In other words, AP students sometimes have to buy or rent books to prepare for the tests. Jeremy told about how he prepares for his AP class as follows:

It[the test in the AP class] has two parts of the test: [to answer] 80 questions of multiple choice and [then to] answer by writing an essay about the chapters that you study. And, because it has so much information and it is reworded differently. For example, we might talk about China, . . . maybe one paragraph about China [as an answer]. But you have to really . . . maybe get up [to the] book[s] or go online to look into, more into them[the references] because if you just look at the note [given by the teacher], then you can fail, probably, [you are] not gonna pass. . . . My mom bought books special for the class, but I've been going on [a] different website, called "Quiz It."[15] I'm going on that. I'm reading that book. I'm doing my notes, but they actually help me pass the tests. (J. Nice, personal communication, January 10, 2014)

According to Jeremy, it seems hard for students to prepare for and pass the tests in the AP courses by simply taking notes on the teachers' lectures during class. Thus, he needs specific books to find the proper answers to the questions given on the tests in an AP classroom. Without his parents' economic support, his high achievement in the AP classes is not realistic. Along with his parents' support, he also studies hard to pass the AP classes. His long-term goal is to receive admission into at least one of the out-of-state universities to which he is applying. However, Jeremy anticipates that his diligence to excel in school will be rewarded by successfully entering a university.

Jeremy's mother emphasizes to him the importance of his obtaining a scholarship so that he can spend less money on his tuition; therefore, she hopes that Jeremy's grades will be high enough to earn a scholarship. However, the reason that Jeremy's mother wants to save money is

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[15] In order to protect his privacy, the real name of the website has been replaced.

not because Jeremy's parents have money to pay off his college tuition. She wants Jeremy to participate in internships that will help develop his career even if the internships do not offer compensation for the work. She does not want him to pursue high paying summer jobs at the cost of the chances to have low-paying internships that could help his career development.

His parents' tendency to weight his career development as more important than the amount of income that he could earn to fund his education is also reflected in their thoughts about Jeremy's future profession. According to Jeremy, his father emphasizes that he does not have to take a job solely to earn money. He said that his father regrets that he has worked only for money and hopes that Jeremy will follow a career path different from his. Jeremy wants to become a video journalist, which does not seem to be a lucrative job such as that of a physician or an attorney. His family resources allow him to test out several careers without concerning himself about money.

Besides his family's economic background, his parents' knowledge about schooling and school involvement has also affected Jeremy's school behaviors and achievement. First of all, his mother's profession has helped him do what he needs to do to achieve very well in school. As a high school teacher, his mother can give him information about how high schools operate. Concerning his mother's direction about how to act in school, he said, "Not only just . . . your academics but also the school system[s], [which are about] how it works, how to stay out of trouble, . . . , the things that I probably won't end up hearing about from other people". (J. Nice, personal communication, September 7, 2013)

Also, the culture of his family matches that of his school. Jeremy explained how his family culture had helped him adjust to the rules and the practices of his high school:

Some teachers can be very strict. [But,] I never have really [had] problem[s] with strict

teachers because my parents are so strict that I [am] used to it. I know a lot of kids [say]

really like, "They're mean. They're mean." I don't view [that] they're mis-mean. They

just have, they have certain rules. You go by those rules, and you won't get in trouble. (J.

Nice, personal communication, October 12, 2013)

Jeremy said that some teachers are just mean to their students, but such teachers are

rigorous with students who break the rules. Jeremy mentioned that he is familiar with the school

rules because his parents' rules are more rigorous than the school rules. He has had no problem

with adapting to the school rules, which are less strict than those in his family. By following his

parents' advice about "how to stay out of trouble," he has kept himself away from events that

might cause him to become involved in trouble.

Being familiar with the school rules and avoiding trouble are important ways for Black

male students and their parents to combat the prejudice that assumes that many Black male

students are trouble-makers. According to Jordan & Anil (2009), who compared the frequency of

the discipline referrals given to students with respect to their race, gender, and social class, the

students who are Black, male, and lower-class tend to receive more discipline referrals than the

students who are White, female, and middle-class. Monroe (2002) explains the reason by

pointing out that Black boys tend to receive more discipline referrals than students from other

racial groups because of the tendency to criminalize African American males in schools,

communities, and the broader society. Monroe's study echoes an older study conducted by

Taylor & Foster (1986). According to Taylor et al. (1986), who investigated the suspensions

given to students from September 1983 through June 1984 in the southeastern region of the

United States, African American male students tended to be overrepresented among the

suspended students in elementary and secondary schools. The findings of this study are consistent with similar studies published in those years (Taylor & Foster, 1986).

Second, the status quo of society tends to privilege a specific race and class over the others. Regarding the privilege of a specific race and class, Monroe (2002) mentions that the school boards tend to consist of White and middle-class members. Thus, their decisions about discipline are likely to be biased against Black boys (Monroe, 2002). Along with it, the status quo of society tends to apply zero tolerance initiatives for Black boys' discipline. Black students tend to be punished seriously and in ways that exceed the purpose of correcting their misbehavior (Monroe, 2002).

During the Jim Crow era, in order to protect Black boys from being in trouble, Black parents taught them not to contact any sources that might cause them to be at risk because zero tolerance policies tended to be applied to them (Ritterhouse, 2006). Jeremy's father has delivered the same messages to Jeremy. According to Jeremy, his father has warned him by giving him examples of people who used drug and committed bad things that sent them to Jail, and who then struggled with getting back on the right track (J. Nice, personal communication, October 12, 2013). "Doing good," consists of behaviors that his father thinks that Jeremy ought to do; "doing bad" consists of behaviors that his father thinks that Jeremy ought not to do in order to avoid being in trouble, things such as doing drugs and becoming involved in altercations. So far, Jeremy seems to follow his father's advice.

Another benefit of his parents' middle-class status is that Jeremy has been able to learn the skill of communicating well with teachers. His knowledge about the school system, which he acquired from his parents, has helped him become placed in the academic track. He knows that being in the academic track has benefits, and he has succeeded in being placed in that track.

Before his teacher placed him in the AP classes, he had asked his teacher to place him in them. Even though his mother had warned him that the AP classes would be harder than the honors classes he had taken, he persuaded his mother to support his request and finally asked his teachers to place him in the AP classes.

According to the curriculum guide of his school, some AP classes are open to students who request their teachers to place them in the AP classes. AP Geography was one of those courses. However, according to Jeremy, his teachers and even his parents had warned him that the course would challenge him. Despite their warning, he requested his teachers to place him in that course and he has survived and remained in it.

Jeremy's request to be placed in the AP class is not a typical behavior of the participants in this study despite his parents' and teachers' hesitation to accept that request. Unlike him, Tiffany and Julia, who had really desired to be placed in the AP classes before they were placed in them, had never requested to be placed in the AP classes. Even their parents had not requested that their teachers change their children's academic track.

According to Jeremy's mother, typically, Black parents do not know that they can change their children's placement by discussing it with their children's teachers, even though their children do not exceed the threshold. She thinks that their ignorance about the process of their children's placement may deprive their children of opportunities to receive a higher quality of education:

> So, they're, they[Black parents] trust [the teachers] but they're being told [by the teachers], and they may be told one thing or another based on so many other factors including possibly racism. Enemy! It will be a situation where discrimination is on[being used against] a person [who is] not even aware that they are [being] discriminated

[against]. It's not until [it's] brought [to] your attention sometimes that do you realize if you've skipped over this child, this child, this child. Do you realize their scores are very similar, but you chose this one, this one, this one? (Ms. Nice, personal communication, October 26, 2013)

Jeremy's mother mentioned that many Black parents do not know the process of how their children have been placed and just hear that their children have been placed in the regular classes after all the placements have been finalized. Because of their lack of knowledge, their children lose the opportunities to study in educational environments better than those of the regular classes. Thus, the changing of Jeremy's track, which gave him benefits in terms of the quality of the education that he would receive, does not generally happen. Also, like some Black students and their parents, the parents in low-income families know that they are also not equipped with the skills to communicate with the teachers in order to get them to accept their requests (Lareau, 2003).

In sum, the economic and cultural background of Jeremy's family has positively influenced his academic achievement. The economic background of his family has allowed him to focus on his studies. The cultural background of his family has helped him obtain specific benefits from his school, such as his participation in the honors and AP classes.

The support system of Jeremy's family, however, has limitations, especially in terms of providing him access to necessary social networks. Jeremy's family members have few people around them to discuss his education. Also, Jeremy has no role model in the profession and its field in which he has expressed interest. Thus, his family obtains most of their information about college and his future career from the Internet. Jeremy's mother talked about how she searched for the information to help Jeremy:

I do not have resources. Just digging around on the Internet. That's [Video Journalism's] the area that he[Jeremy]'s expressed his interest. So, that's the area that I decided to research on my own [unclear]. Do unlock some of those doors for him. It's up to him to make it happen, but as his parents, his father and I, we will do whatever we need to do [to] see to it, but he has that exposure. (Ms. Nice, personal communication, October 26, 2013)

This lack of information has influenced some of Jeremy's career decisions. For example, during my interview with him, Jeremy said that he had planned to work at a grocery store for an internship. He had decided to do so because his father was a grocery store manager. To achieve his career goal, however, it would be better for him to find an internship related to journalism. However, he and his family do not know anyone in the field of journalism to ask about giving him an internship.

Racism embedded in local communities is also an issue for Jeremy, even though he is achieved and comes from a middle-class family. Concerning potential malicious influences on him, caused by racism, Jeremy's mother has protected him from racist threats. Here is her understanding of the potential influence of racism on Jeremy's schooling:

You know oftentimes I don't think that it [the lower representation of Black students in the honors classes] can really be explained. I don't think that it's malice on a[the] part of the school officials or [the] teachers. Sometimes it just happens that way. As a parent, we take on that role [to correct something wrong happening to my son]. (Ms. Nice, personal communication, October 26, 2013)

While speaking the words in the above quote, Jeremy's mother was almost crying. Clearly, she had prevented racism from influencing Jeremy though he is not aware of it. Thanks

to her effort, Jeremy barely seems to feel the influence of racism on his schooling. However, in his daily life, the potential influence of racism on his life cannot be ignored. In my opinion, still, racism is unconsciously influencing his life as a student.

The influence of racism on Jeremy's life can be identified in the YSC. In that program, the students are required to wear a uniform. The boys are strictly disciplined to wear a blue shirt with a tie, khaki pants, and church shoes. The girls should wear a blue blouse and black pants. The blue shirts and the blouses are uniforms. One day, the program director recognized that the participants in the program usually come from low-income families who have difficulty in purchasing the required types of pants. Thus, he has allowed the program participants to wear jeans. The participants still have to wear the uniform shirts. By wearing the uniform shirts, the Black participants in the program can look professional, according to the program director. The program director has often emphasized the importance of professional dress to the program participants.

However, their dressing in this way has another purpose. The YSC is held in a university building. The program director tells the young program participants that if the school personnel finds something wrong in the building, they will blame the students because the school building on Saturday is usually empty. However, as far as I know, the school building is not empty on Saturday. Besides the YSC, the science camps are often held in the building. The students in the science camps mainly consist of Euro-American and Asian American young people. Unlike the Black students in the YSC program, they wear personal dresses and walk around more freely. I do not know whether the students in the science camps listen to the same message as the African American and Hispanic students in the YSC program do.

Regardless of the meanings communicated by wearing the YSC uniforms, Jeremy seems satisfied with the uniform policy of the program. To exemplify his satisfaction, he mentioned a time when he had been treated professionally because of the uniform. Every Saturday, Jeremy and his younger brother, as participants in the YSC program, had to wear a program uniform. After the program had finished, he, his younger brother, and his mother would often go to the mall that afternoon. Usually, they would not return to their house before shopping at the mall, and so Jeremy and his brother would still be dressed in their uniform. One day, while shopping in the mall with his mother and his younger brother and still wearing the program uniform, he recognized that people looked at them differently. He told about that experience as follows:

> When I first started [to] go [to the YSC], because my mom always wanted us to go to the store after the program, we went to [a] bunch of different places. I never really noticed, but I think, [it was] after that in [the] second year, seventh grade. Suddenly, I noticed that people were looking at me [a] little different[ly]. And I [saw] some people would [be] like smiling at us. I remember, one time, some older couple said, "That's right. Y'all do. Y'all are very good and y'all are very professional," and I'd never, never really paid attention at that. And I noticed that kind of treatment means more respect. They are, that kind a[of] like, that kind a[of] like, affect [from the way, in which] I dressed so professionally like adults, yet they, they thought I was young. (J. Nice, personal communication, September 7, 2013)

I did not ask Jeremy whether the older couple was White or Black. In fact, it is not important to know what race the couple was. The couple might have been Black, White, or from some other racial groups. However, honestly, I felt anger as I listened to his story. Just before telling the story, he talked about the dress policy:

They [the YSC staff members] wanna[want] us to dress [in a] suit and [a] tie and go out walking around . . . public places. And it's Saturday. So it's not like Sunday when people automatically assume [that] you went to church or something. It's on a day that people will probably never dress like this. So, . . . we can have a more professional sight to it. (J. Nice, personal communication, September 7, 2013)

According to Jeremy, no one expected people to dress professionally on Saturday. However, Jeremy and his brothers wore a suit that looked like a uniform, and they had heard the comment made about their attire, "That's right." What is right about their wearing a suit on Saturday when few children are expected to wear a suit and a tie on Saturday at a shopping mall? Would anything have been wrong if Jeremy and his brother had worn shirts and jeans as the other kids usually did? This episode reminds me of "the policy of respectability," which refers to a set of behaviors and attitudes that the parents of Black middle-class children developed during the Jim Crow era to socialize their children. Here is an explanation about how the policy of respectability developed:

Black parents worried about their children, not least about their safety in a world dominated in every way by Whites, and they tried hard to shelter their boys and girls not only from racist treatment but also from its psychological effects. Many, especially among the Black middle and upper classes, fought etiquette with etiquette, teaching their children an alternative code of respectability—and with it a dual consciousness—that was meant to help them preserve their self-respect. Centered on the bourgeois values of temperance, thrift, sexual self-restraint, hard work, and perseverance as well as conventional good manners, the middle-class Blacks' "politics of respectability" reflected both an antiracist discursive strategy, as historian Evenly Brooks Higginbotham and

others have argued, and deeply held beliefs that were nowhere stronger than in their

views on child rearing. Yet "proper" child rearing could also be a focal point for

intraracial class tensions, as is most evident in the concerns voiced by middle-class

Blacks that too few working-class Blacks were raising their children well. (Ritterhouse,

2006, p. 56)

During the Jim Crow era, Black parents were afraid that Whites might physically and

emotionally threaten their children. Thus, Black children had to avoid confronting White people

as much as possible and show etiquettes to respect White people whenever they came across

White people. Without expressing that respect, Black children and Black adults might even be

physically injured (Ritterhouse, 2006). However, displaying these etiquettes can hurt the Black

identity of Black people. Thus, middle-class Black people have developed a set of behaviors and

attitudes, emerging as the highest level of morality and as a set of counter etiquettes, which

Ritterhouse (2006) defines as the politics of respectability. The mode of the politics of

respectability still remains as a practice of etiquette among middle-class Black people even

though the Jim Crow era has already ended (Ritterhouse, 2006).

Jeremy's story about the program uniforms has reminded me of the concept of the

politics of respectability. If Jeremy and his brother were White boys, would they have been

required to wear the "right" dress on Saturday, when no one was usually expected to dress this

way? Also, Jeremy felt a kind of self-affirmation when he received praise from the older couple,

which resembles the psychological and emotional reward given to Black children who have

observed the politics of respectability.

I cannot say that what I inferred from his story about the uniforms is correct. However, I

can feel the anger that I had while interviewing him. Though he is supported by his educated

middle-class parents who know how school systems work, racism still significantly influences his life.

Tiffany Jones: Learning to Survive

When Tiffany was asked about the influence of racism on her academic achievement, she said that she did not concern herself with it. However, I changed questions, and then when I asked her about her experiences of racism, she gave this example:

> Automatically, because I'm a Black girl, they assume that, first of all, that I'm not smart, that I like to party and do wild things and [that I want] stuff I don't have; [that] I'm not civilized, and [that] I don't have things to worry about. That makes me sick. They assume I can dance, but I can't do [that]. Oh my! They assume disgusting things [and make things] up just because of stereotypes [and think that] I'm a party girl and I get drugs and stuff like drink, which I don't. Nobody in my family does, and it's some stereotyping [of me]. Race doesn't define what people are good at or [what] people are bad at. It just doesn't. It's stupid, it's really, really stupid. (T. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013)

In the quote, the stereotypes given to Black people and Black girls can be easily identified. The stereotypes are "less smart," "like to party," "do wild things," "not civilized," "party girl," "get drugs," and "drink." Less smart or unintelligent has been an attribute used to describe Black people (Crenshaw, 1991), and the characteristics of "loud, disruptive, confrontational, aggressive, unladylike, ratchet, ghetto" have been used to characterize Black girls (George, 2015). She knows the stereotypes are used to characterize her before she shows her ability. At least, she does not deny the influence of stenotypes and the expressions of racism on her life as a student. She gives an example of how stereotypes have influenced her life:

It[racism] seems to happen on occasion. I had a teacher. I can't remember her name, but, and, I was like in a group for this White girl, and we're all like we were really cool to hang in and out and things, and we all had to get, like we're, I think we were doing reading, and she didn't know that I was better at reading than the White girls. So she handed me over the reading material that it seemed really easy, and she gave her[the White girl] the more difficulty material. And I went up to her [the teacher]. I went to her, saying, "Excuse me, but this is too easy. Do you have anything else, anything I also could read?" And she would [say] like, "No, I don't have anything like [that] else." I saw the girl next me, she had the hardest thing that she just couldn't do it. [But,] she has the hardest thing. No, I don't [think so]. Maybe it probably just wasn't race. I mean I don't know. That's just made me weird. (T. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013)

In the quote, Tiffany thinks that the teacher may have only accidentally given her a low level of reading material. However, she felt it was strange that the teacher had decided not to exchange her reading material with the White girl's, even though the White girl was obviously struggling with reading her assigned reading material. Tiffany did not say that the teacher had refused to exchange her material with the other girl's material because the teacher had intentionally discriminated against her; however, this event seemed to lead her to think that she needed to prove her abilities to that teacher in order to be recognized in an environment where she is a minority. She said, "Specifically in my advanced classes, [I as] that one little Black girl with all White kids has [meant that I] definitely [have] to prove myself; then I'm just as good as anybody in [the] classrooms" (T. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013). For her, racism sometimes "did not hurt" her, but "surprised" her (T. Jones, personal communication,

December 11, 2013). Despite her denial of the influence of racism on her life, it has influenced her attitudes and behaviors in the classroom.

Tiffany's feeling of needing to prove her ability to people in order to be recognized is the same feeling that some studies on Black high achievers' experiences have reported. For example, in Andrews' (2009) study on the experiences of Black high achievers in a high school where White, middle-class students are the majority, the Black students expressed that they felt that they had to show their academic ability, but the White students expressed that they usually did not have to display theirs.

Also, Tiffany's feeling of being ignored because of her race can be categorized as a type of microagresssion. According to Andrews (2012), Black students tend to feel that they are not valued and that their opinions are either unacknowledged or disregarded as serious ideas. Because of those experiences of devaluation, unacknowledgment, and disregard, they tend to doubt their academic ability (Andrews, 2012). In fact, according to Tiffany's mother, Tiffany lacks self-confidence. She described her daughter's lack of self-confidence as follows:

> I know that's just a normal part of it. So I try to encourage her. I try to encourage her, I
> try to get her positively enforcement on Tiffany. "You are the best, you know that?
> You're the best girl! Could you know that? Did you know that?" and that's what I['ve]
> tried to do with her, and her dad does the same thing, too. So, hopefully, that would be
> something in her and click in her. (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11,
> 2013)

Tiffany's mother thinks that young girls usually lack self-confidence. Thus, her mother has told her that she is the best. However, Andrew's (2012) findings may explain a part of Tiffany's lack of self-confidence. In fact, it is unclear whether Tiffany has intentionally

displayed shyness in the classroom. She may just not want to be given much attention in her advanced classes.

In addition, Tiffany knows that stereotypes can influence Black people in various ways, even with respect to the lightness of their skin color. She mentions that Black people with a darker skin color are more likely to be stereotyped than those with a lighter skin color. She told about how the lightness of skin color among Black people has influenced the way that people apply their prejudices:

> It's kind of weird, but she [Julia] has [it] easier because she has lighter skin [than I do]. Oh, it's weird if skin's like darker [than] you are, [and then] the White people think of it. So Julia has a way of[that is] easier, because she is like lighter of[than] me. So I think people automatically think that higher of her [grades] than that of me (T. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013).

Tiffany knows that invisible racism influences her life as a student even though the White teachers and the White students do not intend to stereotype her. Thus, as a Black female student with darker skin, she needs to prove herself. She needs to show up her academic ability and knowledge to European American teachers and students and also she needs to overcome her lack of self-confidence.

In order to prove her academic ability and knowledge and overcome her lack of self-confidence, first of all, she needs to study hard. Thus, she has to avoid being distracted by her peers. So, she decides to keep away from most peers and then, carefully select her friends. Currently, her friends mostly come from advanced classes and her church. In fact, Julia, another participant of this study, is Tiffany's best friend. She was the first peer that came to her in their elementary school classroom when Tiffany was transferred from Florida to Georgia. Since then,

the students have been the best friends. Though they went to different middle schools, they were still keeping touch with one another and even called every day. Like Tiffany, Julia was also placed in advanced classes in her school. Besides Julia, Tiffany had about five friends who desired to go to college and took advanced courses. So, all of her friends were placed in advanced classes and were expected to go to college and university.

Keeping away from distracting friends and building friendship with students promising college entrance were Tiffany's resilience that she had developed from her experiences of being bullied. Tiffany has experiences of being bullied when she was in the fifth grade. In the year, she participated in a spelling bee. She had answered all the words correctly in a spelling bee. She was proud of her achievement in that competition; however, soon, she recognized that her peers thought that she had cheated. They did not believe that she could spell all the words correctly. She cried after coming home. She commented about that experience as follows:

> They say there's no way that I could've spelled all [the] words correctly, and this is back enough for them to use right. Everybody put[s] dummies into stuff. So I like, I was in home, and I was on a head, and I had cried for hours, because I had honestly done something that I didn't even think I could do. People were still criticizing me because I had done it. And it made me, oh, my Gosh, it's so bad. Oh, it was so horrible. (T. Jones, personal communication, November 21, 2013)

That quote indicates that Tiffany was understood as a cheater. In fact, people did not know that she was actually a high achiever. In elementary school, her reading level had exceeded her age level. However, unless she had told them about it, people tended to think that she was a low achiever. Even her peers made fun of her.

Copying with bullies, she developed two resilience strategies which are ignoring bullying peers and keeping ways from those peers by being placed in advanced classes. About the first strategy, she said, "in middle school, it[bullying]'s stopped because I knew that I wasn't gonna[going to] take people's criticism any more. I didn't care of[about] their [teasing] and then ignored [it]. I just didn't care any more" (T. Jones, personal communication, November 21, 2013). By not responding to her aggressors, she learned how to avoid feeling hurt and how to focus on her studies.

The second strategy is to keep some peers, who may bully her, away from her. This strategy comes from her finding of the reason that she was accused of her achievement in the spelling bee. She said, "If I had a spelling bee now, people would say I achieved because I'd care, I am fully accomplished now. Not to care about what people said to me, but because I'm in advanced classes. I don't need people's approval" (T. Jones, personal communication, November 21, 2013). Before she had participated in the spelling bee, she had not shown her academic abilities to her peers. Her peers seemed to think that she could not competently spell the words. Though she had successfully completed the contest, her peers still could not admit that she had the ability to memorize all the words correctly. Instead, they assumed that she had cheated in order to win the contest. She felt angry and sad simultaneously, for she had no means to show her real abilities.

Avoiding peers' accusation is not the only reason that she desired to be placed in advanced classes. However, it also motivated her. She studied hard and in middle school, and finally, she was successfully placed in the advanced classes by earning high scores on tests in classrooms. Since her placement in the advanced classes now gets people's recognition, she does

not have to show her academic abilities to her peers in order to avoid their accusations. In sum, for her, the placement in advanced classes is a strategy for avoiding peer accusations.

However, in the climate of advanced classes, she has to survive. Thus, while she successfully avoids peers' accusations, she still needs to show her academic ability and knowledge to her peers and her teachers in the advanced classes in order to stay in her advanced classes. As aforementioned in the Chapter 4, students have to keep their numeric and alphabetic grades high in order to stay in AP, honors, and advanced classes. Thus, she maintains herself away from those peers who may cause her to become involved in trouble.

To protect herself from being bullied by her peers and becoming involved in troublesome situations, Tiffany carefully chooses her friends. According to her mother, she tends to choose her friends from among her classmates in the advanced classes, who seem to have a similar interest in going to college. In fact, her mother is also concerned about her choice of friends. Her mother said, "I am very concern[ed] about her, particular[ly] about her friends. Tiffany does not have a whole bunch of friends because I don't want that to corrupt her" (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013). About using the Internet, her mother is "very controlling [on] that issue" and told her, "'no, that's not your friend'" (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013). As well as herself, her mother has been really concerned about her peer relationships. However, before her mother directly told her who would deserve to be her best friend, she had already chosen her friends very well. Her mother said that she is "very, very well about [at] picking her friends" (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013). According to her mother, "Most [of] her friends are good girls" (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013). One of the good girls is Julia, who has been her best friend

since elementary school and has kept their friendship while though they attend different schools. They are presently attending the same church.

Tiffany's mother remembers the private elementary school, housed in a church, as an institution that offered a high quality of education to the students. In fact, her mother had sent Tiffany to that private school from the time she was two years old until the school closed. In her mother's opinion, thanks to her early private education, Tiffany started reading when she was three years old. Her mother said that Tiffany had received an education in the private school that was of a higher quality than the education that she would have received in a public school. However, according to her mother, the education in a private school is too different from the education in a public school. In fact, her mother thinks that Tiffany had not passed the threshold test of a gifted education program because the content taught to students in that private school differed from the content taught to students in the public schools. According to her mother, she did not learn abstract thinking in that private school, but in the public schools, she was taught to solve the problems requiring her to use abstract thinking. Her mother made these comments:

> I think the reason why that abstract thinking was not a part of it for her [is] because you go to private school and you have [a] certain way of doing thing and what you know. You've got to follow the book and then so that abstract thinking in that, her just a be training of her mind would be difficult for her because she used to … resume and that stuff like that. But after she went to public school for a while, I guess she knew to do things in different ways, and she's kind of got an abstract thinking thing and she got, she passed. (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013)

It is hard for me to agree that the private school provided the students no education for developing abstract thinking abilities. In fact, abstract thinking is known as a stage in children's

cognitive development, which children reach when they become a certain age. For example, Piaget's cognitive development theory includes a stage called the formal operational stage, in which children can use abstract thinking abilities to solve problems (Day, 1981). Children can use these abilities when they are about 11 or 12 years old. Thus, if Tiffany could not solve the problems by using her abstract thinking abilities, problems which her new public school teachers had given her, she probably had not reached the age level in which she could conduct abstract thinking.

Anyway, Tiffany experienced different learning methods in the public schools, and at least, from her mother's view, it took Tiffany some time to adjust to the public schools. Meanwhile, she seemed to have lost the chance to be placed in the gifted program. Ever since, she studied hard, and she finally succeeded in being placed in the advanced classes in her middle school. She has had no tutor nearby to help her. Her father has sometimes tutored her in math, but according to her mother, her father is so busy that he cannot often tutor her. Thus, she had been successfully placed in the advanced classes, largely by her own effort.

One of the experiences from which Tiffany draws to sustain her commitment to continue studying is the time that she met a neurologist when she was young. Her mother introduced a neurologist to her because she wanted her daughter to be exposed to a person in that stable and respectable profession. It is possible that her mother was working in a hospital. Since that time, Tiffany has been studying in order to become a neurologist. The dream has driven her to study so far.

Considering the aforementioned description about Tiffany and her mother's concern about her education, she and her mother participate jointly, actively, and diligently in her education. Tiffany worked hard in order to overcome bullies and prejudices by showing her

academic abilities. Her mother has supported her by sending her to a private school and introducing a role model to her. Besides that, her mother brought her the information that students can take a free SAT preparation test at the regional library.

Apparently, Tiffany's family is not categorized economically in the middle or upper class, considering the low price of houses in the area where her family lives. Though she is not eligible to receive either the reduced or the free lunch program, she was living in a townhouse with several bedrooms and two bathrooms when I visited her townhouse, which is obviously not newly built. At the very least, her family is not an upper or a mid-middle-class family. Her father was working at a body shop, and her mother was working as a nurse in a hospital. They are not poor, but they are not rich. In fact, the economic situation of their family limits their choices with regard to Tiffany's education, in her mother's opinion. Her mother misses the education of the private school. About the difference between private education and public education, she says as follows:

> When Tiffany was two years old, we had a private school within our church. New Life
> Baptist Church[16] had a private school, and I enrolled her in that. It was not just head start
> because, you know, she was two years old and just kind I do like day care . . . But by the
> time Tiffany was three years old, Tiffany was capable of reading, and nobody believed
> this, and my mother won't believe that. So she took her to the movies one day, and she
> was reading. So when she was three years old, she was reading, and she was [reading] far
> more advanced stuff that for her age, but that's what the school was doing. And I can tell
> the difference because my youngest one, we just could do afford to have sent her, and I
> can see now where she's struggling in reading. (Ms. Jones, personal communication,
> December 11, 2013)

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[16] The real name has been replaced by a pseudonym.

When Tiffany's mother compared the homework and the content given to Tiffany and Tiffany's younger sister, her mother praised the education of the private school that Tiffany attended. Though Tiffany was young, she could read, and, currently, she never struggles with reading. Tiffany's younger sister, who has attended only public schools, did not learn to read in the right way and still struggles with reading. In other words, Tiffany's mother is not satisfied with public schools at all and made these comments:

> If I had the money to send her to a better school, I would do it. I'm not happy with the public school situation. I don't think they'll reward kids to excel, and I think that they are bunched to do all together. So you excel or you would not do really great. You[they are] bunched all altogether, and this is what I have to teach you, and what you get it or not. That's it. So I think a lot of, kind of disciplines, too, because when she does the work, it's nothing to her. So she is not really to be in pushed. You know, I don't feel those she is. If I could afford hundreds [to pay for her] to go to private school, I would because that's what she needs. But the way of the school systems are now, you know, everybody is kind of being crammed together, you know, and I don't think she's really benefiting [from public schools] as much as she could. If I had the money, I bet you it[going to private school] would be better. (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013)

Tiffany's mother is dissatisfied with the public school system. However, since she cannot afford the tuition of a private school, she has sent Tiffany to a public school. Her statement about the recent change of curriculum standards reveals why she is dissatisfied with public school education. She described the public elementary school curriculum, employed in the public school that Tiffany's younger sister attends, as follows:

Now, the new thing is, you know, [in] my youngest daughter['s education]. She is

learning and working on writing, and she doesn't have to learn cursive [script]. That's not

[a] requirement any more. So that's the effect. . . . So my daughter can't read cursive

writing. . . . So I wrote something that['s] cursive, and she said, "I can't read that. That's

cursive." (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013)

In Tiffany's mother's mind, cursive writing is part of the foundational knowledge that all

students should learn. However, Tiffany's younger sister had not learned it. She attributes

students' lack of foundational knowledge to the lower quality of public education. At the same

time, she wishes that she could send Tiffany and Tiffany's sister to private schools for a better

education. Unfortunately, Tiffany's parents could not afford to send their two daughters to

private schools. Thus, the family does the best they can within the public school system.

Fortunately, both of Tiffany's parents have experienced college education. Her father

entered a state university with a full scholarship though he left that school before he finished

when he suddenly became burnt out. Her mother completed her undergraduate education at a

Historical Black College and University (HBCU) with a major in nursing. At least, her father can

tutor her in mathematics at a middle-school level though he cannot often tutor her because he is

generally busy. In order words, she has a person beside her who actually can help her study as

well as encourage her to study. Her mother also knows the importance of Tiffany's taking the

preparatory SAT test in order to prepare for college entrance. At least, both parents know the

process of going to college and can consider what Tiffany currently needs for her academic

progress.

Thus, apparently, Tiffany's family seems to have no concern about her education.

However, interestingly, still, racism mysteriously works against and affects her educational

progress. When I asked Tiffany about racism during the interview, she requested that I talk about it later. The reason that she postponed talking about racism was her mother's presence in the kitchen where I interviewed her. Though she knows that she has to prove herself because of people's prejudice about Black girls, she avoided talking more about it with me at that time.

Her mother does not want her to be exposed to racism until she has become mature enough to cope with it. Her mother said, "Nothing's gonna[going to] be worried about that, but the other part, you know, the racism. I can't really show her [what is] up [about] that. I just have to give her positive reinforcements because it does not go away."

Tiffany's mother thinks that Tiffany will confront racism soon, but not in school. That belief originated from her experiences as a youth in Florida. According to her, Florida is located in the South, but its culture differs from that of the other states in the southern portion of the United States. One of the major differences that distinguish Florida from the rest of the states in the southern area pertains to their cultural practices about race. In the opinion of Tiffany's mother, she had not experienced racism when she was in her elementary and secondary schools; then, she went to a HBCU in a nearby southern state. Fortunately, she barely experienced racism in that southern state when she attended those schools. However, when she was graduated from the university and started working at a hospital as a nurse in another southern state, she recognized covert racism there. For example, she was not promoted to the position as head nurse of her department even though she was qualified. She thinks that she was racially discriminated against because she was the only Black in the hospital when the evaluation for the promotion was conducted. Interestingly, she does not resist the unequal situations of her hospital. Also, she does not teach Tiffany about how racism works in the broader society, including her school. In

fact, I doubt that she really has the belief that no school embraces racism with them. My thought is that talking about racism is taboo to her.

Tiffany's mother closed her narrative about the promotion by telling about how a Black person must function in a White-culture-centered organization, such as her hospital:

When they make a B, [is it all right that] you make [a] B? No, no, no. When they make a B, you have to make a B+. Why? Because they, certain people, expect you were less. When they let me tell you what you have to do. When they act so [and] so, and then they expect you to act at this level. Let me tell you what you have to do [this], and that's what I have to do [more than this]. I will tell her when she comes across to it. Don't react to that. That's what they are expecting. This is what you have to do. You know. I think I don't know [whether or how] I shield her, [and] [I have] made a way for her to know how to cope with them. I don't how if it is coming up to her now because it is a different generation, but it's still there. I think she is adjusting to it quite well. (Ms. Jones, personal communication, December 11, 2013)

In the quote, she has suggested two strategies for Blacks to use to cope with racism: one is to achieve higher than White people and the other is to ignore racism. These strategies are exactly the same strategies that Tiffany has used to survive in her advanced classes. Tiffany, who has grown up in Georgia, has already experienced racism and has created the same coping strategies that she learned from her mother.

To summarize, Tiffany's family cannot afford to give her enough financial support. However, her parents have experienced college education and know how to overcome potential threats caused by covert racism, such as the peers' and the teachers' intentional or unintentional ignorance of Tiffany's academic abilities. Also, her family knows ways to compensate for the

unsatisfactory quality of public education by themselves, such as Tiffany's own concerted effort and her mother's offering of the opportunity at the public library to prepare for college entrance. In fact, I am unsure whether Tiffany can finally go to medical school, but at least, due to her family's experiences, she knows the steps required to attend medical school and does not cease her effort, yet.

Julia Len: Negotiating Black Identities

Julia is the only student who had pointed out the underrepresentation of Black students in the advanced classes before I asked her about it. Unlike the other participants who had avoided talking about racism, Julia was open to telling me about it during my interviews with her. About the underrepresentation of Black students in the advanced classes, she said, "In my school, Black people, we are not really a minority. It's really the White who is the minority. But it's[there are] still more White people in the advanced classes than Black people" (J. Len, personal communication, December 3, 2013).

Also, Julia is the only student who said during the interview that her school mainly teaches White history. As mentioned in the previous section, she is interested in learning about Black history. However, she barely has had the chance to learn about it extensively in her school. Thus, she has learned about it by watching documentaries on the History Channel and reading books by herself or with her mother.

Julia does not tell about any discomfort or discontent with her school culture, in which Black students are underrepresented in the advanced classes and in which Black history is barely taught to the students. In fact, she has already been placed in the Advanced Science classes and the Advanced Language arts classes. She will have credits transferrable to high school when she has completed these advanced classes. She is proud of her current achievement.

Thus, apparently, she has no concern about her education except for increasing her test scores in math, which is her weakest subject. However, like Tiffany, Julia also feels stress in her advanced classes, in which few Blacks are placed and study. In her advanced classes, she feels that she has to prove her academic ability to the teachers and the students. She thinks that people look at her academic ability from a prejudicial perspective about Black students' academic ability. She said, "I feel like I have to be better. If I don't, I will be judged because people will say, 'Oh, she is Black and she can't'" (J. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013). In order to change people's prejudices, she thinks that she has to study more and earn higher grades. It is stressful for her to study in order to prove her ability; however, she has coped with those prejudices well so far.

Because she has been recognized by her effort, Julia tends to attribute the underrepresentation of Black students in the advanced classes only to their lack of effort. When she was asked why Black students are underrepresented in the advanced classes, she answered, "They need to try by themselves, and they can do" (J. Len, personal communication, December 3, 2013). She emphasizes that Black girls have to make an effort to be placed in the advanced classes. Though she does not think that Black students are less intelligent than White students, she thinks that they have to study more.

Julia's mother thinks similarly about why Black students are more underrepresented in the advanced classes than White students. From her perspective, parents have to carefully investigate their children's progress beyond checking their attendance and their participation in tests. Before their children are left behind, in her opinion, parents have to take some actions in advance, such as meeting teachers and discussing their children's progress. As the following

quote shows, Julia's mother essentially attributes the lower achievement of Black students to their parents:

> My opinion is [that] they do not put the Black kids and Latino kids [in the advanced classes]. They don't be given opportunities, and then [that] goes back to their parents because their parents are not involved. They just let their child go through school. [Unclear phrases]. They don't care about when they graduate . . . . They just want their child to get the numbers [scores] by taking the tests. That's my opinion. (Ms. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013)

Julia's mother believes that Black parents, probably those around her, do not care about their children's academic progress; therefore, their children are placed in the regular classes and left behind.

However, the overall economic situations of the African American people in her neighborhood tell stories differing from her opinions. In terms of the statistics about household incomes, many Black students in the county where Julia lives come from low-income families. The Center for Work, Health, and Well-being at the Harvard School of Public Health, which has compiled statistical data about household income by race, in the individual counties during 2010 and 2011, provides this data: 48.4% of the White students and 78.6 % of the Black students were eligible for the free or the reduced lunch program in the county in which Julia's family lives. In fact, Julia's school is assigned as a Title I school, which is a program for supporting schools with a high percentage of low-income students.

In this situation, African American students may be left at home with limited care from their parents. According to Lareau (2011), who studied the differing parenting strategies of low and middle-income families, the low-income families tend to exclude their children from

participating in any extracurricular activities after school. They are left with students in the neighborhood while their parents are preparing for dinner or still working. Unlike them, according to Lareau (2011), the students from middle-income families participate in various activities after school or during the weekend. Their schedules are tightly managed by their parents. Their parents also monitor their achievements. If they have problems in school in terms of achievement, their parents meet with their teachers and discuss what their children need to do. The differing communication skills of middle-class and working-class parents cause different interactions between them and their children's teachers.

Reay (1998) also shows that the mothers from low-income families and those from middle-income families use different communication methods. According to Reay (1998) the mothers from middle-income families negotiate with the teachers to change their children's learning plan and homework, but the mothers from lower-income families accept the teachers' decisions about their children's learning without challenging them. They did not imagine that they could change the teachers' opinions. In fact, they have difficulty in talking with the teachers because of their unfamiliarity with the pedagogical terminology. Also their fear prevents them from communicating with the teachers. Their fear is caused by their bad memories as low achievers in school.

Unlike the parents from low-income families that Lareau (2003) and Reay (1998) describe, Julia's mother has a middle-income family background and graduated from a state university in a southern state. She has been arranging times to communicate with her daughter's teachers, which Black and White-working class parents may not have considered doing.

In fact, the culture of Julia's mother, one that is favorable to academic development, is an asset that Julia possesses. Though Julia's maternal grandparents did not finish a degree at a four-

year university, they had obtained some college education. Her mother's brothers, sisters, and cousins were graduated from universities just as her mother had been. Thus, in Julia's extended family on her mother's side, almost all the members have graduated from college. According to Julia, no one expects to limit their education to the high school level. Thus, she has always received high expectations from her family to extend her education beyond high school. This situation differs from Tiffany's. Though Tiffany's mother was graduated from a university, her grandparents did not experience higher education. Thus, one day, Tiffany heard her maternal grandmother ask why Tiffany had to study so hard to go to college. At that time, Tiffany was upset, and her mother protected her by telling her that a woman also needed a high level of education.

Unlike Tiffany, Julia has many relatives. Thus, she can discuss what she will do after going to college with her relatives, including those who are currently attending college. In this way, she can update her information about college. In her family, how to study and apply to attend college is commonly shared information.

Along with that, Julia's mother had also experienced the benefits of starting her education early. She was used to reading books and newspapers that her parents read near her. About that experience, she said,

> My parents always, all of them, were reading something, even just newspapers. So they always read something, and I would read. They wouldn't pay attention to me, and I had to read [near them], too. Why wasn't it interesting in this? So I started reading.(Ms. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013)

She was naturally familiar with reading, which helped her adapt to attending schools. She had a great interest in early education, and one day, she experienced an impressive experience during her pregnancy, as follows:

> Actually, when I was pregnant, what I did was reading through. So when she[Julia] was a baby, we got a book, because I never forgot since I saw a lady in a mall read. With her baby she strongly read a whole book. I thought it was so amazing. I was amazed at what she did. She did, and I just used the little book. Because she said what she read during the last two and half hours' voice, that's the reason why, a lot, she would sit back with the book and just looked at that book for her baby. So I tried still reading to her[Julia] even though she's kind of grown now . . . actually, she heard quote, verses, "I will start reading without you in middle school, too." But I picked it up to high school; however, I'll ever stop reading. So, but, yeah. She is [reading] all her life. (Ms. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013)

Reading during pregnancy is regarded as a popular method for the education of children in some Asian countries, such as South Korea. In these countries, some mothers believe that education during pregnancy effectively facilitates the improvement of young children's literacy after they have matured. It is unproven whether the method really helps young children's literacy. The important thing is that Julia's mother has been interested in improving Julia's literacy at a very young age. After Julia was born, Julia's mother continued to read her books. She did so because she believes that reading to children at a young age helps children develop their cognitive abilities. Specifically, Julia was interested in reading about Black history even when she was five years old. The interest has grown so far.

As a result of her high level of literacy, when Julia became a first-grader, she was tested whether she qualified for the Gifted Program. However, her scores were under the threshold. She was tested again when she was in the third grade, but her scores were still under the threshold. Her reading and writing scores were not the issues. The problem was her math score.

Thus, Julia's mother hired Julia a tutor when Julia was in the fourth grade in order to raise her math score. However, she failed to be placed in the gifted program in elementary school despite her efforts. Then Julia had to wait before being placed in the advanced classes until she finally succeeded in being invited to take the advanced classes in her middle school. During the semester that I interviewed her, she was still tutored in math every Wednesday. Julia and her mother both regard the placement in the math advanced classes as an important task that she has to achieve.

Besides providing early education and hiring tutors, just as the parents of the other participants in this study have done, Julia's mother has also frequently communicated with Julia's teachers and has actively participated in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). She has also recommended various extracurricular activities to Julia, but Julia did not participate in them. Julia focuses on her math scores so that she can be placed in the advanced math classes. Just as Julia was successfully placed in the advanced language arts classes and the science classes, Julia desires to be placed in the advanced math classes in the upcoming semester. The only activity in which she has been participating is the Four-H Club, which may offer her a scholarship when she goes to college. She heard about the scholarship when she was in the fifth grade and told her mother that she wanted to join the club. Since then, she has been participating in that club.

As well as having her mother's support to be placed in the advanced classes, Julia had the opportunity to meet her role model because of her mother's social networks. Like Tiffany's

mother, Julia's mother used her social network to introduce a celebrity in the community to Julia. Julia decided to become a lawyer after meeting the Black woman judge when she visited the judge's book-signing event. Julia met the lawyer because her mother's friend had informed her mother about that book-signing event so that Julia's mother could take Julia to it. Since that event, Julia has had the dream to become a lawyer.

Julia's mother's support differs from that of other Black single mothers, as described in the studies on Black students' achievement. Julia's mother is divorced, and she is currently a single mother. However, apparently, her mother does not suffer from economic problems. She lives in her house with Julia and can afford to hire Julia tutors. This situation differs from that of Bella's mother, who is a single mom and has to sacrifice earning a higher salary in order to take care of her children without hiring babysitters.

Her mother also controls Julia's peer relationships. Before Julia can befriend a peer, her mother has to know her peer's parents as well as her peer. Thus, like Tiffany, Julia has several friends whom she carefully chooses. According to her mother, she chooses friends "in a long, long the way," and then "she really calls them friends" (Ms. Len, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Except for those friends, she seems to ignore her peers. When she was asked about what tends to distract her, she pointed out "the students" in her school (J. Len, personal communication, September 7, 2013). She prefers to stay inside her house rather than play outside. She is not isolated because she can talk to Tiffany by phone every night.

However, in the advanced classes, Julia does not make close connections with the other students. Like Tiffany, she is the only Black girl and has the burden to display her academic ability to her classmates. Her situation is consistent with the studies on Black students in schools in which White students are the majority, such as Price's study (2002). Price (2000) has

demonstrated that the Black students from middle-income families, who achieve very well in academics, tend to be isolated socially. Specifically, Wortham (2006) shows that African American students who are placed in an AP class are easily regarded as students without interest in academic achievement. Because the prejudices are embedded in the class, which have affected teachers' and students' thoughts even though they do not recognize that influence, African American students who are in the minority tend to be mischaracterized; then, finally they also become disinterested in progressing academically in that class. Though Julia does not experience the covert misidentification in her advanced classes, the feeling that she is in the minority is not an easy one for a young student to handle. Without increasing the number of Black students in the advanced classes, the feelings of isolation that Tiffany and Julia have experienced will not essentially disappear.

To summarize, Julia has benefitted from her family's cultural, economic, and social background. She learned how to read and write at an early age, can use her mother's social network, which has helped her find a role model and set up a goal of academic achievement, has obtained help with her learning from private tutors, and has been encouraged by her relatives who are college graduates. The prejudices about Black students nonetheless still influence her, which are not nullified by her economic, social, and cultural family background. She overcomes her racial isolation by talking to students outside of her school, such as Tiffany.

Also, Julia is the only student who has shown an interest in exploring her Black heritage. Though Julia does not demonstrate how her achievement would contribute to her Black community, she gave an interesting idea about her career. When I asked her to tell me what she would do after becoming a lawyer, she answered that she would open her office in Harlem.

When I asked her why she had chosen Harlem, she did not answer me. However, it still interests me why she chose Harlem instead of Manhattan.

I am not sure how much her mother has played a role in developing her sense of wanting to make a contribution to the Black community. However, I think her mother's educating her early about Black history and heritage as well as offering her an opportunity to meet a celebrity in their Black community may have helped Julia develop her sense of belonging to the Black community.

Bella Williams: Class Matters

Unlike the three participants whose stories are told in the previous sections, Bella does not come from a middle-class income family. She lives with her mother and her younger sister Kim. Her mother has been working in a school as a cashier. She could have chosen a job with a salary higher than that of a cashier, but she chose it because she wanted to be with her two daughters at home as long as possible. Because she works in a public school, she can leave and come home at the same time that her two children come home. After coming home, she gives Bella and Kim their dinner and then tutors Kim. She does not tutor Bella. She lets Bella do her homework on her own and observes her. She believes that Bella has to study by herself.

The content that Bella has to study is determined by her mother. She asks Bella what homework is due and what formative tests have been scheduled, and then she expects that Bella will complete her homework or prepare for her tests according to their urgency. Sometimes she asks the teachers whether Bella has submitted her homework on time and what her test scores are. When she finds that Bella does not submit her homework on time or earns low scores on her tests, she commands Bella to submit her homework on time and prepare for the compensatory tests given by her teachers. In those cases, Bella has to complete the homework or study for the

make-up tests. Recently, Bella's scores and grades fell down below 70 because she had earned low scores on the formative tests and had not submitted her homework Thus, her mother often tells her that she needs to focus more on her studies. Even when I visited her house to interview Bella, Bella's mother almost yelled at Bella because of her low scores on the tests and her incomplete homework. Her mother thinks that Bella's grades fall down because she does not pay attention to her teachers and misses her teachers' directions. She thinks that "What Bella is . . . [doing now] . . . excuses, 'don't listen,' or '[don't] pay attention' in class" (Ms. Williams, personal communication, January 14, 2014).

In order to improve her grades, Bella's mother has suggested that Bella memorize the content to learn it. In fact, the handouts that Bella received from her teachers consist of content that Bella has to memorize. I had a chance to look at Bella's learning material for her math, science, social studies, and language arts courses. The material only included the content that Bella had to memorize without providing a detailed explanation of the content. For example, the math material included formulae without proofs. In fact, I was shocked at the low quality of her math material compared to what I had learned in South Korea. I was always encouraged to think by myself about why particular formulae were regarded as true in mathematics even though I could not find the answer alone. Whenever I faced the barrier, I could read my textbook, which provided a detailed explication about how to solve the problems or how to prove the particular formulae that I was learning at that time. In fact, without the teacher's explanation, the students could understand what they were learning by reading their books. Even when I missed my teachers' explanations, I could catch up with them by reading my books. Thus, Bella's poor math materials surprised me. Also, I was shocked because she did not receive or rent a math textbook from her teachers at all.

The same thing happened when I examined her social studies materials. In a set of social studies materials, in which Bella was required to fill out the order of the historical events related to World War II, no explanation of the war had been included. Regardless of how the teachers were meant to teach that content, those materials contained only trivial facts that Bella had to memorize. Thus, to Bella, studying is likely to be regarded as the memorization of a series of facts and formulae, and that is all. As the previous section shows, Bella defines studying as the act of memorizing content. Compared to other participants, this type of learning is far from a meaningful construction of knowledge. So, it can be understood why Bella loses interest in studying and avoids studying if she can. For her, studying is meaningless labor. Her grades have, therefore, been declining.

Bella's mother does not provide Bella alternative methods of study. Bella's mother only pushes Bella to study more and does not explain the content of the materials with which Bella is struggling. In order to prevent Bella from becoming distracted, she often checks whether Bella has studied and memorized the content that she learned in her school. In fact, I had a chance to experience how Bella's mother tutored Kim when I visited Bella's house. She was tutoring Kim in social studies in the kitchen. She let Kim read the materials about Franklin D. Roosevelt and the historical events during his presidency several times, and then let her memorize the events. It is hard for me to imagine that Bella's mother used additional methods to tutor Bella. I do not think that Bella enjoys memorizing content. During an interview with me, she said,

> I think achievement's how you can, . . . how can you make your goal, doing your work
> every single day, studying what you need to study, even though you don't want to. Just
> study, study, study. I'm like, [doing] ten or fifteen minutes of study or five minutes,
> something like that; then you can own the play time, but, and, and just you can . . . study

largely for you and pick up the books you read because books help you with your

vocabulary, your spelling, and helps you be smarter. So, you can do that, too, if you can

accomplish all and just listen to your teacher like what I said. (B. Williams, personal

communication, October 5, 2013)

In the interview quote, Bella regards studying as what a person has to do even if he or she

does not want to do it. She said, "Just study, study, study . . . , then you can own the play time"

(B. Williams, personal communication, October 5, 2013). If studying were fun to her, she would

not have to describe studying in that manner. In her definition studying is regarded as work; thus,

she can anticipate having a time to play after working hard. For her, studying does not attract her

interest but requires her to be patient and continue her efforts. Her mother seems to expect her to

make the effort to study, but Bella is not as patient with her studying as her mother wants.

In addition, a health problem has prevented Bella from focusing on her studies. She has

suffered from diabetes since she was four years old. Mostly, she can control the amount of

glucose by injecting herself with insulin every day. However, she sometimes feels dizzy and

tired. When she feels such discomfort, she goes to the school nurse. Whenever she has missed

her classes, her teachers have given her study guides and reading materials, and if she has missed

the tests, they have given her make-up test questions. Because she does not have a tutor to help

her study the teachers' guides or the handouts, she has had to study them all by herself.

In my opinion, Bella had struggled with understanding the teachers' study guides given to

her, to the point that she was about to fail most of her subjects. As aforementioned, Bella's

content material does not include detailed explication. So, I believe that Bella needs a tutor.

However, Bella's mother cannot hire Bella a tutor. She said, "You've got to pay your tutor.

Simple as that. And I know that I don't have. I don't have money to do that" (Ms. Williams,

personal communication, January 14, 2014). But she wants a tutor for her daughters. She said to me, "But I'd like to have a tutor, I'd like to for both [to] have a tutor. But I'm not fortunate enough to pay a tutor (Ms. Williams, personal communication, January 14, 2014).

Because of economic difficulties, it is hard for Bella's mother to hire Bella (and Kim) a tutor. Bella's family situation differs from Julia's. Julia's mother who works and has an employed husband has hired tutors to help Julia for several years, but Bella's mother who works but does not have a husband has not been able to hire a tutor as Julia's mother has. The differing sources of incomes of the two families accounts in part for the ability or inability to hire a tutor.

As a single parent, Bella's mother has to care for Bella's younger sister as well as for Bella. Thus, while tutoring Bella's sister, she would just check whether Bella had studied or not by yelling at her. Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, Bella feels it is hard to focus on studying by herself. Bella's mother has her own theory about why Bella has neglected her studies:

> I think that Bella, right now, is not mature enough like[as] I wished her[she] would be. So . . . when I tell her how important schooling is to me, I feel like it's not a really big deal with her right now. So I don't think she takes my advice and my concerns so very seriously. (Ms. Williams, personal communication, January 17, 2014)

However, Bella does know the importance of gaining an education. In my first interview with her, she said, "School is, (in there) we can do education for a better life."

In fact, I tutored Bella in math during and after interviewing her. When I was working with her, I found she really focused on my explanation. Also, she enjoys solving math problems by herself. After finishing the homework, she asked me to give her some math questions similar to the homework questions. I did, and she practiced the problems, one after another. She really

enjoyed solving the math questions, which she could not have solved without being tutored. If someone were near her to explain what she had learned in her school, her grades would more likely improve rather than remain the same or drop.

The economic difficulty of Bella's family may affect not just her current grades but also the decision of her placement in the academic track. Unlike Julia, who has studied and been tutored to prepare herself to become qualified to take the advanced classes, Bella has not prepared for that placement. It is obvious that she will be continuously placed in the regular classes if her school grades stay below the 70s.

In addition, Bella's own decision-making about her future is influenced by the economic difficulties of her family. She is the only student in my sample, who has considered an early termination of college if she cannot pay for the tuition and her bills. Also, she is the only student to ask me about mortgages. Though she is the youngest among the four participants in this study, she is the only one who regards the cost of education as money. Except for her, all the participants define the cost of education as a sacrifice of their fun and their relationships with their peers. Bella seems to be the most realistic among the participants, or sensitive to economic problems in the real world.

Bella's decision to become a veterinarian is also related to her desire to earn money and become independent, as it has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. She does not yet know how to obtain her dream job, which is to become a veterinarian. She also does not know yet what level of school she has to attend in order to be trained as a veterinarian. She does not know how many years are required for her to become trained as a veterinarian. Her lack of knowledge is prominent in comparison to the knowledge that the rest of the students have. She may have limited knowledge about future professions because she is the youngest participant in this

research and because her mother does not know about the process of becoming a veterinarian, either. Thus, her mother appreciated that I had brought Bella a handout about the procedure to become a veterinarian. I do not know whether the requirements for becoming a veterinarian are common knowledge. However, in my opinion, it is inconsistent that a student who knows about mortgages does not know the requirements for becoming a veterinarian.

Maybe, without being placed in the advanced, honors, or AP classes, Bella will go to college. She likes track sports and basketball, and she is plays basketball in a basketball club. In that club, her mother serves as a non-paid assistant coach. She may become a varsity player and then go to college as a student athlete. Actually, she wants to become a college basketball player. She hopes to play basketball in a flagship state university near her apartment. Bella's mother may help her become a student athlete at the college level. Actually, Bella's mother has an athletic background.

However, Bella's mother does not want her daughter to live like her. In fact, she entered university but quit when she was a sophomore. So, she desperately hopes that Bella will be able to graduate from college and that her college degree will enable her to have a lucrative job. She said, "To me, the benefit of education is to be aware [that] they're able to get a good job and get out of here [and] in[to] the real world. They can earn pretty, you know, pretty good some money or whatever. That's my plan on that there" (Ms. Williams, personal communication, January 17, 2014). This quote shows that Bella's mother defines a college degree as the means to develop a better life. For that reason she regrets that she terminated college even though people around her advised her not to leave school. When I asked her whether she felt adjusting to college had been difficult, she answered:

It [college] wasn't hard to adjust [to]. You know. You're away from home, and you aren't with your parents. It's not hard to adjust. You just have things to work on. You have to go to class, and you don't. You don't have mom and dad to tell you are supposed to get up and sign in school. You don't have them. You have to get up all on your own and go yourself. For instance, schooling work and everything, you know, I have forgot books or whatever that I was supposed to do. It's just you met whole around different people, and I just cut off a little boy, you know what I mean. I just like, I just like, I just don't wanna be here anymore. So, I won't be here this, hurry. That's why I said if I could go back and change all of them, I would, and I would do just wrong, and, of course, if I would, I would've stayed in school, it is, probably I get a good job. (Ms. Williams, personal communication, January 17, 2014)

She does not want Bella to make the same mistake that she did. She wants Bella to complete her college education and have a better job, which means a high-paying job. She said:

Our life is for a reason, and I can say if I could go back, I would. But I can't. So that's why I'm so hard on Bella and Kim about schooling. That's a big thing with me of their schooling, and that's I say, I, sometimes, I, kind of, get little hard on myself because I wish that they should be better [off] financially. (Ms. Williams, personal communication, January 17, 2014)

In summary, Bella's mother does not want Bella to follow her path. Instead, she wants Bella to be able to live better than her. In order to help Bella have a life different from hers, she has pushed Bella to study. Her low income has continuously been an issue to her to educate her children well. I think Bella's mother has done the best that she can to educate her daughters within the restrictions of her income. She asked me, "I can really give them the proper help and

stuff that they mean, but what I can do with a little bit of an extra, a little bit [of] income; what can you do?"

Despite her desperate question, she is actually and obviously doing the best for her daughters. First, she has stayed at home with her daughter as much as possible and tells her daughter to study hard by emphasizing the importance of education as a factor that can change her life. Also, she has often communicated with Bella's teachers to know about her daughter's educational progress, which she uses as a reference point to decide what her daughter needs to do. Additionally, she has controlled Bella's peers. She has controlled Bella's relationships with her peers as well as the amount of time she uses the Internet. However, Bella's family's economic difficulties have restricted her choices significantly.

Also, Bella has been influenced by racism though she may not perceive it. In an unrecorded conversation with me, she said that her friends are White and that she does not concern herself with racism. However, when I asked her mother about whether Bella had experienced racism at school, Bella's mother answered as follows:

Well, we rarely had, rarely had this experience. That, um, maybe one time when she was like, um, in the 2nd or 3rd grade. And she suddenly looked like, "They don't, they don't like Black people." And they talked to Bella because they can't, she can't play with them. So what's Bella is came home, she didn't say they also should came home and called me about it. And I needed to know the little girl who said it, and I say this type of thing was very seriously. So as soon as I went to the school, and I talked to the little girl, and I, you know, I told, I said, "it's not mercy to say things like and what if my child said to you, you would hurt your feeling so whatever." And I also looked up to the parent because her mama said to the teacher and the principal. And I told to myself, "That's not right. That's

y'all, did not correct the issue," and he said the girl, said what she didn't say, be either. "That's not right." But I said Bella was said that Bella had been in school, y'all suspended her putting in school was too, I said, "be fair with it." So that's all I have experienced that there. So, yeah. That school there probably about twelve Black kids. The school's over there. (Ms. Williams, personal communication, January 17, 2014)

It is unclear what was going on between Bella and her peers who would not play with her. However, at least it is clear that it was a situation in which Bella had experienced discomfort with her peers because of her race. Also, that Bella had not gone home and instead called her mother does not clearly express why Bella had chosen not to come home: whether someone had held her at school or whether she had decided not to come home. Bella's mother had wanted to clarify this incident, but for some reason, her request was not accepted by the people involved in the incident at school. She said that the issue may be related to race or racism. However, currently, she does not give it much concern.

Bella's mother actively intervenes in Bella's peer relationships and her relationships with her teachers. She has allowed Bella to meet the peers whom she knows; and she has frequently communicated with Bella's teachers by email. At least, she went to college, even though she did not graduate. She thinks that earning high school grades is critical for being able to attend college. Based on that idea, she has encouraged Bella to study, but she does not provide her help, such as tutoring her or hiring tutors to teach her. At least she knows that grades are used as an important means to evaluate students' academic abilities and lets Bella follow the practices of her school in order to succeed in school.

While Bella was participating in this study, her grades and test scores were dropping. Her mother could not stop the decline of Bella's grades; however, Bella may find a better way to

study as well as a way to become more motivated. She may develop her own study strategies by herself, successfully apply high standards of achievement, attend college, and finally find a way to escape from the poverty that restricts her from reaching her potential at this time.

Discussion

Critical race theorists argue that racism ought to be considered when studying the lives of people of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Zamudio et al., 2011). In the four participants' narratives, the influence of race on their narratives also can be found though all the students mention that they are not influenced by racism. Jeremy is judged on the basis of the negative prejudices about Black boys by people in his communities and becomes regarded as an exceptional student. Tiffany and Julia tend to be isolated in the advanced classes because they are the only Black girls in their advanced classes. Thus, they have to continuously prove their knowledge and abilities in them while the White students do not have the burden to prove theirs. Bella does not remember, but her mother said that racism may have influenced Bella when she was in elementary school. The four participants are also influenced by race.

However, rather than race alone, the volume and the combinations of economic, social, and cultural wealth or capital seem to influence their academic achievement and their decision-makings regarding academic achievement. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, I separate wealth and capital because in schools, as the four participants' narratives show, only some wealth can be used to increase students' scores on tests. The idea that students' wealth is selectively regarded as valuable is close to the original idea of Bourdieu, who argues that only some people's habitus can be converted into cultural capital. Habitus can be summarized as the practices and the tastes of particular groups of people, which the members of that group internalize. Only the habitus that can be used to engender money can be called cultural capital. Thus, the habitus of White and

middle-class people is more likely to be regarded as habitus than that of people of color and of working class peoople.

Yosso (2005) criticizes the idea about the relationship between habitus and capital because it may justify the prejudice that the culture of people of color is not as valuable as Euro-American culture. Thus, Yosso (2005) criticizes cultural capital as "an accumulation of specific forms of knowledge, skills and abilities that are valued by privileged groups in society" (p. 76). Instead of using cultural capital, Yosso (2005) suggests using a concept of cultural capital, which refers to all the expressed form of culture constructed by any cultural group. Cultural capital has six types of capitals, which are "aspirational capital," "linguistic capital," "familial capital," "social capital," "navigational capital," and "resistant capital" (Yosso, 2005, pp. 78-80). Aspiration capital is a willingness of students to realize their dreams under any circumstances and can be defined as resiliency. Linguistic capital is a set of communication skills and knowledge. Familial capital is a family's heritage transmitted from generation to generation. Social capital is a network consisting of people and their community resources. Resistant capital means the development of his or her knowledge and skills to challenge unequal situations, such as racism in schools.

However, I do not agree with Yosso. As the narrative of Bella shows, her family's limited capital actually cannot be used as capital. For example, her mother's knowledge about basketball cannot be converted into Bella's academic achievement if Bella does not decide to become a varsity player in her school and go to college as a student athlete. Considering the amount of economic capital in Bella's family, apparently, her family has no capitals to support Bella. Because her family is not in the middle or the upper class, Bella has no recourse but to make a greater effort than everyone else in her school in order to succeed in school.

Yet, I partially agree with Yosso's (2005) assumption that all groups of people have valuable assets that can be used for success. Even though Bella's family lacks economic capital, her mother frequently contacts the teachers by email and telephone, and then pushes Bella to complete and submit her homework. In that case, her mother's communication skills with the teachers can be a valuable habitus, or a cultural capital.

Thus, I compare the cultural capital and the cultural wealth, which is the asset possessed by the participants. First of all, I will demonstrate the participants' cultural wealth, which can be divided into the five types of cultural wealth suggested by Yosso (2005) and placed along with economic capital in Table 8. Cultural wealth can consist of six types of wealth: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant wealth. I will use the term wealth instead of the term capital except for economic capital because the wealth is either converted into capital or not.

Table 8

The Four Participants' Wealth

	Jeremy	Tiffany	Julia	Bella
Cultural Wealth				
Aspirational wealth	- Desire to enter colleges ;located in out of Georgia; - Desire to stay in AP and Honors Courses; - Desire to become a video journalist; - Desire to travel in the world. - Desire to *do good* in everything	- Resiliency to cope with bullies - Desire to enter New York University and medical schools; - Desire to stay in advanced classes and be placed in advanced Math class; - Desire to become a neurologist.	- Desire to stay in advanced classes; - Desire to be placed in advanced Math classes; - Desire to become a lawyer; - Desires to go to college and major in Black history; - Desire to go to Harvard Law School.	- Desire to become a veterinarian; - Desire to become a college basketball player; - Desire to adapt orphans and rescue abused animals by becoming a veterinarian; Desire to become smart and economically independent.
Linguistic wealth	- Learning reading at young age in family.	- Learning reading in family at young age; - Learning in private schools at young age.	- Literacy learned at young age in family; - Literacy learned at young age in private	- Literacy learned at young age in family.

			schools.	
Familial wealth	- Knowledge about college application; - Knowledge about school system - Rigor rules at home; Mother's schools; - Father's knowledge about people in troubles and those of the methods to avoid the troubles;	- Knowledge about college application; - Father's content knowledge of middle-school math; - Mother's knowledge about hospital system; - Philosophy of making peer-relationship;	- Knowledge about college application; - Content knowledge about Black history; - Philosophy of peer relationship; - Relatives' knowledge and experiences of entering and studying in colleges	- Knowledge and skills about basketball; - Mother's experiences of colleges.
Social wealth	- Mother's network in schools; - Father's network in grocery stores; - Directors, Parents and students in The YSC.	- Mother's networks in hospital; - Tiffany's role model - Directors, Parents and students in the YSC; - Julia, the best friend	- Mother's network in an research institution; - Relatives with Bachelor's degree and beyond; - Parents and students in the YSC; - Math tutor; - Tiffany, the best friend,	- Basketball clubs; - Directors, Parents and students in the YSC;
Navigational wealth	- Knowledge to negotiate with teachers, learned from his mother; - Mothers' and fathers' contact to teachers; - Knowing about rules of schools.	- Mothers' connections to teachers;	- Mothers contact to teachers	- Mothers contact to teachers
Resistant wealth	- Knowledge about handling peers' accusations.	- Knowledge about racism in advance classes; - knowledge about handling the accusations from peers	- Knowledge about Black history and culture; - Critical consciousness of White-centered culture in schools;	- Not much concern about racism; - Knowledge of how to protect families from stepfather's threats.
Economic wealth	- Free or reduced lunch program participation is not eligible; - Parents can buy books for homework; - Parents can afford university tuitions without scholarship; - living a recently bought house	- Free or reduced lunch program participation is not eligible; - living a town house	- Free or reduced lunch program participation is not eligible; - Parents can buy books for her exploration of Black history; - Money for hiring a private tutor; - living a owned house	- Free or reduced lunch program participation is eligible; - Living an apartment

According to Table 8, all the participants seem to have diverse and affluent cultural and social wealth regardless of the amount of their economic wealth. As for economic wealth, Jeremy's and Julia's families are more economic wealth than Tiffany and Bella. Also, by money, Jeremy can have opportunities to participate in career development camps to understand broader possibilities of jobs that he can take in future. Julia can learn mathematics from tutors, which is the least competitive subject of her.

Compared to Jeremy and Julia, Tiffany and Bella do not have enough economic capital. However, they also have compensated for the lack of economic capital with cultural capitals. Tiffany has a familial capital, which is his father's knowledge and skills in mathematics, with which she can complete homework and prepare for math tests in classrooms. Also, she has an aspirational capital that she overcomes bullies by being placed in advanced classes. That aspirational capital drives from her experiences of being bullied in her elementary school and escaping bullies by being placed in advanced classes of her middle school. She has a desire to go to college and then become a neurologist. Bella has a dream to become a veterinarian and rescue abused children and animals. This desire also comes from Bella's experience to be beaten by her step-father when she was a kinder and resisted him to protect her and her family's possessions from him.

Bella's familial capital is her mother's skills to communicate with teachers. With it, Bella's mother check Bella's progress and urges her to compensate for the tests and homework so rigorously that she has to make up to earn high scores in tests and grades. However, the in middle school, Bella's learning content is harder and it is hard for Bella to study by herself. Unlike Tiffany's father, Bella's mother cannot tutor her. Instead, Bella mother can teach her basketball and actually her assistant coach in a club Bella belongs to. So, if Bella can enter universities or college as a basketball student player, the knowledge of mother can become changed into a helpful means for Bella to become successfully a university student.

Unfortunately, only some of their wealth is obviously useful to earn high scores in schools. Table 9 and Table 10 show the wealth, which can be used to increase the participants' test scores. Table 9 demonstrates the comparison of the wealth and the capital possessed by

Jeremy and Tiffany, respectively. Table 10 demonstrates Julia's and Bella's wealth and capitals.

First, here is Table 9.

Table 9

Jeremy's and Tiffany's Wealth and Capitals

	Jeremy		Tiffany	
	Wealth	**Capital**	**Wealth**	**Capital**
Economic	- Free or reduced lunch program participation is not eligible; - Parents can buy books for homework; - Parents can afford university tuitions without scholarship; - living a recently bought house	- Parents can buy books to prepare homework and tests in classrooms.	- Free or reduced lunch program participation is not eligible; - living a town house	
Social	- Mother's network in schools; - Father's network in grocery stores; - Directors, Parents and students in The YSC.	- Mother's network in schools; - The YSC Directors and the parents and students in the program	- Mother's networks in hospital; - Tiffany's role model - Directors, Parents and students in the YSC; - Julia, the best friend	-- Mother's social networks in hospital; - The YSC Directors and the parents and students in the program;
Cultural *Aspirational*	- Desire to enter colleges ;located in out of Georgia; - Desire to stay in AP and Honors Courses; - Desire to become a video journalist; - Desire to travel in the world. - Desire to *do good* in everything	Desires to stay in AP and Honors courses	- Coping with bullies by studying hard to be placed in advanced classes; - Desire to enter New York University and medical schools; - Desire to stay in advanced classes and be placed in advanced Math class; - Desire to become a neurologist.	- Going to NYU and become a neurologist; - Becoming placed in advanced Math classes; - Staying in advanced classes
Linguistic	- Learning reading at young age in family.	- Learning reading at young age in family.	- Learning reading in family at young age; - Learning in private schools at young age.	- Learning reading in family and private schools at young age
Familial	- Knowledge about college application; - Knowledge about school system - Rigor rules at home; Mother's schools; - Father's knowledge about people in troubles and those of the methods to avoid the troubles;	- Knowledge about college application; - Knowledge about school system - Rigor rules at home; Mother's schools; - Father's knowledge about people in troubles and those of the methods to avoid the troubles;	- Knowledge about college application; - Father's content knowledge of middle-school math; - Mother's knowledge about hospital system; - Philosophy of making peer-relationship;	- Knowledge about college application; - Father's content knowledge of middle-school math; - Mother's knowledge about hospital system; - Philosophy of

				making peer-relationship;
Navigational	- Knowledge to negotiate with teachers, learned from his mother; - Mothers' and fathers' contact to teachers; - Knowing about rules of schools.	- Knowledge to negotiate with teachers, learned from his mother; - Mothers' and fathers' contact to teachers; - Knowing about rules of schools.	- Mothers' connections to teachers;	- Mothers' connections to teachers;
Resistant	- Knowledge about handling peers' accusations.		- Knowledge about racism in advance classes; - knowledge about handling the accusations from peers	

According to Table 9, both Jeremy and Jeremy's mother can use navigational wealth to communicate with teachers and appeal them to be placed in AP and honors classes. In other words, Jeremy's mother, who is a high school teacher, has knowledge about the systems in schools and then, knows how to request teachers what he needs. His mother's knowledge is inherited to Jeremy and then, he uses it when he requests his teacher to place him in AP Geography. In there, he studies hard to survive and finally succeed increasing his scores enough to stay in AP classes. However, if he does not have money to buy books necessary for completing homework and preparing for homework, he may not earn high scores from teachers and then, may fail in improving his grade in the AP class. He has economic and navigational wealth and then, jointly converts them into cultural capitals which are helpful for him to stay in AP courses.

Compared to Jeremy, Tiffany is in lack of economic capital. However, Tiffany can use her father as a tutor to help her. Her father's knowledge about math is her familial wealth, which can be converted into a cultural capital. The cultural capital can be used to increase her scores on math and then, finally, the values of her future. In other words, her familial capital can be converted into cultural capital useful for her to earn high scores.

Also, she has a strong aspirational capital. She has experienced bullies when she was an elementary school student. She suffered from bullies at that time; however, she used the experiences as motivations for her to succeed in middle schools. In order not to be bullied, she found that she had to be placed in advanced classes, focusing on studies, and maintained herself away from peers who may distract and/or bully her. Her desired to be placed in advanced classes, therefore, drove her to a hard study leading her to successful placements in advanced classes.

Of course, her final dream is to become a neurologist. This dream about the future profession also drives her to make effort to succeed in schools. She constructs the future dream after her meeting of a neurologist, introduced by her mother. Her mother's social wealth provides her a role model motivating her to study hard. Though she may be in lack of cultural capital, she has familial wealth and mother's social wealth, which can be finally converted into capitals helping her earn high scores on tests. In sum, Tiffany can make up her lack of economic capital. However, unlike Tiffany, Bella does not compensate for the lack of economic capital by the wealth that she possesses. In order to explain Bella's wealth and capital, I demonstrate Julia's and Bella's wealth and capital in Table 10.

Table 10

Julia's and Bella's Wealth and Capitals

	Julia		Bella	
	Wealth	Capital	Wealth	Capital
Economic	- Free or reduced lunch program participation is not eligible; - Parents can buy books for her exploration of Black history; - Money for hiring a private tutor; - living a owned house	- Money for hiring a private tutor; - A car; - A house with middle-income neighborhood	- Free or reduced lunch program participation is eligible; - A car; - Mother's job: casher in a high school; - Living an apartment	

Social	- Mother's network in an research institution; - Relatives with Bachelor's degree and beyond; - Parents and students in the YSC; - Math tutor; - Tiffany, the best friend,	- Mother's social network in a research institution; - Relatives with Bachelor's degree and beyond; - The YSC Directors and the parents and students in the program; - Math tutors;	- Basketball clubs; - Directors, Parents and students in the YSC;	-The YSC Directors and the parents and students in the program.
Cultural Wealth				
Aspirational	- Desire to stay in advanced classes; - Desire to be placed in advanced Math classes; - Desire to become a lawyer; - Desires to go to college and major in Black history; - Desire to go to Harvard Law School.	- Going to the Law School of Harvard University and become a lawyer; - Becoming placed in advanced Math classes; - Staying in advanced classes; - Desire to major in Black history in an undergraduate school.	- Desire to become a veterinarian; - Desire to become a college basketball player; - Desire to adapt orphans and rescue abused animals by becoming a veterinarian.	
Linguistic	- Literacy learned at young age in family; - Literacy learned at young age in private schools.	- Learning reading in family and private schools at young age	- Literacy learned at young age in family.	- Literacy learned at young age in family.
Familial	- Knowledge about college application; - Content knowledge about Black history; - Philosophy of peer relationship; - Relatives' knowledge and experiences of entering and studying in colleges	- Knowledge about college application; - Content knowledge about Black history; - Philosophy of peer relationship; - Relatives' knowledge and experiences of entering and studying in colleges	- Knowledge and skills about basketball; - Mother's experiences of colleges.	- Mother's experiences of colleges.
Navigational	- Mothers contact to teachers	- Mothers contact to teachers	- Mothers contact to teachers	- Mothers contact to teachers
Resistant	- Knowledge about Black history and culture; - Critical consciousness of White-centered culture in schools;	- Knowing that Black students are underrepresented in advanced classes; - Knowing that schools do not	- Not much concern about racism; - Knowledge of how to protect families from stepfather's threats.	

In Table 10, among Bella's wealth, the skill and knowledge about basketball seems to be helpful for Bella if she can go to college as a student athlete. Also, she has a strong desire to become a veterinarian and rescue young children and animals.

However, her desire does not seem to help her achieve high in schools. In her school, her family knowledge and skills, which are related to basketball, does not seem to be helpful for her to earn high scores on tests, yet. Thus, those knowledge and skill are not converted into the

capitals for her to earn high scores enough to be placed in advanced classes. As capitals, Bella has her mother's experiences of college and literacy education that she received from her mother before she went to elementary schools. However, apparently, the literacy does not seem to be helpful any more to her who is already a middle school student. Also, her mother cannot tutor Bella unlike Tiffany's father. Bella needs to be tutored to catch up with the learning pace in classrooms; however, she does not have anyone in her family to ask to help her. In sum, Bella has aspirational wealth which is not converted into a capital because other types of wealth is not converted into capitals in schools, Thus, the volume of capitals Bella can use for her achievement is too small to help for her to succeed in her school.

Julia also has cultural wealth, such as mother's knowledge about going to college and the culture of her families encouraging students to go to college. Also, Julia's mother educated her literacy before Julia entered schools. Julia's mother also knows that Julia needs to be placed in gifted programs and advanced courses for success in school. Though Julia was not placed in gifted programs and advanced courses, finally, she succeeded by her effort. However, besides her effort, her economic capital was combined into her cultural wealth and then was used to convert the cultural wealth into cultural capital. For example, unlike Bella, Julia can be helped by tutors who are hired by her mother. Her mother has money to hire tutors and then, Julia can get helped to study math, which is her weakest subject. She expects to be placed in advanced math classes next semester. In sum, Julia has economic capital that enables her to earn high scores continuously. Bella also has cultural capital and wealth, but they cannot compensate for the lack of economic and other types of cultural capitals.

As I mentioned earlier, all the participants endeavor to succeed in school. With combination of their cultural, economic, and social wealth, they pursue succeeding in schools.

However, the combination is not enough to support students' academic achievement as Bella's combination shows up despite Bella and her mother's efforts toward Bella's academic success.

If the YSC can provide tutoring to students, Bella can compensate for her economic capital; and surely the YSC have supported students. They provide tutoring service, Leadership education, character education, and even the information such as the requirement of college. Thus, Bella should have known what she needs in order to become a veterinarian. However, because of the lack of staff members who actually tutor students, (and the lack of fund to hire good tutors), the YSC also has the limitations to help students. For example, there is only one math tutor regularly helps students. Thus, that tutor has to help 10 and greater numbers of students in different school grades. When the tutor is tutoring a particular group of students, other students wait for tutoring have not other ways but to wait for their turn. Sometimes a couple of the program staff members help students but they are also busy with helping students who struggle with subjects, such as American Language and Literacy, understand the content of those subjects. Also, usually in the math tutoring room, high school students stay and ask for tutoring. Thus, a middle school student like Bella is relatively isolated from that tutoring service.

However, all the problems cannot be attributed to the program. Actually, lower scores on tests prevent students from being placed in the advanced, honors, and AP classes, and also make students miss the opportunities to receive a high quality of education. Unfortunately, the YSC does not correct all the problems even though it is an excellent program to support students regarding the enhancement of their academic and social excellence. The YSC is not an institution that can give students scores on tests and give grades to them. As long as the goal of program participants' schools is to help students earn high scores on tests, the YSC, a program established to assist students to achieve in schools, has to follow the goals of achievement set by schools. In

fact, the culture of the YSC is also following the goal set by schools. For example, program participants are required to submit their progress reports, which are published by school in the mid and the end of a semester. Based on the reports, high achieving students earning A or B are praised and underachieving students earning C or blow C are asked of why their scores and grades are too low in front of all the students in the morning conference of the program which are held before the program of the day started. The climate of the program is oriented to the increase of students' alphabetic and numeric grades. However, because of the lack of the staff members, students like Bella barley receive helps that she really need for her achievement.

To summarize, without the weak support from their local communities, all the African American students and their parents combine cultural wealth, social wealth, and economic wealth and then try to succeed academically in school. However, some students do not compensate for their lack of economic capital and then become left behind. The reason can be found in the course tracking system. Whether or not a student is placed in an academic track plays a significant role in the student's educational attainment. I will focus on the tracking system when discussing the findings from the four participants' narratives in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, based on the discussion of the participants' wealth in Chapter 5, I will

demonstrate a flowchart, of which the course tracking system is a core. Using the theoretical

frame introduced in Chapter 2, I will discuss what I found through this study.

Exploring Doxa in School

Doxa is a set of unspoken perspectives and cultural practices such as traditions

(Bourdieu, 1977). Only after heterodoxy appears can doxa be recognized. Heterodoxy is a set of

perspectives and/or behaviors that people recognize as a deviation from what they are familiar

with. Some people who are strongly opposed to heterodoxy may introduce the orthodoxy as a

representation of correct perspectives and behaviors to criticize and even remove the heterodoxy.

While criticizing or accepting heterodoxy and reacting to revealed doxa, people may organize

their experiences related to the doxa, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy.

In this chapter, based on the narratives of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, the doxa will be

explored. After that, the masternarrative and counternarrative appearing in the participants'

narratives, which develop in the doxa, will be demonstrated.

Doxa I: The Placement in High-Academic Track is a Symbolic Capital

Doxa can be identified in the participants' narratives. Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia, who are

placed in AP, honors, or advanced classes, as well as their mothers, believe that tracking is an

efficient way to educate students according to their academic knowledge and abilities. Because

of the system, they think that students can learn the content suitable for their academic

knowledge and ability. Parents, such as Jeremy's mother, believe that the tracking system can provide equal opportunities to receive high-quality education for all students regardless of their background. Even Bella's mother wishes that Bella would be placed in gifted programs. Bella, a student who had not yet been placed in advanced classes, also lied that she had been in gifted programs of her elementary school when she was not. Obviously she wished that she was placed in advanced classes or gifted programs even though she did not know what students placed in there were doing.

Different from the participants' and their parents' beliefs, however, the placement in tracks is not always fairly determined. At the elementary school level, in which there is neither advanced, honors, nor AP courses, the placement of students in a gifted program is a tracking. The method to find gifted students is in a state document entitled SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38. According to that document, a gifted student is defined as follows:

A student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities. (Department of Education of Georgia State Government, 2015)

In order to find a gifted student, a psychometric-based test is conducted. The test is conducted to evaluate students' intellectual and creative abilities, motivations, and achievement in academic domains. Also, the gifted students are required to be specially educated in order to learn at parallel levels of their abilities. To be concrete, students must be within the 95% percentile to be placed in gifted programs in psychometric test, and they must meet or exceed the same standard of performance test in schools. Thus, students must reach or pass the threshold of

two different tests. Both Tiffany and Julia took the psychometric tests through the teachers'

recommendations while in elementary school. However, the two students did not reach the

standard. Thus, they could not be placed in their elementary school gifted programs. Not until

does they become seventh and eighth graders, respectively, Tiffany and Julia could not be placed

in high-academic track.

Considering the purpose to assess students for the placement in gifted programs, the

policy to use psychometric and performance tests for placing students in a gifted track may not

be a fair method to evaluate students' academic knowledge and abilities. According to Steele

(1997), who suggests a stereotype threat concept, people regarded as underperformers in the

group based on prejudices tend to underperform in the test when they are aware that their

abilities are being tested, such as women during their math tests (Steele, 1997). The stereotype

threat is defined as the examinees' underperformance on tests under the conditions that they are

aware that their abilities are evaluated by the tests. Concerning African American students'

stereotype threat, Nadler & Clark (2011) find that the performance of African American students

is improved when the effect of the stereotype threat is nullified by meta-analysis on studies. The

psychometric tests that young students take to judge whether they can be placed in gifted

programs may underrate the actual abilities of African American students. Considering the

stereotype threat, the psychometric test may not be a fair instrument for African American

students.

Besides being placed in gifted programs in elementary schools, the placement in

advanced, honors, or AP classes in middle and high schools is also another option for an

academic track. Students who are already in gifted programs can take those classes. Students

who are not in the class can be placed based on their school grades and test scores, such as
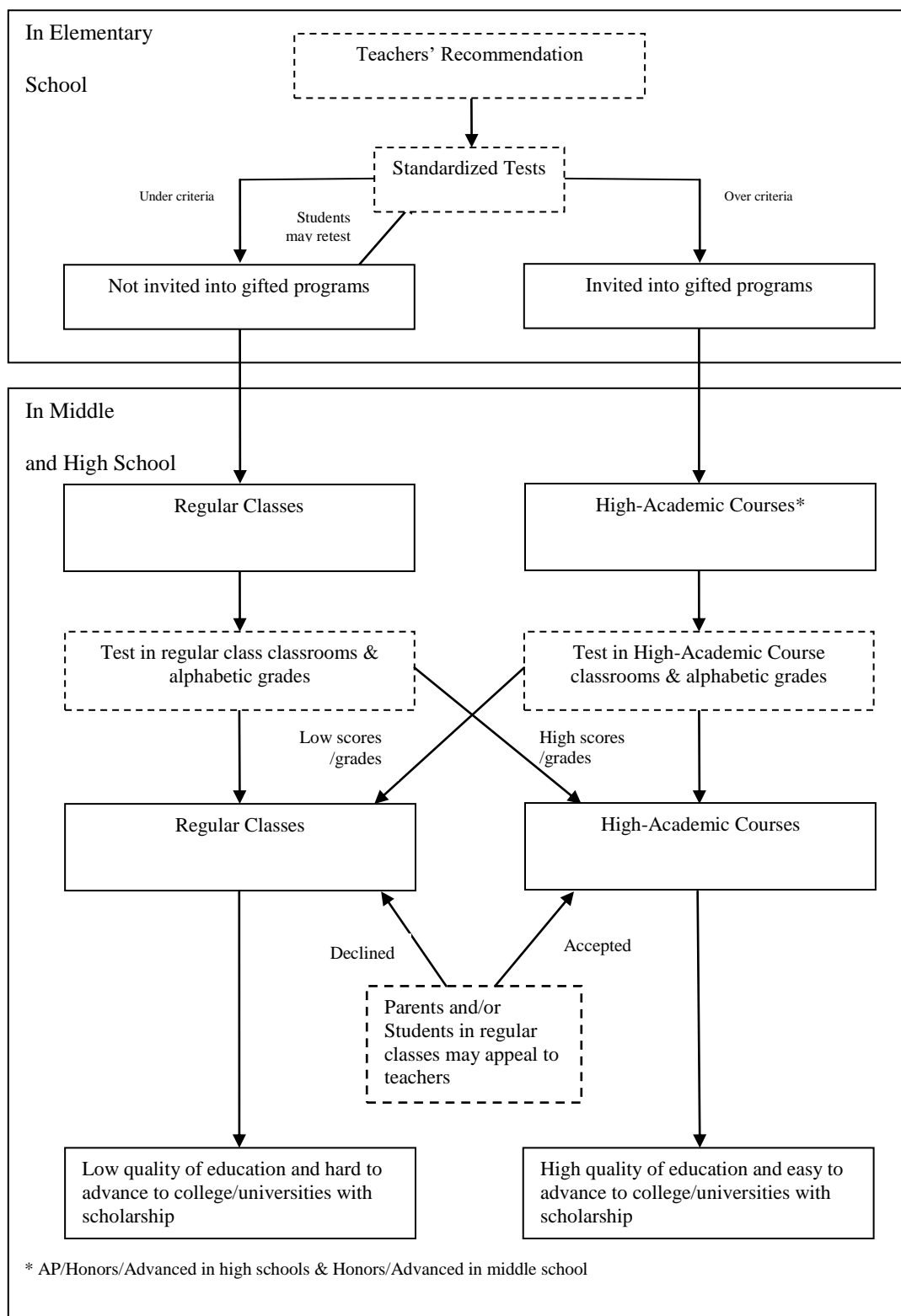
CRCT. Teachers can recommend some students to be placed in advanced, honors, and AP classes considering their alphabetic grades and test scores. In some cases, students who do not meet the threshold may also be placed in these classes through students' or parents' requests as well as teachers' recommendations. However, according to Jeremy's mother, many African American students do not know that their appeals may enable them to be placed in the high-academic track classes. Anyway, Jeremy was placed in AP classes through his efforts and request, and Tiffany and Julia were placed in advanced classes through their efforts.

The placement in AP, honors, and advanced classes provides many benefits to students, and, among them, it enables students to apply to scholarship programs and academic courses. First, the students in academic courses can receive a better education than students in regular courses; second, their grades are weighted; third, they are recognized by teachers and students and they can focus without being distracted by peers in the regular classes; fourth, their credits can be transferred into schools at upper levels; and fifth, students can apply to competitive universities and scholarship programs that require applicants to submit credits of rigor classes. As mentioned in Chapter 4, flagship universities recommend that students take rigor courses, which are mostly AP, honors, and advanced classes. Scholarship programs also require applicants to submit the numbers of credits taken from rigor courses. Rigor courses are usually advanced, honors, and AP courses. Thus, students who are placed in them can apply to famous state universities and scholarship programs.

Based on the discussions in this section, a path from the placement in gifted education to college entrance can be drawn, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

A Flowchart from Elementary Entrance to College or University Entrance

In Elementary School

Teachers' Recommendation

Standardized Tests

Under criteria

Students may retest

Over criteria

Not invited into gifted programs

Invited into gifted programs

In Middle and High School

Regular Classes

High-Academic Courses*

Test in regular class classrooms & alphabetic grades

Test in High-Academic Course classrooms & alphabetic grades

Low scores /grades

High scores /grades

Regular Classes

High-Academic Courses

Declined

Accepted

Parents and/or Students in regular classes may appeal to teachers

Low quality of education and hard to advance to college/universities with scholarship

High quality of education and easy to advance to college/universities with scholarship

* AP/Honors/Advanced in high schools & Honors/Advanced in middle school

According to Figure 3, those students in gifted programs can stay in the academic track, in which AP, honors, and advanced courses are included, and can follow the avenue to the famous universities by participating in scholarship programs. As opposed to those students, it is difficult for students who were once placed in regular classes to be placed in gifted programs or advanced, honors, or AP classes before they increase their test scores in classrooms. Students who are not placed in gifted programs can work hard enough to earn high test scores in order to be placed by their efforts. Also their requests and/or their parents' appeals to teachers can have a benefit toward their placement in a high-academic track until they can attend a college or university. Interestingly, students tend to stay in their track after being placed there (Oakes, 2005). Thus, Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia's track changes are unusual cases. Considering the participants' explanation of the learning in regular classes, students in regular classes may have the abilities and knowledge to understand the content taught in advanced classes. However, because they are in regular classes, they continuously miss opportunities to learn more and be challenged. If they are in these classes, it is also expected that they will lose opportunities to apply to famous state universities and participate in scholarship programs because they do not take rigor courses or less compared to students in advanced, honors, and AP courses. The students in regular classes lose the opportunity to receive the better education they once had. The problem is that students in regular classes are likely to be continuously placed in regular classes even when they do not lose interest in studies (Oakes, 2005). Yet once students are placed in non-academic tracks, it is difficult for them to change the tracks; the tracks tend to be unchanged.

Based on Figure 3 and the discussions so far, the students in the academic track are more likely to attend college and university than students in the regular track. The attainment of a college/university diploma causes a big difference in income between the holder and non-holder

of the diploma. According to the Pew Researh Center (2014), in 2013, the median of the annual income of bachelor's degree holders or more is $45,500, that of two-year college/some college degree holders is $30,000, and that of high-school diploma or equivalent degree holders is $28,000. Compared to the statistics of 30 years ago, the gap of income between bachelor's degree holders and non-degree holders becomes wide. Table 11 demonstrates the increase of the income gap.

Table 11

The Annual Median Income of College Degree Holders and Non-Holders

Years	Bachelor's degree holders or more	Two-year college or some college diploma holders	High school graduates without non-college degree
1965	$38,833	$33,655	$31,384
2013	$45,500	$30,000	$28,000
Difference between the two years	$6,667	-$3,655	-$3,384

Within the bachelor's degree holder groups, the median income increases by $6,667. Within the two-year college/some college graduate groups and within high school diploma holders, the median incomes decrease by $3,655 and $3,384, respectively.

As well as the income level, there are disparities in the unemployment rate according to educational attainment. The unemployment rate is 3.8% among the bachelor's degree or more holders, 8.1% among the two-year/some college degree holders, and 12.2% among the high school graduate or equivalent in 2013 (Pew Researh Center, 2014). All this information shows that attending college/university is one of the major factors causing the difference of income and unemployment. The participants' choice to attend college rather than to earn jobs after graduating high school, therefore, seems to be reasonable.

In sum, people who hold diplomas are less likely to be unemployed compared to those without a degree. Like French Society in 1960s, which Bourdieu & Passeron (1990) and Bourdieu (1984) explorer, the diploma of the U.S. college and university diploma can be regarded as a cultural capital. In French Society, the diploma of college and university and that of grande-école are regarded as cultural capitals and symbolic capitals, which can affect the types of jobs that the diploma holders can have.

In this study, according to Figure 3, students can earn that capital by being placed in a high-academic track and attending a university or college. In other words, the placement in advanced, honors, and AP classes becomes a symbolic capital with which students can access universities and scholarship programs as well as graduate with a diploma. In addition, as previously mentioned, by being in those classes, students can enjoy a high-quality education and avoid the distractions of their peers. Thus, the placement in these classes is a symbolic capital.

Of course, in current college campuses, the population of nontraditional students who did not attend college immediately after high school graduation or attend college without graduating high school has a tendency to increase (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). For example, in 2008, about 38% of undergraduate students were over the age of 25 according to the Center for Post Secondary and Economic Success (2011). This means that more than a third of college students attended colleges and universities after a post high- school delay. However, higher numbers of nontraditional students tend to earn lower GPAs and leave college before graduation compared to traditional students (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2012). As previously mentioned, the diploma of four-year colleges is a cultural capital. Still, students who follow the elite path of Figure 3 by being placed in a high-academic track seem to be privileged compared to those without that diploma.

In sum, the placement in advanced, honors, and AP classes is a symbolic capital within schools. By possessing it, regardless of students' abilities, the students gain recognition in school. If students do not acquire that capital, they miss out on all the benefits that students in advanced, honors, and AP classes enjoy. In this study, Bella, who is not placed in a high-academic track, is at a risk of being deprived of those opportunities.

Placement in advanced classes is located in the center of the flowchart from elementary school to university. It works as a symbolic capital in the academic arena. The problem is, as mentioned in Chapter 5, that the distribution of cultural capital may not be fair. Bella's family has a lack of economic wealth, which can be converted into capital in school. Though her mother wisely combines her cultural wealth and does her best to enhance Bella's test scores, Bella still struggles because of her family's lack of economic wealth. Considering what I mentioned earlier, Bella needs tutors. However, her mother does not have money, or economic wealth, to higher tutors for her.

So, I can tell that Bella's mother and Bella have interest in Bella's achievement. Her mother wants to They are just in an unfortunate situation. However, they do not blame their economic situation but attribute Bella's underachievement to her apparent lack of effort. Despite the unfortunate connection between Bella's underachievement and her family's economic difficulties, they do not seem to acknowledge the tracking system's negative effect on Bella's achievement. Of course, the three participants and their parents do not discard their belief that tracking systems can provide students the opportunities to succeed in schools according to their academic knowledge and ability. In fact, Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia are already successfully placed in AP, honors, and advanced classes and, therefore, they truly do not have to criticize the tracking system.

Doxa II: Finding the Best Combination of Capitals; However…

In the discussion of Chapter 5, I examined the students' wealth that could be transformed into capital. The four participants each possess a different amount of wealth. With their wealth, they study to achieve high test scores. If they are lacking in wealth, such as economic capital, they may compensate for it with other kinds of wealth. For example, without hiring a tutor, Tiffany can increase her test scores through her efforts and through her family's source of wealth, which is her father's math knowledge. . In contrast to Tiffany, Bella does not have much wealth to compensate for the lack of her family's economic capital; therefore, she struggles in her studies.

However, like other families, Bella's family members also do their best to improve Bella's numeric and alphabetic grades. Like the mothers of Jeremy, Tiffany, and Julia, Bella's mother contacts teachers before teachers call conferences to discuss Bella in order to investigate Bella's academic progress. Also, she tutored Bella as an elementary school student by herself. Since Bella began attending middle school, she has not tutored her; however, she encourages and even pushes Bella to study.

It is difficult to say that Bella's family, which is a low-income family compared to the other three participants' families, does not have interest in Bella's education. On the contrary, Bella's family does its best by directing all its available wealth toward her education. Even Bella's mother sometimes sacrifices her wages in order to stay with Bella and her sister and supervise their studies. She combines all her wealth and uses it for Bella and her sister's education. Like Bella's mother, Jeremy's, Tiffany's, and Julia's mothers also combine their wealth and use for it for the three participants' educations. In order to win the battle of schools,

in which people compete for high test scores and placement in a high-academic track, they are taking all possible strategic actions with their wealth.

The strategic actions taken by the four participants' families can be explained by Bourdieu's theory of sociology. Using the metaphor of a game, Bourdieu explains competition between people to possess symbolic capitals and the powers given to the winners of the competition. The key is the competition is that it is not fair but already biased to particular groups of people, who have already privilege in the field. In Bourdieu's theory, field is a domain where people compete to earn particular types of power: "a battlefield which can be seen as a game" (Bourdieu, 1977). Like pursuing wins by using trump cards in card games, people compete for dominance in the fields they are involved in (Bourdieu, 1977). The domination is earned by people's gaining reputations and social positions with authorities in the fields are what they compete for (Bourdieu, 1977). Like people who make effort to earn reputations and social positions, which are symbols of power affecting the fields, the four participants study to earn the highest test scores possible in the field, which are their schools.

The metaphor of game is used in the latest study on African American students' achievement. In Wiggan (2014), African American high achieving students define the pursuit of high achievement as "play[ing] the game," and sometimes they release their stresses by breaking some rules such as not attending classrooms on time (Wiggan, 2014). However, all of them know the rule of this game, which is that they will be judged by their academic knowledge and abilities, and then they study to prove their knowledge and abilities to win the game (Wiggan, 2014). Also, they know they can release their stresses by not obeying the rules in schools as long as their achievement is not in trouble.

Compared to Wiggan (2014), this study finds that three among the four participants study to win placement in the academic track by earning high scores. The participant, Bella, who does not yet recognize the importance of such placement, or who cannot meet the standards for placement there, has to suffer the disadvantages of participating in classes that continuously provide a lower quality of education. This is the rule of the game in schools. Unfortunately, in this study, Bella is in an economic situation that causes her to struggle to earn the symbolic capital or placement in high-academic courses. Because she does not attain the capital, it is fair that she does not receive high-quality education until she proves her knowledge and ability. That is the rule of the game in her school. Without additional support for Bella's family, Bella is anticipated to struggle to receive high test scores, and, therefore, she may not be placed in advanced, honors, and AP classes for some time.

Interestingly, along with the three participants, Bella and her mother do not doubt the fairness of tests in schools. I will explore their epistemologies, identify the supportive ideologies of the epistemologies, and then discuss these ideologies.

Doxa III: Trust in Standardized Tests

All the students and their parents tend to trust the fairness of tracking and fair assessment of advanced students by standardized tests and tests in schools. However, studies show that a higher rate of students from low-income families is placed in regular classes. The studies meta-analyzed Ansalone (1989), showing that tracking seems to contribute to widening the gap between high achievers and underachievers, and the gap between Bella and the other three participants is anticipated to become wider. The studies not analyzed by Anderson (1989), such as Lucas (1999), Loveless et al. (2009), and Bol, Witschge, Van de Werfhorst, & Dronkers (2014) also report the same finding as Anderson's (1988) analysis. In particular, Bol, Witschge,

Van de Werfhorst, & Dronkers (2014) , who study 32 countries, find that the tracking system broadens inequality in learning because students from upper- and middle-income families tend to be placed in the high-academic track and receive high-quality education.

The quality of education of regular track classes, or actual vocational track classes described in related studies, has been identified as low enough to decrease students' motivations toward their studies and expectations of their future. Oakes (2005) shows that the students who are not placed in an academic track receive lower quality education, and they also have a low level of motivation in the study conducted with 25 schools in 1984. Since the original study was published, debates have been conducted between the advocates and opponents to the tracking systems (Oakes, 2005). The advocates have argued that tracking systems can provide the education suitable for students' levels of academic knowledge, abilities, and skills (Oakes, 2005). The opponents point out that tracking systems tend to decrease students' motivation and expectation of their futures (Oakes, 2005). This study supports a part of the opponents' arguments against the tracking system. As I previously mentioned, this study shows that students in regular classes have lower quality education. However, at least three participants who experienced both regular classes and high-academic track classes believe that students can move up to high-academic track classes. Interestingly, no students imagine that students can learn in de-tracked schools. They take it for granted that students are tracked based on their academic abilities, and they learn in separate classes.

In fact, tracking has been a popular system since at least 1970. According to Lucas (1977), in the 1970s, program-based or school-based tracking was implemented. Students were placed in different programs or in different schools. However, after the civil rights movement broke out, the program-based tracking system was accused of its early categorization of young

students based on only one type of students' intelligent abilities. The tracking system was therefore changed from program-based tracking to course-based tracking (Lucas, 1999). Currently, tracking tends to be applied to individual courses; therefore, students attending schools since the 1970s are familiar with selecting a course regardless of their tracks in other courses (Lucas, 1999). Though there have been many debates between the advocators and opponents of tracking, tracking still exists in many schools (Oakes, 2005). Though the types of tracking have been changed from tracking schools or programs to tracking courses (Lucas, 1999), tracking has not been abolished (Oakes, 2005). Tracking is justified by two ideologies that people tend to take for granted, which are egalitarianism and meritocracy (Lucas, 1999).

Between these two ideologies, egalitarianism is related to the idea that all students have the equal right to receive the best education (Lucas, 1999). In this phrase, the best education means education optimized for students' academic knowledge, ability, and interest. Thus, if the equality of the best education (or equity) is defined differently, equalitarianism justifies the stratification of the quality of education according to students' academic knowledge, ability, and interest. As long as the validity and reliability of measurement equipment are not suspect, it is regarded as a better method to educate students that they can learn the content according to their academic abilities. Thus, if a student is not placed in a high-academic track, the reason is attributed to his or her lack of effort. In other words, meritocracy is embedded in the idea of tracking and supports the idea that students who have made the effort for high achievement can be placed in a high-academic course.

The ideas of meritocracy can be identified in the narratives of the four participants. Except for Bella, all the participants and parents also mention that meritocracy is an evidence to

support tracking. They believe that students in regular classes do not make efforts like them and, therefore, they are not placed in advanced, honors, and AP classes.

Along with the meritocracy, their parents show trust in the realization of egalitarianism by measuring students by standardized tests. In particular, Jeremy's mother shows strong support toward the classification of students according to students' test scores. She does not like the current method to place students in tracks, which allows teachers to place students according to their judgment of students' academic abilities and knowledge. She thinks that the method may allow teachers' arbitrary placement regardless of students' academic abilities. She is afraid that even if two students earn the same test scores, one student may be selected and placed in an academic track while the other is placed in a regular track. To speak concretely, she worries that African American students may not be placed in a high-academic track even though their scores are the same or close to those of European American students. Her belief is reinforced by her good memory of the tracking system applied to her school. When she was a young girl, the placement of her elementary school was implemented based only on students' standardized test scores. She believes that the system provides her the same opportunities of education as that of White students from middle-class families. She described herself as a young African American girl from a low-income family in Florida.

However, as the flowchart in Figure 3 actually shows, tracking does not realize the idea of egalitarianism. On the contrary, it deprives students who were once categorized as underachieving students of the opportunities to learn more and return to the academic track. The worst thing is that tracking may widen and deteriorate the achievement gaps between students from middle-income and low-income families. Unfortunately, Bella is categorized in the group of students who come from a low-income family and is expected to be repeatedly placed in

regular classes every school year; and her mother and even Bella attribute the reason of her underachievement to her lack of effort.

In sum, the climate supporting egalitarianism and meritocracy is deeply embedded as doxa in the participants' schools via standardized tests and tracking systems. In fact, the educational policy at the national level, which is the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, facilitates the climate in which meritocracy and egalitarianism are taken for granted. Since the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 was applied, schools must evaluate students annually and send the test scores to the Department of Education of the state government. Schools with low average scores of individual students and a high gap among racial groups are labeled as "schools in need" (Hayes, 2008). If a school in need fails to meet the standard of students' average scores and those of the achievement gap for five consecutive years, the schools may be changed into charter schools, and principals and most teachers can be replaced by people designated by the Department of Education of the state government (Hayes, 2008). In this situation, teachers must also focus on teaching the content, which is anticipated to be assessed by the tests, rather than identifying what the students must know in order to teach it (Hayes, 2008). Schools must follow the standards established by the NCLB Act; therefore, regardless of individual teachers' and administrators' thoughts about the NCLB, they have no choice but to trust in the validity and reliability of standardized tests, the meritocracy, and the egalitarianism.

In Georgia, where the participants live, teachers tend to show satisfaction with the culture generated by the employment of NCLB. For a long time, even before the NCLB was applied, the exit examination of high schools was conducted. Students had to pass the tests in order to receive a high school diploma. Tests were regarded as the correct method to measure students' academic performance.

Recently, students do not have to pass graduation tests in order to graduate high school. Yet they should still take the examinations. The Department of Education website of the state government does not abolish the examination. Instead, it clearly describes that students' scores on the graduation examination may be considered by companies and organizations that want to hire students after graduation. In sum, the state publicly ensures that the tests are appropriate to not only measure people's abilities in academics but also beyond.

Summary

In the four participants' narratives, three different doxa can be identified. The first doxa is that placement in the high-academic track is a symbolic capital in schools. The second one is the participants' actions relating to capital to earn high scores. The third doxa is the participants' trust in the fairness of standardized tests. The fourth is associated with the ideologies of meritocracy and egalitarianism, which dominate discourses of education in schools.

Under the hidden doxa, the four participants follow the rules in schools (in their communities and in the broader society), both consciously and unconsciously. They accept some ideologies and include them in their narratives of achievement. The belief in meritocracy and egalitarianism can be found in their narratives. In the next section about masternarrative, I will describe how the doxa is included as a masternarrative in their narratives of achievement.

As well as masternarratives, I will also provide the counternarratives appearing in their narratives of achievement, even though they are hardly identifiable there.

Masternarratives and Counternarratives

This is a section that describes the masternarrative. I will explore the narratives about earning high scores and ignoring race that appear as masternarratives in the participants' stories. After that, I will provide different stories as counternarratives.

Masternarrative: Efforts toward Success and Ignorance of Peers and Racism

In the condition that Doxa I, II, and III are working, the participants construct three narratives for them, which seem to be consistent with the dominant groups' stories. However, not all the participants share masternarratives. The three participants placed in the academic track share the masternarratives. In order to construct this masternarrative, I will explore their commonalities

First, the three participants make efforts to be placed in AP, honors, and advanced classes. Jeremy uses his communication skills and is successfully placed in AP classes. Also, using his economic capital, he can buy books. By using them as his reference, he can prepare for tests in his AP class. Of course, as his mother says, he controls himself and studies a lot besides doing homework. Though he recorded lower alphabetic grades earlier in the semester when he started taking AP and honors classes in high school, he can finally increase his grades from an F to a C and a D to a B. Tiffany receives help from her father, and she also studies hard when doing math homework and preparing for math tests. Though she is not placed in advanced math classes, she is expected to be placed there in the future. She has experienced placement in other advanced classes as a result of her efforts. Also, she uses aspirational capitals. She acquires them while she is coping with peers' bullies,recognizing that she can avoid being bullied by being placed in advanced classes and so isolate herself from the abusive peers who are usually in regular classes. Her aspirations to avoid those peers drive her to study more diligently .

Julia uses her mother's economic capital. By spending that capital, her mother can hire math tutors for her. She has also made the effort to be placed in high-academic track courses since she was an elementary school student. Through their efforts, the three participants are

successfully placed in high-academic track course. Their cases can be examples of students who study hard and, therefore, become high achievers through their efforts.

Unlike the three participants, Bella is failing her regular classes. Her mother often contacts her teacher and learns about the homework that Bella must complete and the tests she must make up. Her mother's behaviors are different from those of working-class parents reported in Lareau (2011) and Reay (1998). However, her mother's compensation for deficient economic capital through other types of cultural wealth is not successful, and the handouts from teachers seem to be difficult for Bella to understand and follow. For example, a math handout contains formulae but no explanation of how to use them. Thus, Bella's mother urges her to do homework and prepare for her tests; however, Bella cannot. She requires a tutor, but in her household, there is no extra money to hire one. However, people may think that Bella struggles not because of the deficiency of her family's economic capital but because of the lack of Bella's effort to achieve high in her school. In sum, all the participants believe that a student's effort is a significant factor in determining achievement and underachievement.

Second, in order to study, the participants must sacrifice their peer relationships and ignore the racism directed at them. Even when I asked about racism or race, the participants intentionally ignored the questions or assured me they had no experiences with racism. On some days they were willing to talk to me about it; however, the participants look at their parents who were watching them a little far from them; ad then, they told me that they would describe racism later. Some parents do not want to talk about this issue. They hope that their children are not exposed to racism when they are young. As shown through the events concerning Jeremy's dress, Tiffany's reading teacher, Tiffany and Julia's isolation in advanced schools, and Bella's strange experiences while playing with students in school, racism invisibly affects the lives of

students. However, both students and parents tend to hide their experiences related to racism. To summarize, participants tend to avoid becoming involved with peers and in race-related events.

In the four participants' narratives, the reasons why African American students underachieve include their lack of effort and their lack of peer-relationship control. As a result of hard work and the control of their peers, they can earn high test scores. However, I did not notice much excitement in learning from the four participants' narratives. Except for the stories in which Julia explores the culture of African Americans, for all the students, learning is a process of enduring difficulties, including White-centered culture and the lack of peers who support them, in order to stay in a high-academic course and successfully attend college. Jeremy, who is well-disciplined according to his mother, even regards going to college as a way to escape the current difficulties of his studies. Bella thinks that she must patiently study in order to have free time. Tiffany and Julia refer to studying as a step toward realizing their future professions. For all the students, studying is not a joy but difficult training.

In addition, except for Julia who has learned about Black history since she was young, it is difficult to find any mention of Black communities in their stories. Contrasting with the findings of Andrews (2012), Carter (2006), and DeCuir-Gunby (2007), the connections between the participants' lives and Black communities barely appear in their studies; therefore, they do not seem to have the chance to critically think about the relationships between a racially stratified broader society, their school culture, and their lives as students. In fact, in a culture in which a slight drop from placement in a high-academic track may deprive students of the opportunity to learn challenging content and attend college with a scholarship, it is difficult for the participants to be concerned with anything but raising their test scores. As Chapter 4 shows, the four participants, except for Bella, do not think about their long-term future.

To summarize, in the schools in which the placement in a high-academic track course is symbolic capital, students who focus on earning high scores to be placed in that track can survive and succeed. The three participants successfully catch up with the track and then follow the pathway to college. Their efforts and ignorance of peers and racism lead them to succeed in schools. However, I wonder how much pleasure they derive from studying.

Counternarratives: Difference Ideas about Standardized Tests and High Achievement

Students have a few counternarratives against doxa and the masternarratives. First of all, their original definitions of achievement are diverse. Jeremy thinks that academic achievement is "doing good" in both academic and non-academic domains; Tiffany thinks academic achievement means applying what she learned to diverse new situations; Julia defines academic achievement as learning; and Bella thinks academic achievement is living well. In the school culture in which earning high test scores is the best goal of achievement, it is hard for them to retain their own perspectives on achievement.

However, concerning tests, some participants have different beliefs about standardized tests as a fair method of testing students' academic achievement. The two students who experienced non-standardized tests, Jeremy and Tiffany, show alternative ideas about the assessment of students' academic abilities and knowledge. First of all, Tiffany explains that a standardized test is equipment that measures students' memory rather than their intelligence. Also, she thinks that school education does not encourage students talented in non-academic domains to grow. Moreover, Jeremy also prefers challenging projects over standardized tests. Though most mothers and some students still trust in standardized tests, the students who experienced challenging and creative assessment prefer alternative methods of assessment over standardized tests.

Those experiences, however, do not seem to influence their current studies in school. Though some participants have different ideas about assessments in school, they must follow the game rules to earn high scores and be placed in a high-academic track as long as schools place students in a track according to test scores. If they do not (or fail to) follow the game rules, they will lose many chances to be challenged and think critically while learning. In order to follow the rules and earn benefits by winning placement in a high-academic track course, they must earn high scores. To earn high scores, they must avoid peers who are anticipated to distract them as well as ignore the prejudice and isolation caused by the structure of student populations in high-academic track courses.

Thus, their experiences of persecution are carefully covered, and they barely have the chance to tell their stories of isolation due to their race and gender. Until they attend college, they put aside all their difficult experiences. The three participants in the high-academic track can have the chance to attend college and tell their stories because they have taken the pathway to college. As for Bella, she is still young. As her mother says, she does not recognize the importance of school grades and, therefore, she may not be willing to study. However, even though scholars such as Yosso (2005) argue that all students' cultural wealth is valuable and can contribute to students' academic progress, some families' wealth may not be sufficient to compensate for economic capital; for example, the basketball knowledge possessed by Bella's mother is not useful for Bella in earning high test scores in school if she is not a varsity athlete or does not take physical education classes.

Also, in the participants' schools, the chances to learn about African American culture are limited. Though the participants have some counternarratives that are different from the masternarratives, these narratives are rarely communicated. The participants may not feel it

necessary to tell their stories; however, if they were to have the chance to tell their stories in school, what experiences would they have?

Summary

The four participants are influenced by the masternarratives in schools, such as the argument that earning high test scores is important. Also, among the three participants who take AP, honors, and/or advanced courses, being placed in a high-academic track is another important narrative for them. They know that it is important to be placed there. Thus, trusting in the masternarratives, the three participants make an effort to succeed in schools. Bella, who does not recognize the importance of being placed in a high-academic track, does not study for the sake of the placement in those classes. Also, because of her lack of economic capital, she may have other difficulties attaining high achievement in school; thus, she may not be placed in the high-academic track course. Students who do not take the high-academic track course may still attend college and graduate schools, and then they may have a prestigious enough diploma to find the jobs they want. However, regarding scholarship, the students who do not follow the traditional methods of attending college may have greater difficulty participating in any state-governed scholarship programs. In the participants' shoes, it may be easier to follow the pathway to college appearing in Figure 3 than to take the nontraditional pathway to attending college, such as taking the GED as well as SAT.

To focus on their studies, the participants must sacrifice peer relationships and endure prejudice directed toward Black people, including themselves. However, the stories about their sacrifices and their endurance of prejudice are rarely told. These are unspoken counternarratives and are kept within the four participants' minds. Because there are few domains where African American students tell their stories and learn about their histories and the cultures of their

communities, they may lose the culture of their racial group. Thus, the four participants' stories about racism seem to be hidden narratives in their schools. Until they attend college, if their schools do not have classes to provide in-depth knowledge and understanding of African American history and culture, the participants may not have the chance to learn about these issues.

In the South

In Chapter 2, I mentioned earlier that the characteristic of the South is that there are strong African American communities that support students' academic achievement. Specifically, before school desegregation began in 1954, African American schools played a key role in teaching students about African American culture. Thus, the four participants' schools are also anticipated to play a role in providing students with learning opportunities about their culture. However, no schools that the research participants attend provide sufficient opportunities to learn about Black culture outside celebrating the civil rights movement during Black history month. Even at Tiffany's and Julia's schools, where more than 50% of students are African American, African American culture and history are barely taught to students. In Jeremy's school, in which both African American and Hispanic students comprise more than 50% of students attending in his school, neither African American nor Hispanic history are often taught to students according to the curriculum information included on the school website. At Bella's school, about 80% of students are White, and African American students make up less than 20% of the student body. On the school website, education about African American culture or history is hardly present.

Thus, contrary to expectations , Jeremy's, Tiffany's, and Julia's schools do not play a role in helping African American students to understand their culture and develop racial identity, despite the high rate of African American students attending their schools. Also, it is hard to find

a community aimed at helping African American students explore their culture in their schools. At Bella's school, where White students are about 80% of the population, there is an African American female students' club. On Bella's school website, the club purports to "assist in the community, [and] academic and personal development" of African American female students. In order to assist club members, the club is known to offer opportunities to "understand one another in order to achieve a common goal, enhance goal setting, leadership and communication skills" and "develop a positive self image" according to the school website. Considering the purpose of the club and the activities offered to the club members, the club is anticipated to provide students the chance to learn about African American culture and help their community. However, Bella is not a member of that club. In order to become a member of the club, students should be recommended by at least one teacher. It is unknown of what types of students can earn teachers' recommendations.

Jeremy also does not seem to have many opportunities to learn about African American culture and history in his school. Despite the rate of African American students among students attending in their schools, the four participants have few opportunities to learn about African American history and culture outside of the celebration of the civil rights movement against segregation in the South.

Thus, the only community, except for their local communities, in which students can learn about their culture, seems to be the YSC, where more than 80% of students are African American. However, the organization does not seem to provide students many opportunities to learn about African American culture and history. In the character education classroom, students read and discuss the content included in *The seven habits of highly effective teens*. The book contains extensive information concerning scheduling and managing schedules, proactive

behaviors, methods of speaking and listening to other people, and study techniques. However, the book does not target a specific racial group. Thus, it is hard to find content about African American culture and history in this text.

For this reason, unlike the descriptions in Morris et al. (2009), the four participants apparently do not learn about African American culture and history. As a community, the YSC, or the program supporting African American students' achievement in academics, emphasizes the familiar idea that students have to earn high scores and earn placement in high academic courses. Thus, the program contributes to the dissemination of ideas about earning high scores and placement in high academic courses to the program participants.

However, I doubt that the club can emphasize alternative ideas about learning. As I mentioned earlier, according to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, schools must submit students' average test scores to the Department of Education of the state government. Schools with low average scores and a large difference of average scores among racial groups are labeled as "schools in need" (Hayes, 2008). If schools in need fail to meet the standard of students' average scores and those of the achievement gap for five consecutive years, teachers and principals can be replaced and the schools can be converted into charter schools (Hayes, 2008). Thus, in order not to lose their position in the school, teachers have to teach students the content which is assessed by standardized tests every year. Also, students have to be concerned with increasing their test scores if they want to be recognized in schools. They are evaluated based on their test scores and their placement is also determined based on these scores. In sum, test scores are the most important standard used to evaluate students and schools, which makes teachers and students concerned with test scores rather than other forms of academic

achievement that can show students' actual abilities, such as presentation, discussion, and collaboration with other students.

In a school climate in which test scores are the most important means to evaluate students' academic knowledge and ability, the YSC, aimed at student success in schools, cannot help concerning itself with students' test scores the most. Thus, rather than offering students opportunities to study African American culture, the program is anticipated to provide services to help students increase test scores.

In sum, students who attend in schools where African American students are the majority do not have opportunities to learn about African American culture. Rather than teaching African American culture, schools have to focus on increasing students' test scores. Also, the four participants attend the YSC, which can be regarded as an African American community. Maybe, as old segregated schools and African American communities embracing the schools provide students with opportunities to learn about African American history and culture as a means to cope with discrimination from broader society, the YSC may have provided students the methods for success academically in schools. However, the methods are mostly associated with increasing test scores in school classrooms. Unlike African American communities encouraging students to explore and understand African American values and communities, the program seems to have no choice but to focus on increasing students' test scores. In an educational climate in which only test scores are recognized, even African American communities are expected to teach students how to increase their scores. As I show in Table 2 in Chapter 2, the test scores of African American students in the South seem to have become higher than those of African American students in the North, the Midwest, and the West. However, I wonder where students

in the South nowadays can learn about their culture and history, which may help them cope with the invisible disadvantages and prejudices faced by their racial group.

Discussion

Based on the data analysis in Chapter 4 and 5, in Chapter 6, I can find the following doxa: First of all, the placement of high-academic track is symbolic capital in schools. Students who are placed in a high-academic track, such as AP, honors, and advanced classes, can receive a higher quality of education than students in regular classes, weights on grade points of transcripts, and credits of rigor courses. As symbolic capital, placement in a high-academic course is an asset contributing to students' entrance into college and university.

In order to be placed in a high-academic track, students have to earn high scores on tests. Thus, students and their parents find the best combination of their cultural wealth and then use it to attain high scores on tests. When students lack one type of capital, they compensate for this lack by utilizing another type of capital. However, when the volume of cultural wealth is too small, students and parents have limited choices and so the use of this wealth may not prevent the students from being left behind. In particular, students who lack economic wealth have a greater risk of failing to excel in school if they cannot compensate for economic wealth with other types of wealth, such as familial wealth. In this study, Bella cannot compensate for the lack of economic capital with her mother's efforts to prevent her from falling behind by frequent contact with teachers and encouraging her to study hard. Unlike Bella, Tiffany can compensate for her lack of capital with her father's tutoring as well as her own efforts.

All the achievement defining students' placement tends to be evaluated by students' scores on standardized tests in classrooms. Placement in a gifted program is determined by scores on psychometric tests and classroom tests; AP, honors, and advanced class placement is

determined by students' scores on tests, numeric or alphabetic grades, and/or teachers' recommendations. According to Jeremy's mother, though students can earn teachers' endorsements even when their test scores are close to the threshold, many African American students and parents do not tend to ask teachers for placement in AP, honors, and advanced courses if their scores are below the threshold. Thus, students are in actuality placed on this track by their standardized test scores.

The participants tend to naturally accept their placement even when they are placed in regular classes. They take it for granted that students are placed in different tracks according to their test scores. This idea seems to be based on their trust in standardized tests. Though some of them doubt that standardized tests appropriately measure students' academic knowledge and ability, they trust that the measurement is fair to all students. Their parents also rely on tests in schools. Some parents even think that their children could be placed in a high-academic track though they are in a minority group because the tests fairly measure their academic ability and knowledge despite prejudices against African Americans embedded in schools several decades ago. In sum, students can be rewarded by their efforts and all students have fair opportunities because of unbiased standardized tests. In sum, meritocracy and egalitarianism are foundational ideas of the doxa that I have discussed so far in this section.

The participants accept meritocracy and egalitarianism in their masternarratives. They believe that they can earn high scores on tests by their efforts. Thus, their goals for achievement are reduced to high scores. However, they have counternarratives about achievement. They think academic achievement includes doing all kinds of good things, learning how to apply knowledge, understanding and acquiring knowledge, and becoming intelligent. All their stories are counternarratives.

Participants and their parents do the best they can with their resources to earn high scores. However, because of the tracking systems in their schools, Bella, who has the lowest volume of wealth, struggles in school. She does not have enough wealth to compensate for her lack of economic capital and has little idea of the effect of high academic course placement on her future educational attainment. She goes to the YSC; however, even the organization suffers from a lack of human resources to help students. Under the doxa that placement in a high academic course is symbolic capital, if Bella fails to possess this capital in the future, she has no choice but to lag behind in school. Even though her mother does her best to support Bella, her alphabetic grades are falling. In her school, where the tracking system is employed, she has no choice but to receive a lower quality of education than her peers in high-academic-track courses. Also, without taking high-academic-track courses, she may not be able to take the courses that she needs to take in order to eventually apply to universities and veterinary schools..

Unfortunately, there are many students like her in the South. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the South is characterized by lower household incomes, higher rates of unemployment, and higher rates of poverty than the North, the Midwest, and the West. Furthermore, African Americans tend to earn lower incomes than European Americans; therefore, there may be many students like Bella, who may suffer from the lack of economic capital and start to fall behind despite their parents' efforts to increase their scores.

Moreover, if a Black student is left behind, she or he may be regarded as an example of a negative stereotype of African American students, such as the idea that they are not interested in academic achievement. In addition, even African American peers who are successfully placed in a high academic track blame the students who do not achieve like them. Unfortunately, African

American students have few chances to learn about their culture and, therefore, it may be easy

for them to accept the masternarrative of meritocracy as truth.

Thus, students like Bella are in a difficult situation. How can they survive in school? An

increased education budget i can definitely help Bella in her struggle to achieve highly in school.

However, this method is not realistic.

In the next chapter, I will discuss how to help students like Bella based on the findings of

this study.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the discussion in Chapter 6, I will display the implications of my study and provide suggestions for gaining a better education.

Implications

One implication of this study is that it is not a study on the achievement gap. According to Murrell (2009), African American students' achievement is related to the achievement gap; however, this study has explored the narratives of academic achievement of African American students. Also, this study is not a study on a popular topic, such as acting White; this study has only sought to explore the meanings of achievement constructed by students while they are living. Many studies on African American students discuss whether African American students are discriminated against while they are learning and studying. Also, researchers have investigated the achievement of African American students living in urban areas as a topic of studies on at-risk students. Unlike those studies, this study focuses on exploring foundational meaning achievement, which the participants have constructed. In particular, this study explores how school tracking system generates a symbolic capital, or the placement in high academic track, and then, how the symbolic capital affect the experiences of students' academic achievement.

The finding is that the research participants have a two-fold meaning of achievement. The participants define academic achievement diverse as "doing good," as actually applying the learned content to diverse and real situations, as learning, and as learning to live well as an

independent woman. However, all those meanings have been reduced to their obtaining high scores on tests. The participants who are experienced in taking the high-academic track courses, such as the advanced, honors, and AP classes, have earned high scores in order to take those courses and to stay in them.

The second implication is that the role of tracking in students' achievement needs to be identified. The placement in the high academic track is actually a symbolic capital that provides its possessor with diverse benefits. In particular, the benefits include the participation in a high quality of education and the qualification to apply to flagship state universities and scholarship programs. If a student is neither placed in the gifted program in elementary school nor becomes placed in the advanced courses, the student actually loses the opportunities to learn challenging content in a classroom without disturbance from peers. Also, in order to earn the symbolic capital, students ignore racism that nonetheless still affects the participants.

Third, despite the lack of economic capital, some students combine their cultural wealth, or cultural capitals, in school in order to learn and study in school. However, in school, only some of the wealth can be converted into cultural capital. Thus, students who have few cultural capitals can hardly have access to the education in the high academic track courses. Considering the second implication, students who lack capitals and cannot compensate for the capitals with other kinds of capital may lose many of the benefits from being placed in high academic courses.

Based on the discussion so far, the most important thing is to help students who lack capitals. The following suggestions are mainly discussing that issue.

Suggestions

The participants have combinations of wealth, which optimize their possibilities to excel. However, the problem is that their wealth is not easily transferred into capital. The following

methods can increase the possibility of converting one form of capital to another form of capital. Because economic capitals cannot be increased immediately, I will focus on the conversion of some social and cultural capitals.

First of all, among the capitals, an aspirational capital, which may be related to the students' self-images in the future, can be constructed by meeting diverse people. From those people, students may learn what they can and cannot do in the future. Specifically, students, who have a few social capitals regarding their future professions, need information and informants to tell them about professions. With respect to familial capital, all the participants except for Julia are disconnected from their history and cultural tradition because the education about their African American history and cultural traditions is limited in their schools. Besides exploring them in their families, they need some organizations to provide the content about their history and tradition, which may empower them to become more engaged in their achievement.

Also, students have to know a resistant capital, which includes learning about their tradition and history. Students also need to explore how the status quo are dominating minority people and not just ignore implicit racism but tell about it. By learning about the status quo, students can understand the reason that people from minority groups have bigger difficulties to focus on studies than people from majority groups. Also, by understanding the influence of the status quo in broader society on people of color, they are anticipated not to blame people from their minority groups based on prejudices.

As for social network, by meeting people in the same home, students can expand their social networks and have the opportunities to meet people in a variety of professions. Social wealth is another name for the development and use of a social network.

The conversion of wealth to capitals can be conducted both in schools and local institutions conducting after-school programs. The examples of the conversations in both schools and local institutions are introduced in Table 12.

Table 12

Changing Wealth to Capitals in Schools and Local Community Institutions

	Wealth-Related Actions	**Actions Supported by Schools/Institutions**
Economic Wealth	- Providing tutors to the students.	- Peer teaching from the upper to the lower grade students. - Tutoring one on one or in small groups.
Cultural Wealth		
Aspirational	- Having particular future dreams. - Desiring to realize the dreams.	- Introducing diverse jobs and careers. - People coming from diverse professions to the students.
Familial	- Teaching the historical and cultural tradition of the students' cultural groups.	- Exploring the historical and cultural traditions of the students' cultural groups.
Navigational	- Teaching the rules and conventions in schools and in communities.	- Teaching the rules and conventions in schools and in communities, specifically to new students.
Resistant	- Exploring the status quo in the broader society, in communities, and in schools and resisting inequalities in an appropriate manner.	- Teaching and learning about the status quo to take actions to criticize them, such as creating UCC.
Social Wealth	- Introducing people from diverse professions to students. - Introducing people with diverse cultural backgrounds to students. - Connecting to communities by diverse activities, such as community services.	- Inviting people from diverse professions and/or having diverse backgrounds to schools or local community institutions. - Participating in actions in diverse communities.

As for economic capital, in order to help students whose parents cannot afford to hire tutors, the schools and the educational institutions in local communities, such as the after-school programs in churches and colleges, can provide tutors. If Bella has a tutor, she may not be left behind in her school. Unlike Bella, Tiffany has a tutor, her father, to help her do the homework in her weakest subject, math.

Specifically, in universities, undergraduate or graduate students who are preparing for teaching jobs may participate in community service courses, which allow them to participate in a community-related internship, such as tutoring students in the local schools. Schools or

community institutions cannot increase the students' family income; however, they may provide tutoring services to students free or for a small fee.

Among the kinds of cultural wealth, aspirational wealth refers to the students' desires and motivations to succeed in school and realize their dream professions. However, as this study reveals, students need role models and also need to know how to realize their dream. In this study, Tiffany and Julia have role models who motivate them. Jeremy does not have a role model around him regarding his future job; however, he has participated in career development camps and thinks that his interest lies in the field of video journalism. His parents also brought him information about that profession. Compared to Jeremy, Bella does not have a role model. Her parent does not send her to career development camps or bring the information on veterinarians to her. In fact, her parent does not know the qualifications of veterinarians and may think that Bella can become that profession after graduating from a university. If her school or an after-school program can provide her the information about veterinarians, she can begin to prepare for that profession since she is in middle school and can make the effort to take the advanced science and math courses. Actually, Tiffany is taking advanced science and studying to be placed in advanced math, which will help her take the math and science courses in high school or at the upper levels. Thus, students who lack information about specific professions need the schools and the after-school programs to provide that information to them. Along with that, those organizations can invite people who may become role models to meet students and let them tell about their experiences to the students.

Familial wealth refers to the repertoire that people's families and communities provide about achievement. All the participants' families have knowledge about achievement, but the knowledge that Bella's mother has is not converted into capitals for Bella to use to help her excel

in school. All four participants' mothers have attended a college or a university, and three of them graduated. All the mothers associate school grades with acceptance into a college and obtaining a scholarship to attend college. However, in details, the other three participants' knowledge and the knowledge of Bella's mother differ because Bella's mother was a student athlete and stayed in her college shorter than of the mothers of the other three participants. While Bella participated in this study, Bella was a sixth grader and does not play basketball for her school. Thus, the knowledge that Bella's mother has about student athletics is not useful, yet. Also, Bella's family does not know what educational credentials and examinations are required for her to become a veterinarian. Without obtaining the information, Bella may not take courses helpful for her to apply to universities which may assist her to get admissions from veterinarian schools.

All the parents know about the school rules in general, but regarding placement in the advanced classes, some of them do not have all the information about it. Thus, they need to learn about the diverse services in their children's schools, too. Schools also need to care more for the parents, but sometimes, this care is not available if parents have some problems with their access to their children's school. Possibly using institutions, such as the church, can provide solutions.

With respect to resistant wealth, basically, no student except for Julia has shown interest in Black history and culture, and then, consequently, they have no idea about resisting inequality in their school. Even Julia does not resist inequalities. They do not recognize racism, or they pretend not to be bothered by it. If there is no racism in their school, then the students do not have to be forced to think about it. However, if they just pretend to ignore inequalities, for their mental health, then they had better tell about them rather than hide them.

Some of the participants have forms of social wealth that will encourage and support their achievement and choice of future jobs, and some of the participants do not have them. Jeremy, by using his parents' knowledge obtained by their Internet search and his parents' economic wealth, can get the necessary information. Bella is relatively isolated, and Bella's mother also does not have appropriate networks to help her children achieve high and search for future jobs. In this case and in cases like it, social networks in the communities need to be developed and given to such parents.

All these descriptions about social, cultural, and economic wealth convey that communities are necessary for Black students to communicate with one another. Maybe students with other backgrounds can be included, but they also need a place to safely talk with one another and exchange information.

Probably, forming school clubs and after-school programs are also helpful. The four participants are already in the Young Scholar's Club (YSC), which aims to develop the students' academic and social excellence. Though that organization takes the role to help them excel, it still needs to be reformed. I can tell about the program briefly and suggest the ideal characteristics of African American student-centered communities.

Constructing African American Students-Centered Communities

In schools, all the cultural groups have to have equal opportunities to learn. However, I think that students categorized into minority groups have to have some safe spaces just for them. In these spaces they can exchange information and opinions and connect emotionally to one another.

One of the methods would be to construct racially oriented clubs in schools, and the other would be to construct organizations aimed at affirming African American students' achievement.

About clubs in schools, Akom (2003), who studies Black-Islam students' clubs in schools, finds that the girls construct sisterhood in such clubs and then create a Black achievement ideology. The ideology aims to encourage one another to achieve in school. Also, they can exchange information about how to react to the discomfort caused by prejudices against them, and they can construct ideologies to resist these prejudices and to affirm their academic knowledge and abilities.

Murrell (2007) theoretically support the building of communities for minority students to encourage each others' achievement. Murrell (2007) argues that people synthesizes diverse identities constructed out of diverse levels of their societies and communities. Murrell (2007) points out that minority students, who are discouraged academically because of prejudices in the broader society, need to construct communities for achievement, aimed at both their academic achievement and the development of their identities as minority group members. In the communities of achievement, students (and teachers) can construct identities harmoniously synthesized out of diverse communities in which they have memberships, including their membership in their minority groups. Also, they have common goals of achievement in academics to help one another to accomplish them.

In fact, all four participants in this study already participate in such a community for achievement, the YSC. Though it is not a program only for Black students, most of students are students of color and have cultural backgrounds differing from White-centered cultures. In the YSC, the director of the program emphasizes the importance of the placement in high academic courses and also encourages students to earn high scores on tests and high grades in school. However, in the program, the number of students ranges from 50 to about 100 each year, and about half of the 10 tutors care for the elementary school students. Thus, middle and high school

students do not have as many tutors as they need. In particular, most of the students want math

tutoring, but there is only person who can deal with both high school and middle school math.

The students, therefore, sometimes do not get help there.

Also, in the YSC, students have only a few times when they can learn about African

American and Hispanic cultures. Within the environments in which schools have to be oriented

toward raising students' standardized test scores, the YSC also has to focus on raising the

students' scores on school tests. However, sometimes students can share their feelings of being

isolated in school with one another in the YSC, and students, therefore, can construct a sense of

solidarity, or a type of navigational wealth, in the YSC.

However, the organization is also influenced by a doxa, the tracking system in schools. In

it, achievement is also interpreted as earning high grades on the quarterly progressive reports.

Students are praised or advised according to the scores in the reports. At least, in the YSC,

members hear about the importance of their placement in the high-academic track. Also, though

most students of the YSC community are African Americans, they only have a few opportunities

to hear about their history and traditions. Like Black schools, in which students, parents, and

teachers can share the ideology of education as the means to develop as an independent person

and a contributor to African American communities (Mungo, 2013; Walker, 1996), by learning

about African American history and culture as well as jointly studying the subject content taught

in school, students can build identities as high achievers and African Americans.

Reforming the Tracking System

I do not agree with the idea of removing tracking because empirical studies support that

high achievers may lose the opportunities to achieve higher than they had before. Schumidt's

(2009) study on the comparison of the achievement of students in the tracked and detracked

schools indicate that the high achiever in the tracked schools earn higher scores in their math courses. The same study indicates that students in middle school and underachievers in the tracked schools tend to record lower scores on tests than those in the detracked schools. However, I do not prefer sacrificing students who can excel.

In addition, detracking is not realistic. Since tracking has been used for a longer time than a couple of decades (Ansalone, 1989; Schumidt, 2009), it is unrealistic to argue for the removal of the tracking system. Thus, it would be better to improve the quality of education in the regular classes rather than to implement detracking.

Rather than detracking the classrooms, a new pedagogical idea should be appreciated for regular classes. The biggest problems are that the students tend not to be challenged in their classes and that they also tend to receive lower expectations from their teachers. However, from the teachers' perspective, students do not complete their homework and do not remember what they learned in previous semesters or in previous classes, and then, they often receive homework without their teachers' expecting them to complete it. It is a situation of determining which is first: the chicken or the egg. It is hard to pick which of the two groups to criticize: teachers or students. Most of all, the teachers in the regular classes have to teach around 20 or more students whereas the teachers in the advanced classes teach less than 15 students. Thus, downsizing the number of students in the regular classes is the first condition to provide students with equal opportunities to learn. However, more than downsizing is needed; the quality of the content also has to be upgraded.

As previously mentioned, the lower quality of learning in the regular classes may be caused by the teachers' lower expectations of the students. However, teachers also can speed up their pace of teaching or give challenging content to students when students can understand

easily their words. For example, in the case of Bella, she did not know what the least common multiple (LCM) and the greatest common multiple (GCM) meant. Students have to comprehend those two concepts in order to understand the addition and subtraction of fractions. Based on her homework, her math teacher had already taught the students the addition and subtraction of fractions. In other words, Bella did not understand the LCM and the GCM, and then, she also did not know how to add and subtract fractions. Thus, while interviewing and helping her with her homework, I had to explain LCM and GCM first, and then, showed the subtraction and addition of fractions to her. If the students in the regular classes are like her, teachers would hardly give student challenging homework.

One of the solutions is the collaboration between the community organizations and the schools. Tiffany's school, which is located less than 10 miles from a state university, has a collaborative program with that university. A university professor, a student teacher, and a practicum Ph.D. student have come to Tiffany's school twice a week to teach the students, and share ideas with the principal and the teachers.

Also, in Jeremy's school, students whose grades are falling have been tutored during the lunch period. Though students do not like it, they have more chances to learn what they missed in their classes. There is no similar program in the schools of Tiffany, Julia, and Bella. If Bella's school had provided such a program, then she might not have struggled so much with her learning.

Ideally, it would be better that the tracking system not only be changed but also the school culture. However, given that in the school culture standardized tests are still regarded as fair methods that categorize students only on the basis of their academic abilities and knowledge, schools are still evaluated by the averages of the students' scores on standardized tests. Because

the NCLB Act is applied to public schools, these schools are evaluated according to the average of their students' test scores, and the teachers therefore have to be especially concerned about the development of students' abilities and knowledge, which are measurable by those test scores.

This situation, however, does not mean that students have to accept cultural practices that measure students' abilities only by the use of standardized tests. The acceptance of those cultural practices may cause students to have lower self-esteem, construct unhealthy identities, and internalize prejudicial accusations about their racial groups, such as they are unintelligent and unwilling to succeed in school. Thus, students have to know how the NCLB Act and tests based on multiple choice questions have affected their academic achievement and everyday lives. In order to know the influence of the NCLB Act on their lives, students need to explore its meaning. By doing so, they can construct resistant ideologies or develop resistant capital.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR STUDENTS

(1) I**nward space question: What are students' views on themselves related to academic achievement?**

    a. Think about school subjects such as reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and foreign languages and tell me which one or which ones you are good at. Why?

    b. What do you feel when you study? Is studying exciting, boring, easy, hard, or what?

    c. How do you describe academic achievement? Think about the concept of academic achievement. What does it mean to you? Do you think you are achieving academically at a high level (or get a high grade)? Why or why not? Can you give me an example?

    d. In your opinion, what can you do if you want to get higher grades than now? And if you need any help, do you think you can find help easily? Why or Why not?

(2) **Outward space: What messages do students hear about the relationship between their race, gender, and socioeconomic class, and what perspectives do they construct based on the messages?**

    a. Tell me whom you generally talk to about your studies when you need help or advice.

    b. What do your parents, teachers, principals, YSC staff members, neighbors, or other people around you expect of you in terms of your academic achievement? Can you share any examples with me?

c. Can you tell me any messages about studying or achievement that you get from your teachers, from your parents, from church, from your friends, and so on?

d. Some scholars believe that African American high achievers get stressed out because they are labeled as acting White. Do you agree or disagree with their beliefs? Tell me why you agree/disagree.

e. Some scholars argue that male/female students are smarter than female/male students. Do you agree or disagree with this opinion. Tell me why you agree/disagree.

f. Some scholars argue that rich students are usually very good in their academic subjects. What do you think about that opinion? Do you agree or disagree and Why do you think so?

(3) Forward space: What academic success and future attainment do students expect as the result of their academic achievement, and how do they relate their expectations to their current achievement?

a. Why do you study? What's your purpose for studying? When do you think about your studies, what would you say is your main goal?

b. Do you think studying will help you reach your goals?

c. What will your studying bring to you in the future? Think about at the end of this semester, after high school graduation, after college graduation?

d. What kind of job do you want to have in the future? Do you think your current studies will help you have the job?

e. Do you think your current studies will help you to achieve at higher level than now? Why or why not?

    f.   In your opinion, what is the cost that you have to pay to achieve high? Do you think your studies are beneficial to you? Why or why not?

(4) Backward space: What past events do they select as significant in terms of their academic achievement?

    a.   Tell me something you remember about your studies or your academic achievement at home, at school, at church, or anywhere. Do you have any event that you remember about your study or achievement in schools, home, church, or anywhere? Tell me your story.

    b.   Tell me a story about success (or failure) in academic subjects?

    c.   What did you feel when you succeeded (or failed) in academics?

    d.   Who has helped you academically with your school work? If you have someone, I want to hear your stories with the people.

(5) Situated space: What messages about academic achievement do students hear from peers and staff members within the after-school program and how do they relate the messages to their achievement?

    a.   Do you remember any messages about studying and achievement that you've heard in the YSC?

    b.   In your opinion, what should be changed in the YSC to help you academically?

    c.   Can you share when and why you started coming here? If you didn't come here on Saturday morning, what would you do during that time?

(6) Inward space questions:

    a. Think about school subjects such as reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and foreign languages and tell me which one or which ones you are good at. Why do you think so?

    b. How do you feel when you do homework or study at home and when you are in school classrooms? Is studying exciting, boring, easy, hard, or what?

    c. What is "academic achievement"?

    d. Do you think you are achieving academically at a high level? Why or why not? What makes you think so?

(7) Outward space:

    a. Tell me whom you generally talk to about your studies when you need help or advice. Why these people?

    b. What do others expect of you in terms of your academic achievement? How do you know?

    c. How do you think others see you as learner? How do you know?

(8) Forward space:

    g. Why do you study? What's your purpose for studying? When do you think about your studies, what would you say is your main goal?

    h. What do you hope your studying will bring to you in the future (at the end of this semester, after high school graduation, after college graduation)?

    i. What kind of job do you want to have in the future? Do you think your current studies will help you have the job?

j. In your opinion, are there any costs to being a good or committed student? What are they? What do you think so?

(9) Backward space:

a. Tell me something about a significant moment in your life as a student when you felt successful. What makes that moment stand out to you? What was going on?

b. Can you think of a moment when you didn't feel successful? What happened?

c. I am hoping to talk to a couple of people who you think have influenced your life as a learner. Would you mind sharing those people with me and why you think they have been significant?

(10) Situated space:

a. What do you think academic achievement means here at the Saturday Academy? What makes you think so?

b. In your opinion, is there anything that the Saturday Academy could do better or help you academically?

c. Can you share when and why you started coming here?

d. What do you feel you get out of coming here?

APPENCIX II

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS[17]

(1) Why do you feel that _____ chose you as an important person in his/her story about

achievement?

(2) Think about the concept of academic achievement. What does it mean to you? How do you

convey that idea to _____

(3) Tell me about the relationship between you and _____

(4) How often do you spend time together?

(5) What is the nature of your time together?

(6) When you are together, do you focus on school or learning?

(7) What do you hope _____ will achieve in the future?

(8) What do you think will help _____ reach those goals?

(9) Do you think you are/were achieving academically at a high level? Why do you think so?

(10)   In your opinion, is there any cost to achieve high? If so, what is it? Why do you think so?

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[17] This protocol was composed before the four participants defined their mothers as those who was the most significantly affecting their academic achievement. Thus, in actual interviews with their mothers, the questions are for their mothers.