Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Faith Lynae Proper 3/24/2014

Against the Current: The Role of Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Institutional Background for Community College Transfer Students and Oxford Continuees at Emory University

by

Faith Lynae Proper

Dr. Richard Rubinson
Adviser

Department of Sociology

Dr. Richard Rubinson

Adviser

Dr. Irene Browne

Committee Member

Dr. Kimberly Loudermilk

Committee Member

2014

Against the Current: The Role of Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Institutional Background for Community College Transfer Students and Oxford Continuees at Emory University

By

Faith Lynae Proper

Dr. Richard Rubinson

Adviser

An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Sociology

2014

Abstract

Against the Current: The Role of Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Institutional Background for Community College Transfer Students and Oxford Continuees at Emory University

By Faith Lynae Proper

What factors impact transfer student success? A plethora of educational research informs our opinions of who succeeds, but less is known about why they succeed. What individual and institutional factors help transfer students integrate into their new campus environment? More specifically, how can individual factors (e.g. cultural and social capital) and institutional factors (how colleges shape students' habitus) interact to impact transfer student outcomes? Oxford College, the two-year division of Emory University, presents a unique opportunity to separate the effects of individual and institutional factors for students in transition. Using in-depth interviews with nine community college transfer students, ten Oxford Continuees, and six staff members, I analyzed their experiences as or with students in transition to evaluate the effects of cultural capital, social capital, habitus, and how their previous college shaped their expectations for college life on their integration at Emory. The findings indicate that cultural and social capital resources vary significantly and effect how well students are able to prepare and adjust for difficulties encountered during their transition. Additionally, experiences with their previous colleges influence how students approach their transition and how they prioritize their capital investments. Tinto's Model of Student Integration is modified to be more applicable to community college transfer students' after transfer. This study furthers our knowledge about the role of cultural capital, social capital, and habitus for transfer students at elite, private universities. I conclude by proposing policy recommendations based on the findings to bring institutional programs more in line with community college transfer student and Oxford Continuee expectations to aid in their success.

Against the Current: The Role of Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Institutional Background for Community College Transfer Students and Oxford Continuees at Emory University.

By

Faith Lynae Proper

Dr. Richard Rubinson

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Sociology

2014

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my wonderful adviser, Dr. Rubinson. Your support, encouragement, and guidance made this project possible. Your patience is unending and your advice never distant; for these and so many more reasons, I am very fortunate to have you as my adviser. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Browne and Dr. Loudermilk for agreeing to serve as members of my committee. All of these wonderful professors already had to put up with me in class; I cannot thank them enough for agreeing to deal with me for this whole past year as well.

It would be an incredible oversight if I did not acknowledge the love and support given by my fiancé, Darryl Chamberlain. For all of the late nights and rough drafts, for getting me through transcription and emotional breakdowns, you have my eternal love and gratitude.

Finally, I must extend my whole hearted thanks and gratitude to the many participants of this study, students and staff members alike. This project would have never happened without your willingness to help and enthusiastic support. The policy recommendations that come from this study will, hopefully, leave a mark on Emory University for years to come; your insights and stories sparked these possibilities. I would like nothing more than to dedicate this thesis to the perseverance and determination of the students in this study. Your tenacity is inspiring; never stop swimming against the current!

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL MODELS

As a growing population, community college transfer students are in the public eye and the subject of much educational research. President Obama's focus on community colleges has increased national attention given to the effectiveness of community colleges as a pathway to a baccalaureate degree (Anon 2011), but are two-year colleges an equitable pathway to a four-year degree? Community colleges are popularly viewed as an alternative pathway for social mobility and educational equity, but research indicates that students who choose to attend a community college are less likely to complete their four-year degree than their peers at four-year colleges (Kalogrides and Grodsky 2008). While a great deal of research has focused on how (in)effectively community colleges get their students to the point of transfer, we know much less about what affects students' educational pathways once they get to a four-year institution. Community college students face important barriers academically, socially, and institutionally when they make the educational leap to complete their baccalaureate; cultural and social capital resources are important to transitions at every stage of education (Aschaffenburg and Maas 1997), but their role in collegiate transfers is understudied and underappreciated. Educational researchers have a responsibility to learn about this transition and provide recommendations to smooth the process. We must ask the question: what influences matter for student success after transfer?

While much is known about the students who transfer, little is known about the underlying sociological processes at play during the transfer process. As we will soon see, academic and social integration are considered key components for eventual college completion, but how do these processes interact with students' backgrounds to influence their overall adjustment? By applying the sociological concepts of cultural capital, social capital, habitus, and

the current models of student integration, we will be better able to identify the processes at play and make adjustments accordingly for the benefit of transfer students.

Emory University provides a unique opportunity for transfer student research. Because of its two-year campus, Oxford College, Emory has a vested interest in making the transition from a two-year campus to the four-year campus as smooth as possible for approximately four hundred and fifty Oxford Continuees each year. By reviewing the institutional policies in place for Oxford students, coupled with an analysis of Oxford Continuees' first-hand transition experiences, we can use Oxford College as a natural experiment to see what policies are the most helpful and which transitional factors are the most resistant to assistance. By comparing Oxford Continuees' experiences to those of community college transfer students at Emory, we will learn more about the transfer process. What problems or challenges are inevitable when switching from a two-year college to a four-year experience, and which can we avoid? On a more abstract level, this study will be able to distinguish between those factors that are inherent to the individual and those that are embedded in institutional practices and the college culture.

Before trying to understand the complexities of transfer student success, it is important to understand a little about the study population. Only by looking at the broader picture can we appreciate the hurdles that community college students face on their way to obtaining a bachelor's degree. Who are transfer students? While the broadly researched topics of community college completion and retention are outside of the scope of this study, understanding these works provides an important contextual understanding of where these students are coming from.

To more fully understand the world of the transfer student, in this chapter I will define what constitutes a transfer student, what we know about the potential transfer student population, transfer student rates, and what we know demographically about successful transfer students.

Then I will define success and review what is currently known about factors influencing transfer student success. Once we are comfortable discussing what it means to be a community college transfer student, I will review some important sociological and theoretical concepts and models that can provide insights into the transfer student population's success at their previous and transfer institutions. This chapter will conclude with the questions raised by the current literature and an introduction to the current study.

DEFINING THE WORLD OF THE TRANSFER STUDENT

Demographic Characteristics

First, what is a transfer student? There are several types of transfer students, grouped by the types of institutions they transfer to and from. First and perhaps the most widely known is the vertical transfer: a student who transfers from a two-year to a four-year institution. We are, however, seeing more and more horizontal transfers: students who transfer from one four-year institution to another (Peng 1977). The last type of transfer students are reverse transfers: students who transfer from a four-year institution to a two-year institution (Peng 1977). These students are more likely to be from low-income families (Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer 2009), and may or may not eventually transfer vertically after preparing academically and personally for life at a four-year college.

This study will focus on vertical transfer students. For the purposes of this study, we will consider a vertical transfer to be a student who transitions to a four-year senior institution after spending at least one year at a community college or other two-year school. Vertical transfer students, from here on out simply referred to as transfer students, are probably the most studied and most numerous transfer population (Horn, Nevill, and Griffith 2006). Since the population of community college students is rapidly expanding (Mullin and Phillippe 2009) and President

Obama has made increasing community college graduates and transfer rates a top priority (Anon 2011), this population is relevant to current public interests and, indeed, has been already researched for quite some time.

So what do we know about students who aspire to be vertical transfers? In particular, what do we know about the community college student population? A report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) says that community college students, when compared to traditional four-year college students, are more likely to be female and from a low income family (Horn et al. 2006). Over half of the community college student population is over 24 years old, and 61.2% are labeled as independent for financial aid purposes (compared to 38% at four-year institutions) (Horn et al. 2006). Community college students are also more likely to be from a non-white ethnicity than their peers at four-year institutions; 59% of the community college population is white, compared to 69% of the student population at four-year institutions (Horn et al. 2006). Community college students are more likely to work full-time and attend college part-time, but they are still more likely to belong to the lowest income bracket (Horn et al. 2006). Community college students, at 35%, are also far more likely than their four-year peers, at 16%, to view themselves as employees who study rather than students who work (Horn et al. 2006); this shows the difference in educational perspective at play in these institutions.

Overall, community college students have more social disadvantages hampering their quest for education than their peers at four-year institutions. Differences between two-year and four-year colleges do not stop with their populations; students utilize two-year and four-year colleges very differently. In the four-year, “traditional” model, it may make sense to measure success by graduation rates; at two-year colleges, as we will soon see, this measure does not reflect what many community college students hope to achieve. Measuring two-year colleges by

four-year standards can create some misconceptions of how well two-year colleges serve their students.

Knowing the above demographic information about community college students, it is perhaps not surprising that overall transfer rates are low. Among students who enrolled in a community college for the first time in 1989, only 33% of them had transferred to a senior institution within five years (Bradburn, Hurst, and Peng 2001). Not only are these rates low, but transfer rates were decreasing through time for all student groups (Grubb 1991). Grubb attributes these large decreases to several factors, most importantly that students are using community college for purposes other than a transfer pathway. Some students are "experimenters," and use community college to see if college is the right choice for them; others could be considered "completes" in that they only plan to and complete their associate's degree. Other students take such a long time to complete their degrees that traditional longitudinal studies miss them completely (Grubb 1991). In addition to these groups, and similar to recent findings about for-profit college students (Cottom 2013), many students attending community college are seeking vocational training, continuing education, or certification for their career and never intend to transfer to a four-year institution at all. For these and other reasons, there is trouble with assessing the competence of a community college by its transfer rate (Townsend 2002). We must look beyond the raw data and try to see who wants to transfer, who is transferring, and what can predict their success.

Rather than criticize community colleges for having low transfer rates, perhaps it is more productive to analyze those students who successfully transfer. What are the social characteristics of successful transfer students? Keep in mind that there is still some ambiguity concerning the definition of potential transfer students and thus successful transfer students as

well. A NCES report analyzing transfer data uses a total of eight different definitions for potential transfer students (Bradburn et al. 2001), and this hardly comprises an exhaustive list of possible definitions. Even so, through the proverbial fog of data, we can make a few generalizations about the likelihood of transfer within the community college student population as a whole. Most notably, higher socioeconomic status is correlated with higher rates of transfer no matter the numerator and denominator of the potential transfer pool. As you become more restrictive in defining the denominator (excluding more students from the pool), we are left with consistently more students from high socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds who end up transferring (Bailey, Jenkins, and Leinbach 2005; Bradburn et al. 2001).

A 1977 report by the NCES also showed several trends in transfer rates (Peng 1977), specifically that students from higher socioeconomic statuses and who have high ability, aspirations, and college performance are more likely to transfer. Also, white students transfer more than black students, and black students transfer more than Hispanic students. These negative odds are multiplied if a minority student has to take remedial courses; while remedial courses do not effect white students' transfer rates, they significantly decrease transfer rates for African American and Hispanic students (Bailey et al. 2005). Age also plays a factor, in that younger, traditionally aged students (ages 18-24) are more likely to transfer than non-traditional students (24+) (Bradburn et al. 2001). None of these results are particularly surprising; it is well known and has been long established that attainment and achievement in the American Education system is stratified significantly by socioeconomic status and race. All of these statistics taken in sum paint a bleak but not unanticipated picture of educational equity in the community college track.

Among those students who transfer, completion rates at their four-year colleges are low. An NCES report in 2003-04 said that only 29% of students who began at a two-year public institution had transferred and completed a bachelor's within six years of their initial enrollment (Radford et al. 2010). The report showed that there were other groups of students who transferred (either horizontally or vertically) and were still working towards their degrees, but a full 24.5% dropped out of college completely even after they took the initiative to transfer schools (Radford et al. 2010). An education system that allows so many students to fall through the cracks has some serious flaws that should not be overlooked; if community colleges are a supposed path to educational equity, why do so few students complete their education?

Combining the information about who ends up transferring with the low completion rates even after transferring, Dougherty's (Dougherty and Kienzl 2006; Dougherty 1987) concerns about the efficacy of the community college system seem quite valid. When so few students manage to successfully navigate the pathway to completing a four-year degree, researchers have to question whether this system is truly working towards social efficacy (Dougherty and Kienzl 2006; Dougherty 1987; Dowd, Cheslock, and Melguizo 2008; Eaton 1988; Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer 2009; Lee and Frank 1990). While questions of educational equity are vitally important, these topics are outside of the scope of this paper. Rather than lament low transfer rates and inequitable rates between social groups, here we focus on those students who make it to the four-year institution. What academic, social, and collegiate institutional factors are helping them succeed? Once we can answer these questions, perhaps we have a hope of increasing their completion rates at four-year institutions which could act back to affect low transfer rates.

What is Success?

Before we can discover what helps transfer student succeed, we need to define how success is measured when it comes to community colleges and their students. At the collegiate level, we have seen the dangers of using transfer rates as a measure of success; however, on an individual level, making the transfer to a four-year college is a success story in and of itself (Bensimon, Dowd, and Davila 2009; Calcagno et al. 2008; Davies and Kratky 2000; Ellis 2013; Gray Davies and Dickmann 1998; Handel 2007; Hoachlander et al. 2003). Making the transition from a two-year to four-year college involves overcoming many administrative obstacles that make transfer student admissions more complicated than four-year traditional admissions (e.g. providing copies of multiple transcripts, getting copies of old test scores, meeting later and varying deadlines that often do not match across institutions).

Most of the research focuses on what social characteristics lead to higher rates of retention, focusing on retention and/or degree completion as the ultimate goal and mark of a successful transfer student (Davies and Kratky 2000; Freeman, Martin Conley, and Brooks 2006; Ishitani 2008; Lee, Mackie-Lewis, and Marks 1993; Linton 2008; Pascarella, Smart, and Ethington 1986; Schlossberg 1989; Townsend, McNerny, and Arnold 1993). Other researchers label students who achieve other measures of academic success, such as achieving and maintaining a high G.P.A. or avoiding “transfer shock”(Hills 1965), as successful transfer students (Berger and Malaney 2003; Carlan and Byxbe 2000; Diaz 1992; Ditchkoff, Laband, and Hanby 2003; Duggan and Pickering 2008; Glass Jr and Harrington 2002; Hills 1965; Jackson 2010; Kuh et al. 2008; Schlossberg 1989; Townsend et al. 1993; Volkwein, King, and Terenzini 1986). Other researchers, mostly in the student affairs literature, view post-transfer adjustment to the new college environment as the goal in and of itself (Berger and Malaney 2003; Davies and

Casey 1999; Eggleston and Laanan 2001, 2001; Ishitani and McKitrick 2010; Jackson 2010; Kodama 2002; Laanan, Starobin, and Eggleston 2010; Laanan 1996, 2001; Linton 2008; McCormick et al. 2009; Schlossberg 1989; Tobolowsky and Cox 2012; Townley et al. 2013; Townsend and Wilson 2006). Retention, academic adjustment, and social integration then are just some of the many varying definitions of what it means to be a successful transfer student.

While it is clear that the definitions of success vary significantly, only by understanding all of the elements that go into transfer student success will we learn how to better serve transfer students' needs (Eggleston and Laanan 2001). To this end, this study will examine success on three dimensions: collegiate adjustment (e.g. familiarity with collegiate culture, norms, and resources), academic integration (e.g. achieving a high grade point average, enjoying classes, adapting to the level of coursework), and social integration (e.g. making new friends and networks, making connections with faculty members, feeling part of the campus community).

What Factors Influence Transfer Student Success?

Now that we have a basic understanding of what makes a transfer "successful," we can begin to examine what makes transfer students more likely to be successful at their four-year institutions once they arrive. This is the true meat of the topic at hand, since this study is interviewing students who already made the transfer and are in a position to either succeed or fail at a senior institution. Many individual factors are known that help transfer students succeed; while some of them are ascriptive, others can be impacted by college level change. While these factors are not able to be affected by universities, we know that gender (Freeman et al. 2006; Jackson 2010; Kodama 2002) and race (Berger and Malaney 2003; Carlan and Byxbe 2000) matter for transfer student academic and social integration. Being an older, non-traditional student is positively correlated with four-year G.P.A., but negatively impacts social interactions

(Freeman et al. 2006; Pennington 2006). As would be expected, socioeconomic status is also positively correlated with almost all measures of transfer student success (Wang 2013).

There are many things that colleges and universities can do to positively impact transfer students. Student personal factors, such as having a belief that they were prepared by their junior college (Berger and Malaney 2003; Ellis 2013), being highly motivated and having high educational expectations (Ellis 2013; Wang 2013), and having high levels of family support (Elling et al. 2013) all positively impact transfer student success. There are other student academic factors that make a difference for success, including transferring with a high G.P.A. at the previous institution (Carlan and Byxbe 2000; Ditchkoff et al. 2003; Elling et al. 2013), having knowledge of requirements, staying in close contact with academic advisors, and being prepared for the transfer (Berger and Malaney 2003; Kodama 2002). We also know that different factors matter more for different transfer students depending on how many credits are transferred (e.g. how long they have been in college) (Duggan and Pickering 2008). While there is little research concerning the positive impacts of social integration on completion or academic success, social factors can be positive outcomes in and of themselves. We know that being engaged in the campus community is a common trait of successful students (Ellis 2013), but we do not know which direction causality flows. Even so, it is reasonable to believe that social integration is important for overall college success and is thus worthy of study.

Outside of the personal attributes of the student, which are highly variable and oftentimes uncontrollable, there are also institutional factors that make a difference, including the availability of financial aid and scholarships for transfer students (Handel 2011; Pennington 2006), providing transfer student orientation programs (Rhine and Milligan 2000), and providing on campus living and working possibilities for transfer students (Kodama 2002). If the pre-

transfer institution is relatively small, that can increase the likelihood transferring (although the exact reasons for this effect are still unclear) (Calcagno et al. 2008). Inter-institutional faculty exchanges are also helpful, but even more helpful are articulation agreements between universities (Davies and Casey 1999; Dougherty 1987; Handel 2011). Articulation agreements help students transfer the maximum number of academic credits and keep students on track for a timely graduation. Especially with so much institutional "swirling" (Rab 2004) of students, where students take many courses within an institution yet make little progress towards graduation, keeping students on track and avoiding the discouragement of having to retake courses is of the upmost importance. Finally, institutions can provide specialized assistance in the form of workshops and transfer centers for community college transfer students; many of these students are non-traditional and have non-traditional needs that are not easily met through the already institutionalized channels (Laanan et al. 2010; Laanan 2001). Keep in mind that all of these results originate from very different types of senior institutions. Much of the research studies transfer students in large, public research universities (Glass Jr and Harrington 2002; Townsend and Wilson 2006), although some focus on private liberal arts institutions as well (Cejda, Rewey, and Kaylor 1998). This is an important distinction to keep in mind because not all of the factors discussed above may affect transitions the same way when transferring to a private university.

Due to the complexity of the questions asked about transfer students, there is a wide range of methodology at play in this field. Quantitative analysis of large data sets is most common when investigating who makes the transfer and who ends up graduating. Within the subject of this paper, there is an emphasis on qualitative interviews and focus groups (especially in student affairs literature). Laanan (Laanan 2007) put out a call for more qualitative work to

ensure that the entire picture of the transfer process was being captured and not just the outcomes or endpoints that are so broadly studied. Large data sets only show a certain part of the picture and cannot show us how all of the factors identified above interact with each other to support successful students. Since we know a great deal about who ends up succeeding, it is time to find out from where their success is coming.

THEORETICAL MODELS

Now that we have established a basic understanding of the current knowledge in the field, we can contextualize this knowledge by applying a theoretical framework. There is not a lot of sociological theory at play in the research that we have reviewed so far, but a few frameworks and concepts are very useful for understanding the current knowledge base. The most relevant theoretical models for this topic, transfer student success at an elite, private university, are Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, social capital, and habitus; Tinto's model of Student Integration, and institutional theory.

Cultural Capital, Social Capital, and Habitus

First, let us unpack some important Bourdieusian concepts for educational transitions: cultural capital, social capital, and habitus. The term "cultural capital" was coined by Bourdieu in his work, *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu himself provides several different definitions of cultural capital that vary significantly. His most educationally relevant usage, from which most modern practice in education research stems, conceptualizes cultural capital as informal academic standards, including linguistic aptitude, experience within an academic culture, formal knowledge, and academic credentials (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Today, there is a plethora of definitions of cultural capital. To help attenuate the complexity of the term, Lamont and Lareau define cultural capital as "institutionalized, i.e. widely shared, high status cultural signals

(attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion" (Lamont and Lareau 1988). This definition emphasizes the institutionalized nature of cultural capital and stresses that it is comprised of status signals that are used for social exclusion. Cultural capital is linked with social class in such a way that, by rewarding those individuals with high levels of cultural capital, society reproduces its stratification patterns from generation to generation.

In the educational literature, cultural capital is primarily measured as engagement with and knowledge of high culture (Aschaffenburg and Maas 1997; DiMaggio and Mohr 1985). Knowledge of high culture sends signals to teachers (who also have high levels of high cultural knowledge) that the bearers are of the right class and status to fully participate in the education system. Students who demonstrate knowledge of proper culture are given deferential treatment over students who do not; these differential patterns of treatment, throughout time, serve to exclude the lower classes from gaining the full benefits of education and to reproduce the social structure. In a similar vein with a slightly different focus, Lareau emphasizes that the particular pattern of parental engagement with the school favored by middle class parents, one of high intensity engagement, is treated preferably to the pattern of engagement found in working class homes, one of professional deference to teachers (Lareau 2000). Here it is not so much knowledge of high culture such as art, music, and dance, but rather of a preferred method of engagement and interaction with the education system by the teachers and middle class parents that gains special treatment.

Tying in closely to this concept is Kane's work on friendships and social networks in college (Kane 2011). She found that students with dense (e.g. closely connected, tight knit) networks have greater difficulty making the transition to college, since colleges are based on

sparse (e.g. widespread, professional) networks. This provides an advantage to higher level socioeconomic status groups, since they are more likely to use sparse networks regularly. In addition to the differences in network structure, Kane points to differences in what she calls "network know-how," a type of cultural or social capital which informs students' networking and friendship decisions that is unequally stratified between social classes and genders. Having cultural and social knowledge about institutional norms helps students make the networks and connections essential to their social standing and integration into the university. Similar to Lareau, here we can see different patterns of interaction with educational institutions based on social class background and cultural capital resources.

Social capital, while referenced by Bourdieu, is attributed more to Coleman's work for its role in educational research (Coleman 1988). Social capital can be understood as connections and social relationships that can help transform cultural capital into human capital and various types of social advantages; research has shown that social capital can create many advantages within an elite institution of higher education (Martin 2013). For example, coming from an influential or legacy family can open doors for college admissions that might be closed based on academic merit; being in good standing with a professor can help students obtain letters of recommendation, learn about research opportunities, or take advanced coursework in their field. It is easy to see how social capital would interact with the patterns of interaction referenced above; if your social circle is comprised of people who are aware of the proper social cues and contacts, you will have a higher likelihood of knowing them as well (Lareau 2000). Social capital plays a pivotal role in creating a cumulative advantage for individuals with high levels of cultural capital. Those with sufficient cultural capital will be able to accumulate social capital more efficiently, which in turn helps increase their levels of cultural capital. Cultural capital, as a

resource held by the individual, is empowered through the collective nature of social capital. Coupled with cultural capital, social capital can grant many transitional advantages in a highly stratified education system (Martin 2013); unfortunately, its role in transfer student success is under studied and underappreciated. A better understanding of the differences in social resources that transfer students utilize in their transition will illuminate the role that social capital plays.

It is not a coincidence that rewarded patterns of behaviors in the education system are those of higher socioeconomic status groups. Knowledge about collegiate culture is not equally distributed throughout the population; collegiate culture is precisely designed to reward high socioeconomic status individuals because they are the ones who dictate the rules of engagement. Education rewards individuals who know more about college and other high cultural forms (e.g. classical music, art, theater) so those in power can ensure that their progeny remain in power; when you make the rules, it only makes sense to ensure that you will win. Bourdieu would argue that social reproductive forces help to ensure that students from higher class families, where the parents have themselves attended college, are more familiar, knowledgeable, and comfortable within a collegiate environment than their lower class peers. We can see evidence of this in elementary schools from Lareau's work (Lareau 2000) and with college freshman from Kane's research (Kane 2011); the question is thus if these principles translate to the topic at hand. Are there social patterns of interaction and knowledge that help transfer students negotiate their educational pathway? We can benefit from a more thorough understanding of how students will benefit from having knowledge of college norms, procedures, and expectations when interacting with administrators, faculty, and other students. Knowledge of the cultural norms can facilitate productive social interactions, which in turn promote positive collegiate experiences.

This leads us to one final Bourdieusian concept that could play a key role in transfer student success: habitus. Habitus, as defined by Bourdieu, is “a system of dispositions, that is, of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting, and thinking, or a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception, and action” (Bourdieu 2005). DuMais gives an insightful overview of habitus in her work on cultural capital, habitus, gender, and educational transitions (Dumais 2002). She explains that “it is necessary to consider both one’s resources (capital) and the orientation one has toward using those resources (habitus)” when studying educational transitions (Dumais 2002). Habitus, then, as a set of assumed and taken-for-granted truths about the structure of the world, influences how individuals function within institutions and invest their various capitals.

In his work on comedy, Friedman makes some remarkable insights into the habitus of upwardly mobile individuals that are relevant to this discussion of community college transfer students, a highly mobile population (Friedman 2012). Friedman shows that habitus are not as static as Bourdieu asserted in his earlier work; indeed, habitus can and do change among the upwardly mobile in society; however, qualifying the popular “cultural omnivore” thesis, Friedman shows that the upwardly mobile often have mixed feelings about their newfound status. While they are comfortable in a wide arena of social groups, this population constantly engages in identity management and justifications of their two discordant sets of preferences, attitudes, and behaviors. The upwardly mobile can experience “status anxiety” as they try to reconcile their past life with the life they are discovering in their newfound societal roles. In short, the upwardly mobile can be classified as a “culturally homeless” population in that their discordant sets of habitus do not allow them to truly belong to any group (Friedman 2012). Granfield relates these concepts to education in his work on upwardly mobile working class students who attend an elite

law school (Granfield 1991). Similar to Friedman, he finds that these upwardly mobile students experience significant “identity ambivalence” negotiating their newfound roles as students of an elite law school. The stigma associated with their working class backgrounds leads to a lack of confidence about their place and role in the institution. I suggest this can be compared to Halle’s work on art found in American homes; those without high levels of cultural capital or a high socioeconomic habitus do not feel comfortable asserting an opinion on art they perceive as being too abstract or advanced for them to fully understand (Halle 1996). In sum, the upwardly mobile, lacking an engrained habitus to give them full confidence in their newfound roles, are prone to experience status anxiety in areas of culture and cultural knowledge.

The concept of habitus has a lot to offer to the current transfer student literature. The influence of habitus in collegiate transitions can be compared to that of boat floating in a stream; students with an understanding of the cultural and institutionalized norms and networks within a college environment find themselves gently floating through the water, while students without such knowledge may feel their boats fighting the current at every step. Since college administrators and students with the proper habitus are swimming with its assistance, they may be blissfully unaware that the current even exists; one only becomes conscious of the current when one tries to maneuver upstream. By gaining a more thorough understanding of the uses and application of a student’s habitus to transfer and networking processes, we can more fully reveal institutionalized undercurrents.

This conception of the role of habitus for the upwardly mobile raises some questions about community college transfer students, especially when transferring to an elite, private university. Do community college students come to Emory with a previously assimilated habitus that they learned throughout their previous college experiences? Does their identification and

comfort level with dominant institutional habitus impact their success at integrating to the new environment? Through qualitative study on the attitudes, knowledge of, and preferences for educational integration among this population, we can learn not just about transfer students but also more of the upwardly mobile in our society. By looking at the educational habitus and social interaction patterns of the research participants, we will more clearly understand how underlying social and cultural values can shape a college experience.

Despite the importance of these concepts, specific investigations of the roles of social and cultural capital or habitus within transfer student literature are few and far between. The closest equivalent would be the concept of "transfer student capital" that Laanan proposed in his 2010 work, which broadly refers to knowledge that will help transfer students succeed (Laanan et al. 2010). It is surprising that the role of concepts this important in the sociological literature would be thus far neglected regarding transfer students, especially when transferring to an elite university that is a great social distance from their family of origin. Elite universities are accustomed to dealing with and built to address the issues of a particular type of student; typically, those with a high socioeconomic background and sufficient levels of cultural and social capital to gain admission to an elite university. Since community college transfer students are likely to be of a lower socioeconomic status than their 4 year peers, lower levels of cultural capital (or "network know-how") could be contributing to problems they experience with social integration and in negotiating a successful transition in general. Additionally, Kane says that the working class and minorities are more likely to have naturally dense networks; this works against them in a university setting. However, this study was about freshmen and first-year graduate students; how can we apply this work to transfer students? When colleges are built to assume more capital and knowledge inherent in their incoming students, those without the expected level

of “know-how” may be at a disadvantage. This study hopes to begin to fill these gaps and identify a system of cultural and social factors that either assist or hinder transfer students’ success in a four-year college environment.

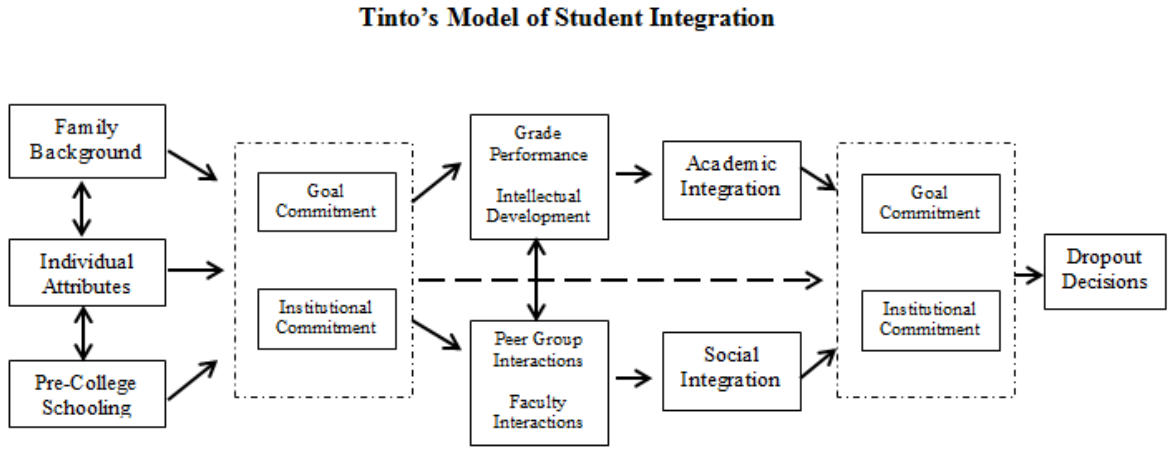
Tinto’s Model of Student Integration

To sum up many pages of explanation, Tinto’s model says that students first separate from their group of origin and then integrate themselves into their new environment; the amount of congruence between a student’s goals and the institution’s goals on academic and social factors will help facilitate their integration which in turn affects their dedication to their degree (Figure 1). Factors external and internal to the institution (e.g. student grade performance, faculty interactions, and peer group interactions) affect students’ academic and social integration, which in turn will impact student retention. While explaining Tinto’s model, Cabrera et al. say:

> “Other factors being equal, the match between an individual's characteristics and those of the institution shape two underlying individual commitments: a commitment to completing college (goal commitment) and a commitment to his or her respective institution (institutional commitment) (Cabrera et al. 1992).”

Since completion is the ultimate goal, we can set sub-goals for academic and social integration as a means to this end. Metz provides a wonderful summary of the development of this theory and its role in student persistence literature (Metz 2002). For this study, we will focus on the work developing this theory with two-year college students and other non-traditional students (who were initially neglected in Tinto’s model).

Figure 1



While his model is quite complex, a few main factors are tested broadly; specifically, the concepts of academic and social integration are seen as vital for freshmen's' eventual success. There is some application on the community college level as well; Bers applied this model to students still enrolled in community college and showed that it has predictive value for student persistence (Bers 1988). Nora and Rendon also applied this model to community college students and showed that academic integration and social integration were significant predictors for students' predisposition to transfer to a four-year institution (Nora and Rendon 1990). Despite the possible applicability of this model to all students, most research on this model has a primary focus on traditional students enrolling in a four-year college, and the work that has been done on community college students stops at the transfer and does not see how this model applies to their integration at their transfer institution. This leaves the question open for whether this model applies to students transferring to a new institution.

Tinto's model has also been applied to non-traditionally aged students returning to school; the findings indicate that only social integration, rather than social and academic integration, mattered as a key factor for their retention (Ashar and Skenes 1993). This makes

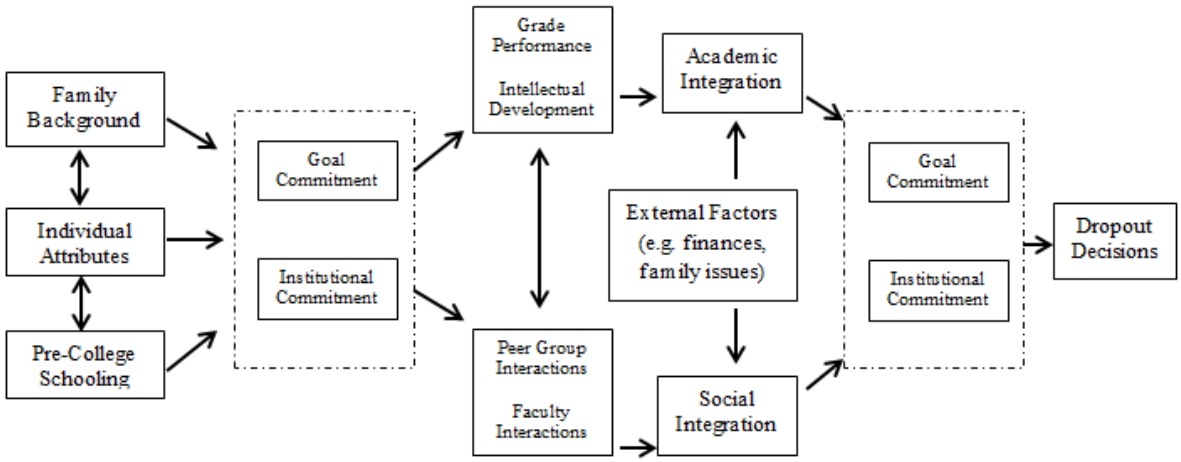
sense in light of the moderate and contradictory empirical support found for academic integration's effects on student persistence (Kuh et al. 2011). Generally, we know that social integration plays a larger role at 4 year residential institutions for persistence while academic integration is more important in 2 year and 4 year commuter institutions (Pascarella and Chapman 1983), and that different types of social support (family vs. friends) matter for different racial and social groups (Kuh et al. 2011). Coupling this finding with the fact that social integration matters more for non-traditionally aged students, we can expect that the social factors of integration will matter significantly for non-traditionally aged students going to a 4 year residential institution.

Tinto's theory is not free of criticism. Cabrera et al. (1992) found significant overlap between Tinto's model of student integration and Bean's model of student departure. While this does not invalidate the model, it does show possible overlap between theories predicting various student outcomes. The model is strengthened by integrating Bean's focus on external as well as internal factors that influence academic and social integration, especially for non-traditional students (Bean and Metzner 1985; Cabrera et al. 1992), which I will do in this paper. Other researchers caution against the over application of Tinto's model; with mixed empirical support for the impact of academic integration and a plethora of additional significant factors for student integration and retention outside of those he proposes, we should proceed with caution against making sweeping arguments (Kuh et al. 2011; Metz 2002). Despite this, I found that Tinto's model provides a useful, although not exclusive, framework for analyzing student retention factors; specifically, this theory helps us focus in on academic and social factors to see how they interact with a student's background to enhance or detract from students' outcomes. Do academic and social factors work in the same ways for transfer students at a four-year college as

they do for freshmen? By adding in Bean's emphasis on factors external to the college environment (especially for nontraditional students), our model is strengthened and looks more like Figure 2 below. Based on this revised model of Student Integration, we can explore if there are any differences between this modeling and how these factors play out for the transfer student population.

Figure 2

Tinto's (Modified) Model of Student Integration



QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

With our feet on solid empirical and theoretical ground, now we can turn again to the current research. What questions are raised by the current research? What do we still need to know about transfer students? First, while we know a great deal about institutional factors on an institutional level, we lack a clear understanding of how college characteristics can make a difference on a personal level. Based on previous research, we would expect to find that social integration matters more for non-traditionally aged students, and for those students attending a four-year residential institution. But how can a student's background interact with institutional

culture to impact integration and adjustment? What institutional factors are most important for facilitating a smooth transition process for transfer students?

In addition, we lack a fundamental understanding about how college student's habitus interacts with their environment to support their academic and social progress. Students' habitus guides them in a particular direction and path for investing their cultural and social resources; how do these predispositions interact with a college setting to assist or hinder transfer student success? What role does cultural capital play in college adjustment for transfer students? Social capital doesn't matter as much for community college students while they are enrolled in community college (Pascarella and Chapman 1983); does this change when they go to a four-year institution, or is it something innate in the students themselves that they require less social ties? This ties in to Kane's concept of "network know-how." Freshman can either benefit or suffer from the interaction patterns they learned from their social backgrounds; how do transfer students negotiate the new social and academic spaces of a four-year college? Based on Friedman's observations about how habitus can change among the upwardly mobile, we would expect to see some "status anxiety" and shifts in motivations among a community college transfer population at an elite university; what role does this changing habitus play in their ability to adapt?

CONCLUSION

In summary, there are many sociological concepts and models that can be usefully applied to the study of transfer students. By researching transfer students in a sociological manner, focusing on understanding the processes at play rather than just the statistical realities, we have a better opportunity of discovering more efficient methods of assisting students in their transition. Community college transfer students are a unique portion of the student population in

that they present higher education with both promise and challenge. The population is incredibly diverse, with varying levels of cultural capital and social capital resources, and thus requires intensive research to discover the nuances of their transitions. There are many issues pertaining to community college students that are difficult to disentangle; they are largely from lower class groups, and additionally are attending institutions that are not known for high success rates. Within the community college transfer student population, issues of class and institutional background comingle so that the possible negative effects of each may compound to hurt educational opportunities.

To this end, a comparison of the singular case of Oxford College to community college transfer students is ideal for examining the taken for granted portions of college culture. Oxford College students are from higher class backgrounds than community college transfer students, on average, and they are part of an institution that has every motivation to help them succeed. Through a comparison of Oxford Continuees and community college transfer students, we may be able to disentangle the effects of individual levels of capital from the effects of what institution they attend. Several theoretical frameworks can be applied to evaluate the research subjects' transitions, and all of these theories apply in various ways to community college transfer students and Oxford Continuees. Through more detailed qualitative analysis, hopefully we will be able to uncover which theoretical frameworks have the most potential for explaining the academic, social, and institutional aspects of the transition process.

CHAPTER 2 – WHOM SHALL I STUDY: DESIGNING A NATURAL EXPERIMENT

Emory houses a college under its university umbrella that presents the potential for an ideal transfer process. Oxford College is a two-year college housed in a major private liberal arts University that serves approximately 900 students at any one time; once admitted, students are guaranteed acceptance to Emory after they complete their Associates Degree at Oxford with a passing grade point average of 2.0. Dougherty suggests that this arrangement should give significant advantages to the students who make the transition between campuses (Dougherty 1987). For this study on the potential impacts of cultural capital, social capital, habitus, and institutional culture on transfer students, I conducted 19 in-depth interviews in the fall semester of 2013 with community college transfer students (n=9) and Oxford Continuees (n=10). I also interviewed staff members who interact with transfer students or Oxford Continuees on a regular basis (n=6) to gain additional insight into the institutional perspective.

Oxford College by most accounts should present an idealized transfer situation. Its relationship to Emory College simulates the ultimate articulation agreement in that they are part of the same university; Dougherty indicates that this relationship should be helpful (Dougherty 1987). Oxford students have all of their credits transfer, they have access to staff and personnel on main campus from the beginning of their freshman year, they take courses with a similar level of academic rigor as their senior level institution, and there is a faculty exchange program between the two campuses; all of these factors should help make the transition smooth (Handel 2011). In addition, there are ongoing efforts to create a comprehensive orientation program specifically for Oxford Continuees to provide for their specific needs once they make the transition to main campus. Socially, Oxford Continuees make the transition to main campus with a cohort of 450 classmates with whom they spent their first two years of their undergraduate

education. By all accounts, Oxford Continuees have every institutional benefit afforded to them for their transition.

Why should we care about this unique case? There is some controversy over how much an intra-university articulation agreement helps students make the transition; Prager offers evidence that these relationships do not help as much as Dougherty proposes they should (Prager 1993). Oxford College creates a sort of natural experiment in the study of transfer students that should allow us to see what effects remain after all of these institutional efforts have been made. Oxford College students are by and large traditionally aged and come from a higher socioeconomic status than community college transfer students; also, Oxford College is a residential two-year college campus and should provide many integration benefits associated with living and working on campus. Is institutional effort enough to grant these advantages to students who need to make a transition between college campuses? In short, after controlling for so many institutional characteristics, this should be an ideal transition process. What social and institutional difficulties still remain for Oxford Continuees?

RESEARCH DESIGN

When I first started to design this project, I was repeatedly asked the same question by friends and family: why study transfer students? What makes this population unique? While any student's educational pathway will be fraught with sociological significance, transfer students present an especially rich context since they have experienced a disruption in the natural institutional flow of the university system. By fighting against the normal educational pattern that discourages transferring, transfer students are in a singular context to illustrate the educational structures and norms so often taken for granted by colleges and universities.

In order to discover the complex and rich stories of educational transition in college, I decided to conduct a series of in-depth interviews with community college transfer students (CCT students) and Oxford Continuees at Emory University. I want to know not only what students transfer but also why they transfer and what factors help or impede their journey; student interviews provide me with the opportunity to explore how these transfer students and Oxford Continuees frame their experience in making a college transition. Qualitative interviews will help me illustrate not only the demographic factors that are known to impact the transfer process (e.g. gender, socioeconomic status), but also why these factors are important when making a transition between campuses or colleges.

Another reason for a qualitative approach to this question has to do with the nature of the research currently available and the possibilities for exploration of what remains unexplained. While there is a plethora of research in this field, most of the research is centered on educational outcomes and institutional reform; very little study has been done on the sociological processes that underlay the transfer student process within the educational system. To accurately apply relevant sociological theories to the transfer student process, more in-depth information is needed than can be collected from a survey. While it is possible to use survey data to frame the current situation for transfer students, the lack of current sociological theoretical precedent makes survey research too confining for the exploratory theoretical research that is needed. In this study, I will explore the transfer student social world to discover what categorical factors need to be taken into theoretical consideration, what problems students in transition face, and what can be done to ameliorate their difficulties.

This study is unprecedented not only in a theoretical sense, but also because of the subjects. Oxford College is a unique fixture on the landscape of American higher education.

While many community colleges and states have articulation agreements that are supposed to ease the transition between a two-year and four-year college, nowhere else can we find a university so thoroughly dedicated to smoothing the transition for a particular group of students. In principle, this transition should be seamless. There is no institutional motivation (functionally, conflict-based, or otherwise) to impede these students' progress; indeed, there is an active effort being made consistently to enhance these students' experiences. Not only do Oxford Continuees avoid many institutional barriers, but their social transition should, theoretically, be eased by making the transition with a group of students with whom they began their college careers. In addition, Oxford College is held to the same level of academic standards and rigor as Emory College; the difficulty levels of academic coursework and faculty expectations should be rather consistent. The case of Oxford College presents a unique opportunity to study an idealized transition experience; when the academic level of difficulty is similar, social groups are already in place, and institutional barriers are minimized, what else remains to impede these students in their transition? A more thorough understanding of the Oxford Continuee experience promises to enlighten efforts to help transfer students.

To create a more compelling comparison, I chose to interview community college transfer students and Oxford Continuees. Both populations have attended two-year colleges, so a student would have to make a transition to another campus or college if they want to continue their education beyond an associate's degree. In contrast to horizontal transfers, who do not necessarily anticipate transferring before completing their bachelor's when they enroll, Oxford Continuees and CCT students have a transition built in to their bachelor's degree. Studying only vertical transfer students controls the population for student intentions, college structures, and ultimate endpoint of the students involved, without negating the differences between the

populations that will form the basis of this research. The few similarities in their structural origins (attending a two year college) will highlight the differential impact that these environments have on their educational pathways; for example, what is the impact of being at a two-year residential college rather than a two-year commuter college?

Obviously this population will only reveal procedural insights about a very specific portion of the population: vertical transfers to four-year, private, research institutions. I cannot draw conclusions about differences between them and students who never enroll in college, nor between these populations and students who decide not to continue. Rather than a weakness, these population dynamics enable me to analyze what mechanisms helped students decide to continue with their education while facing the significant obstacle of transferring. The participants in my study are already very successful students in that they have been accepted and transitioned to a top-twenty research university. Studying their success provides insights on the process that can help educators and administrators assist future students to follow in their steps.

To further control my sample, I decided to match my samples of students as closely as possible based on race, gender, and class year. Race and gender have previously been shown to influence how students interact with their collegiate environments and with each other and the transfer process (Kane 2011; Kodama 2002). In order to compare any differences that may arise between different races or genders, I planned to craft my sample to match as closely as possible on these dimensions. As for class year, the timing of my study was limiting on the depth of information that I would be able to obtain. Because I was collecting data in the fall semester, any students just starting at Emory would only have about one to two months to adjust to the new campus before the time of our interview. Since time tends to change perceptions, I matched the sample on class year to avoid either group having spent more time on average at Emory and thus

having the advantage of hindsight in their interviews. I set a goal to recruit ten CCT students and 10 Oxford Continuees for my study.

The work of Tobolowsky and Cox (2012) showed me the value of college staff insights for the transitioning processes in addition to learning the student perspective. Since I already had some staff contacts that I planned to utilize for recruiting my students, I decided to interview 3-5 staff members as well to get their perspectives on the process, the two student populations of interest, and their suggestions for how the process could be improved. I aimed to recruit staff members who either interfaced with transfer and Oxford students on a regular basis or who played a key role in some point of the admissions, orientation, or campus life processes.

With these conceptions for my sample in mind, I began to design recruitment methods. Being a CCT student myself, I contacted staff members who were important in providing me with information during my transition to get their feedback and ultimately their support on this project. These contacts, in turn, pointed me to their colleagues who helped with the process or interacted with CCT and Oxford students regularly. Through my staff contacts, I was also presented with a method for recruiting the students in my sample. First, two college deans agreed to send out a recruitment email to the transfer and Oxford cohorts from the previous three semesters. Since there is not a separate email listserve for CCT students, the email went out to all transfer students but specifically recruited CCT students. The cohorts contacted capture not only incoming sophomores and juniors, but also seniors who came in the previous year. In addition to the emails, I was given the opportunity to recruit at the transfer student orientation event and at an informal Oxford Continuee Association luncheon at the beginning of the Fall 2013 semester.

RESEARCH APPROVAL

I filed for approval of my research project in July of 2013 with Emory's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Part of the evaluation process involved approval of my drafted interview guide. The interview questionnaire was continually adapted throughout the duration of my interviews because I let my interviewees guide the conversation if they showed a willingness to do so. I incorporated important and recurrent topics addressed in previous interviews into subsequent interviews. For the original version, I consulted previous qualitative works dealing with transfer students as well as literature reviews calling for more qualitative work to ascertain the key points to be discussed. I organized the interview chronologically, flowing from their previous school experiences to their transition to Emory and finally their time at Emory University. I made sure to include questions that would help me sort out the significance of their academic preparedness and social support for their transition as well as any institutional barriers they encountered along the way. By the end, my questionnaire fit on three pages and covered the subjects of academics, social life, and college processes in depth (See Appendix 1).

From my pre-research inquiries I learned that estimates of the community college population at Emory placed the total population size at fewer than 20 students. Because my goal was to recruit 10 students, approximately half of the total population, I proposed extra measures to help me obtain this high participation rate. To recruit student participants, I proposed to use email recruitment from third parties (the college deans helping with my project), snowball sampling, and recruitment at college orientation events. I also requested permission to reach out to any recent alumni of Emory; I was aware of two CCT students who had recently graduated and thought it would benefit my study to get their participation. My project was approved in mid-August of 2013, and I began recruitment shortly thereafter.

RECRUITING RESPONDENTS

As I had previously discussed with the college deans, emails were sent out to all transfer students and Oxford Continuees who enrolled at Emory during the past three semesters. While these emails prompted several responses, it soon became apparent that my other proposed recruitment methods were necessary to increase my sample. With the assistance of my primary staff contact, I attended and had my research publicized at the fall 2013 transfer student orientation. I passed out recruitment flyers while students were registering for orientation and asked if any of them transferred in from a community college. In this way, I was able to contact two of my participants who would not otherwise have contacted me. Four of my community college participants responded to the recruitment emails. Two of my community college participants were previously known to me since they transferred to Emory from the same community college I had, and the remaining participant contacted me via phone within hours of the initial recruitment email being sent. In total, I recruited 9 CCT students to be interviewed. Throughout my research, I asked my participants to refer me to any friends they knew who fit the qualifications for the study. One CCT student said they knew another CCT student, but unfortunately I was unable to get in touch with that second student. Between that student and others who never responded to my emails after the initial inquiry, there were four CCT students known to me within the Emory population that I was unable to interview. Also, contrary to what I had anticipated, I was unable to get either of the recent CCT alumni to participate; they were both in graduate school and were unable to commit the time for an interview. In short, snowball sampling did not prove to be effective in such a dispersed and small population.

While initially I did not anticipate any problems in recruiting a sufficient number of Oxford Continuees, a lackluster response to the email recruitment (only 3 of the participants in

my final sample) led me to take additional steps for their recruitment as well. Despite their large numbers within the Emory student population (my staff members estimated 450 per class year for a total of 900 students), I received very few responses. In an ideal situation, I would have recruited at the parallel orientation event for Oxford Continuees in fall 2013; unfortunately, the official Oxford Continuee orientation happens in January, outside of the time-period for my research study. Instead, I attended an informal Oxford Continuee Association BBQ and ended up recruiting two participants there. Two of my other participants contacted me through my work (I have a job in the Woodruff Library) and volunteered for the study. The remaining three participants in my Oxford sample were recruited through snowball sampling from my first interviewee, which helped me to match my participant populations more closely by race, gender, and class year. In sum, 10 Oxford Continuees participated in my research. Snowball sampling proved an effective tool in this scenario because, as my staff contacts observed as well, the Oxford cohort is a close-knit community.

Since I lacked the prerequisite knowledge to identify key staff members in the transfer student or Oxford Continuee transitioning processes, I relied on snowball sampling and allowed my current staff contacts to point me towards their coworkers. I allowed all staff participants to refer me to other relevant staff members and interviewed those referred to if they responded positively to a recruitment email. This resulted in 5 staff interviews. One staff member worked on the academic side of the transition process, another worked in orientation, and the other three worked in various departments in student life and housing either on the main campus or the Clairmont campus.

SCHEDULING AND CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Once I had names and contact information for willing participants in my study, all arrangements to schedule the interviews took place via email. Email was the preferred method of contact for all but one student in my sample (Richard, a 27-year-old CCT student, preferred phone calls). As a side note, my first observation of differences between the Oxford Continuee and CCT student populations was how they utilized email messages. Oxford Continuees were faster at responding, on average, and replied in full sentences and signed their emails. This stood out in contrast to me compared to seven of nine CCT students who either regularly neglected to follow standard email formatting (5), took longer than usual to respond to my messages (3), and/or had frequent grammatical and spelling errors (2). This will be discussed further in the following chapters.

I scheduled all except four interviews to be held in library group-study rooms; I chose these rooms as my default location because they are generally accessible, private, and provide a neutral ground for the interviews. As for the interviews conducted elsewhere, because the participant was a co-worker and a friend, I conducted the first student interview at my apartment. Another was held in the participant's office (he is an alum of Oxford College and Emory College and was working for the university at the time of this study). The third was in a private group study room in the SAAC on the Clairmont Campus, very similar in nature to the library group study rooms. The last atypically located interview was conducted at the Panera Bread Company to accommodate the participant's hectic lunch schedule. All of the interviews not conducted in library group study rooms were with Oxford Continuees; all of the CCT students opted for the Woodruff Library group study rooms. The staff member interviews were scheduled via email and I interviewed them in their on-campus offices. I chose to interview them in their offices to

put them at ease and provide a quiet place where we would not be disturbed for the duration of the interview.

Student interviews ranged from 43 to 108 minutes in length; the CCT student interviews averaged 72 minutes and the Oxford Continuee interviews averaged 64 minutes. I attribute the longer length of the CCT student interviews to the fact that their educational trajectories and pathways were often more complex than Oxford Continuees. While 8 of the 10 Oxford Continuees were on a completely traditional college track, only one of the CCT students spent a typical amount of time in every stage of the educational process. This does not mean that they were behind schedule; four CCT students began at their community college because they completed high school early and either did not have time, did not know how to apply, or would not have been accepted directly to four-year institutions. While their varied educational pathways will be explored in detail later, I note it here to explain the large discrepancies between the lengths of the interviews. Staff interviews were much shorter overall, ranging from 32 to 59 minutes and averaging 44 minutes.

DATA ANALYSIS

I transcribed all but two interviews personally into Microsoft Word; the other two were transcribed by my fiancé and a close friend and were cleaned by me for accuracy. I removed the participants' names from the completed transcripts and the corresponding audio files, replacing them with randomly selected pseudonyms in all but one case where the participant elected to choose his own pseudonym (Kaliban).

After transcription was completed, I uploaded all of the de-identified transcripts to MaxQDA, a qualitative coding program. I coded both inductively and deductively, working from a list of themes that arose from my interviews and adding new codes as new themes emerged. In

all, my coding system has 127 codes that follow the chronological ordering of the interview and elaborate on sub textual themes that presented themselves during data analysis (Appendix 2). CCT student interviews averaged 135 codes, partially due to their longer length; Oxford Continuee interviews averaged 101 codes. I used my coding themes to compare and contrast my student populations' experiences before coming to Emory, while making the transition, and their current experiences at Emory University. This basic chronology serves as the basis for the organization of the following chapters, but I also highlight the academic, social, and institutional factors at play in their transitions.

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

As stated previously, it was my intention to match my samples as closely as possible based on gender, race, and class year. Towards the end of my data collection, I received an outpouring of interest from Oxford Continuees to participate in the study. At first I thought to interview all those who were interested, but time constraints made that impossible. In the end, I eliminated two Oxford Continuee interviews which had already been conducted from my sample and turned down two more interested individuals from being interviewed. I eliminated interviews that had the fewest novel contributions to the process and whose demographic characteristics were already well represented. Interestingly, two of the participants eliminated in this way were white, female, and beginning their junior class year. This demographic seemed to be the most interested in participating in this research.

My final sample can be reviewed in Appendix 1, and is matched almost exactly on gender, race, and class year. The CCT student sample (n=9) has five men and four women; the Oxford Continuee sample (n=10) has six men and four women. The CCT student sample is comprised of five white students, two African American students, one Hispanic student, and one

Asian student; the Oxford Continuee sample has four white students, two African American students, one Hispanic student, two Asian students, and one black and white biracial student. There was a little more variation between class years, since snowball sampling (which was more effective in the Oxford sample) brought more seniors than juniors and some of the CCT students lost credits in the transition (making them sophomore status even when they had spent two years at their previous college). The Oxford Continuee sample had five juniors, two seniors, two fifth year seniors (Super-Seniors), and one alum. The CCT student sample had four sophomores, three juniors, and two seniors. When considering the purpose behind controlling for class year (amount of time spent on campus), seven CCT students were interviewed in their first semester as well as five Oxford Continuees[1]. Despite the Oxford sample having spent more time on the Emory campus, the CCT student population was, on average, slightly older than the Oxford Continuee population. The average age of the Oxford Continuee participants was 21 years old; the average age for CCT students was 22.7 years old. Controlling for class year, CCT Juniors were two years older than Oxford Juniors. These age differences are small on average, but as we will see later they have significant effects for the older participants (CCT males between ages 25 and 27). It is also interesting to point out that in both groups of students, females were more likely to be the traditional age for their cohort than men (any student over 23 years old was also male).

[1] In the CCT student sample, seven were interviewed during their first semester at Emory, one in his third semester and one in her fourth semester so that the average number of semesters spent on campus is 1.5. In the Oxford Continuee sample, five were interviewed during their first semester, two in their third semester, one after his fourth semester, and two in their fifth semester so that the average semesters spent on campus is 2.5. This is a significant variation in the amount of time spent, but the Oxford sample is skewed by two participants in their fifth semester.

A note of caution is deserved before we continue. As with any study of this nature (qualitative, small sample sizes), these results will not be generalizable in a statistical sense; however, I am searching for generalizable results not about populations but rather the relationships and processes that these populations participate in and perpetuate. Applying sociological theories to the transfer student process compared to the Oxford Continuation process will shed light on themes within the populations and set up the field for future study.

CHAPTER 3 – CAPITAL AND CONSEQUENCES

In this chapter, I will explore and elaborate on differences between the two cohorts of students that are attributable more to their individual backgrounds and predispositions than their institutional heritage. In practice, this means that there are differences between the cohorts that do not fall strictly along institutional lines. I hope to demonstrate that differences in cultural capital, social capital, and habitus, resources that are stratified by class, have a significant impact on the ability of students in transition to adjust successfully to their new environment. First, I will provide a brief refresher on what I mean by these terms. Next I will provide an overview of the sample along demographic variables relevant to this discussion, and then redefine the groups into high cultural capital and low cultural capital groups for the purposes of comparison in this chapter. Two main patterns can be conceptualized as stemming from individual rather than institutionally linked differences: academic achievement and the decision to attend college. I will also explore some general trends in the difficulties faced by students in transition from both cohorts and relate how these difficulties can be attenuated or exacerbated by different habitus and capital levels. The chapter concludes with the theoretical implications of this research and some recommendations for educational policy.

DEFINING OUR TERMS

Before turning to our discussion of how cultural capital, social capital, and habitus interact with the college environment to assist or hinder integration, let me clarify my working definitions of these terms as they apply to this topic and my research. Rather than focusing on knowledge of and participation in high cultural activities, I will focus on my respondent's knowledge about academic culture of the college or, in other words, how familiar they are with the norms and expectations of Emory College. While high cultural knowledge may additionally

help students in the classroom and/or social settings, having a demonstrable knowledge of academic norms, linguistic aptitude, and even a particular positive attitude that is highly valued in collegiate settings is significantly associated with my respondents' ability to adjust to the cultural and social context of the school. This type of applicable knowledge, I propose, facilitates students' access to critical information more directly than the eventual rewards that may be attained by displaying high cultural knowledge in the classroom. Similar to Lareau's work in elementary schools, cultural capital here can be embodied through knowledge of interaction patterns, college policies and procedures, a general familiarity with the collegiate setting as an institution of education, and the confidence to be active and take agency in your educational career. Relevant social capital, in this situation, would comprise of social connections that help students gain information about the college environment that allows them to accurately shape their expectations and behaviors. This knowledge is not distributed evenly throughout the population, but is skewed in favor of high socioeconomic status groups and those with more experience in the education system, i.e. children of highly educated parents.

Having the information to construct accurate expectations is only one piece of the puzzle; another is knowing how to best utilize this knowledge to promote integration. Habitus, as a taken-for-granted mode of operation, shapes how a given student will choose to prioritize, manage, and invest their cultural and social capital resources within the college. When confronted with a difficult situation, the more closely aligned the priorities and habitus of the individual and institution are, the smoother the resolution process will be. A student's habitus will influence their expectations of college and their perception of the reality they face, so a close match between the habitus of the college and the habitus of the student will facilitate a smooth transition.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

As explained in Chapter 2, I conducted purposive sampling towards the end of my data collection in an effort to match my samples closely according to race, gender, and class year. These are all variables that have been shown to impact college integration levels; matching the samples on these factors helps me control for variation along these lines. Both cohorts are predominantly white, with 2 African Americans, 1 Hispanic, and at least 1 Asian in each sample. While some interesting racial themes arose throughout the course of the interviews, these are outside the scope of this study and so will be bracketed from consideration. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I was very successful in aligning my samples by race and gender, and only slightly less successful in matching by class year. The Oxford cohort has been at Emory slightly longer than the CCT cohort.

There are some significant differences in my cohorts based on social class background and parental levels of education. I did not ask directly about family finances; rather, I obtained a rough but relevant estimate of their social class by asking if they were receiving financial aid as well as how much education their parents completed. These pieces of information paint a rather clear picture of the cohorts' class backgrounds. The CCT students come from less educated families than the Oxford students (Figure 3), and they are slightly more likely to be on financial aid both at their community college and at Emory (Figure 4). Three students from the Oxford sample were not receiving need-based financial aid of any kind (Figure 5), while the only CCT student not on financial aid was ineligible because of her status as an international student. Two of the Oxford students not receiving need-based financial aid represent the most highly educated family backgrounds in the sample, while three of the CCT students receiving financial aid came from families with the least higher education. The class differences here become especially

evident when taking the cost of attendance into account; three of the Oxford students were able to afford Oxford and Emory level tuition without need-based assistance, while only one CCT student (an international ineligible to receive assistance) paid in full.

Figure 3 – Highest Level of Parental Educational Attainment

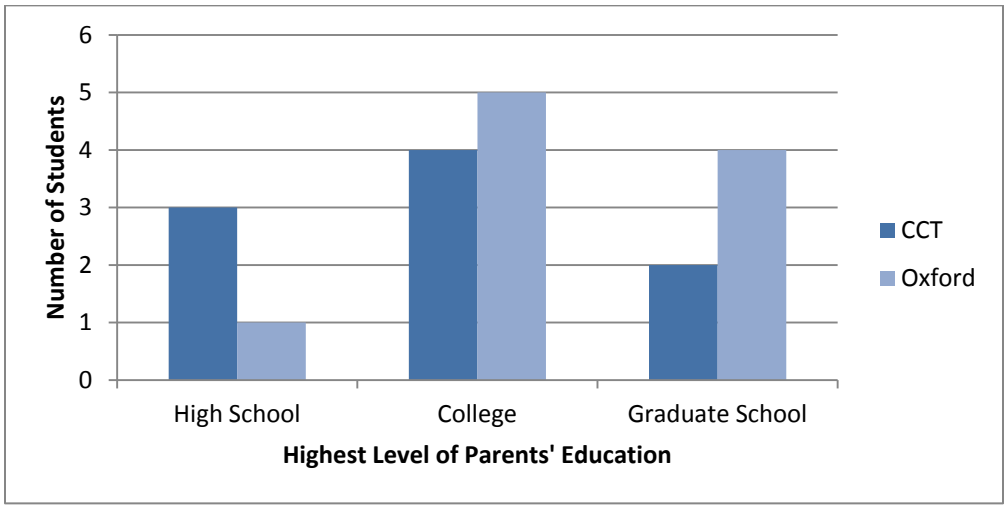


Figure 4 – CCT Students receiving need-based financial aid

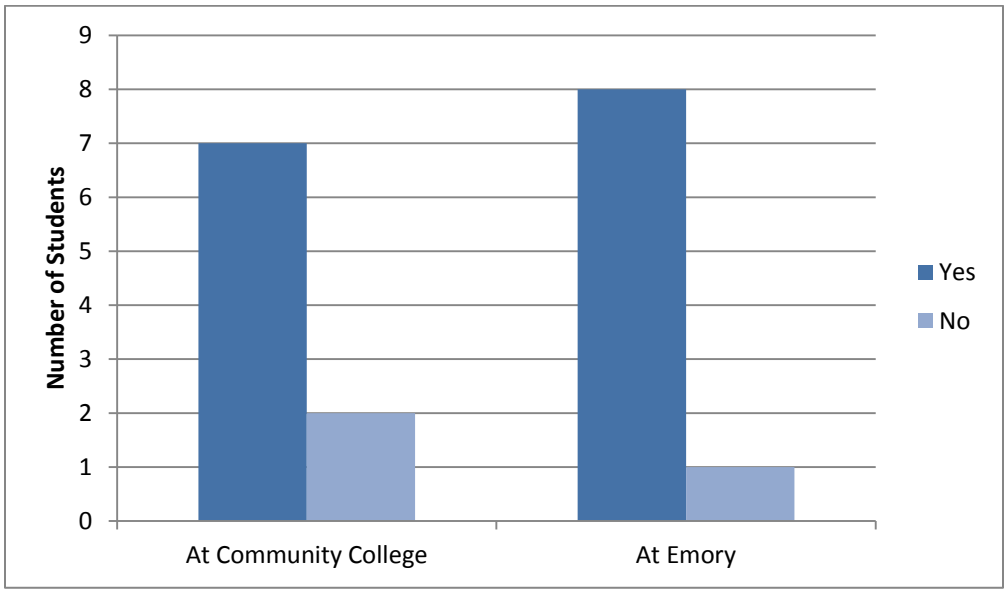
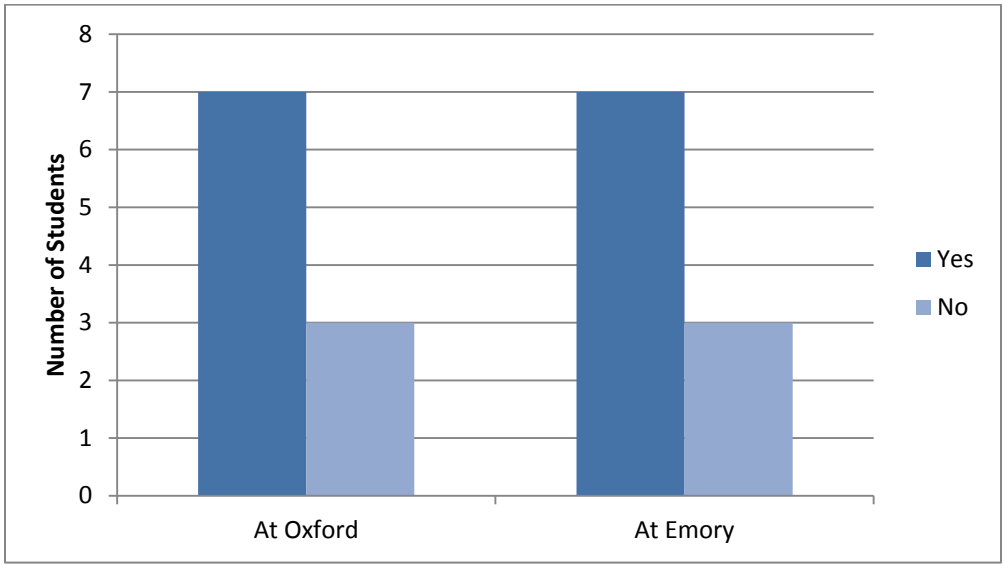


Figure 5 – Oxford Students receiving need-based financial aid



In order to compare the effects of capital levels and habitus, we must have some variation in the sample along these lines. I found variation in cultural capital levels from the very beginning stages of recruitment. Through emailing my potential pool of participations, I observed a lack of cultural observance and linguistic deficiency in a number of my CCT participants through their emailed language and formatting. My initial observations were confirmed during the interviews as the same participants used more colloquial and less refined manners of speech, which signaled that their background differed from their peers. Another set of participants, while linguistically similar to their Emory University peers, lacked certain standards of professionalism that I realized I unwittingly expected to encounter from Emory students such as responding promptly to emails, confirming appointment times for the interviews, and showing up on time.

While at first I dismissed these as simply the result of studying busy college students, I took notice when the pattern coincided with students whose parents had little experience with the system of higher education, received little outside financial or emotional support for their

educational goals, and came from less affluent backgrounds. This is not to say that all students who came from lower backgrounds functioned in this manner, but rather than those who functioned in this manner were more likely to be from a lower class background. I split the participants into the following groups based on capital levels and habitus observed throughout the course of the interviews; these distinctions ended up splitting the CCT cohort in two while leaving the Oxford cohort intact. For the sake of clarity, these groups will be called HCC (high cultural capital) and LCC (low cultural capital).

Table 1 – HCC and LCC Students (listed in order interviewed)

High Cultural Capital Group					Low Cultural Capital Group				
Student	Cohort	Race	Gender	Year	Student	Cohort	Race	Gender	Year
Kaliban	OX	M	M	SS	Alice	CC	W	F	J
Brian	OX	H	M	S	Steve	CC	B	M	J
Cheryl	CC	W	F	S	Ron	CC	W	M	J
Alexander	CC	W	M	S	Kayla	CC	W	F	J
Erin	OX	W	F	J	Richard	CC	H	M	J
James	OX	B	M	A					
Lucy	CC	A	F	J					
Albert	OX	A	M	J					
Chris	OX	A	M	S					
Mary	OX	W	F	J					
Christina	OX	W	F	J					
Garrett	OX	B	M	SS					
Trevor	CC	B	M	J					

Cohort: CC = Community College Transfer, OX = Oxford Continuee
Race: W = White, B = Black, A = Asian, M = Mixed, H = Hispanic
Gender: F = Female, M = Male
Class Year: J = Junior, S = Senior, SS = Super-Senior, A = Alum

To clarify, these groups are not a pre-labelling system I used to conduct my analyses, but rather the main result that emerged from my data. There are two distinct patterns of college engagement at play within the CCT student population; understanding more about these differences and what causes these different patterns will inform future efforts to help each group.

Since transfer students are a unique population, the more we know about what they need and why they need it, the better we will be able to anticipate and address their shortcomings.

My initial observation based on linguistic abilities and professionalism was reflected in the interviews. The LCC group demonstrated less knowledge about college procedures, experienced more difficulty navigating the college admissions and/or financial aid process, experienced more issues with social interactions, and had less accurate assumptions of what would be expected from them in the university setting. Overall, the HCC group had far more cultural knowledge and resources at their disposal to invest as they so desired. These observations and differences between the groups will be explored and explained in more depth in the following pages. While the LCC group is comprised entirely of CCT students, the important point here is that many CCT students fall into the HCC group; this shows that these differences are not purely institutional, but have a basis on individual capital. The membership of the HCC group emphasizes that these groups were created based on personal levels of cultural capital and background knowledge brought when entering the university rather than institutional heritage.

The following sections address two key aspects of transitioning that vary more significantly by individual levels of capital or habitus than by institutional background: how students think about attending college, and their patterns of academic achievement and how they coincide with social capital resources. Capital-based and habitus-based situations concern, primarily, the resources students bring with them into the college environment and their default methods of operation in an environment. Returning to our water based metaphor from Chapter 1 for clarity: capital is the gas in the boat, providing the ability to travel, where habitus is the rudder, determining which way you go. These issues are largely in close alignment with each other (those students with high levels of capital have a high-class habitus to match, and the

opposite is true for students with low levels of capital) but do not absolutely coincide with college background.

WAYS OF THINKING: GOING TO COLLEGE

Earlier I alluded to some fundamental differences between CCT students in the HCC group versus the LCC group. When looking at their decision to go college, the HCC group had resources in place to facilitate their eventual enrollment at Emory. Their parents took them on tours, or they were actively involved in the college decision process. HCC Oxford and CCT students alike always anticipated attending college and continuing on with their educations after graduating from their previous two-year college. When I asked HCC students why they decided to attend their previous college, they responded by answering how they decided which specific college they ended up attending.

> *Albert (Oxford): The tour was amazing, and I really liked the small intimate campus. Everyone seemed to know each other. It was really friendly, really great environment, I thought it was really good. And at that time I thought it would be a good fit for me and I still agree that it was a good decision.*

> *Amy (Oxford): Yeah. Well, I had done a lot of college searching with my brother, and so the first school that he went to look at when he was a junior and I was a freshman in high school was Oxford. And I loved it, because I just remember going there with him and we went to a lot of sessions and I thought the food was really good and I thought that they just really took care of us and I loved the campus and I loved how it was so small. So honestly, I knew the day I visited with him that's where I wanted to go.*

> *Trevor (Community College): So when I came [to America] I took the SAT and I did excellent on it so I applied to [state university] and I applied to [other state university] and I got in. When I wanted to enroll over there, that's when my cousin… told me it would be advisable for me to start from a smaller college so that I could get used to the education of American system before I transition myself into a bigger college or else if I maybe decide to go to [other state university] I might get confused.*

HCC students were already familiar with the high-class habitus that dictates college fit as an important decision criterion. They never had any question about whether they would attend college or not; for them, it was simply a matter of which college they would attend. Their family and friends also participated in this taken-for-granted decision to go to college and provided plenty of encouragement and support for their college decisions.

LCC students not only had to think hard about which college to attend, but also whether they should even attend college. The majority of LCC students did not anticipate that they would attend college, nor plan for it during their high school years. Here, some LCC students relate their thought process as they decided to go to college:

> *Alice: You know, my friends were applying to community college as well. And we all kind of didn't know what we wanted to do, and it's, and didn't do so well. Like for that group of people at my high school, we just all applied to my community college because it was guaranteed acceptance and, you know, so we just figured we'd get in.*

> *Ron: I definitely didn't think I would be going back to college after high school. Basically because I made a lot of, I made really good money from the time I was 13 working, so I really didn't, still stuck in my mindset that I wouldn't need to further my education at the time. I was in my cloud there for a little while thinking that I could keep working in restaurants and umpiring baseball games and being fine.*

Steve's reasoning was even less traditional:

> *Interviewer: Why did you decide to go to college as opposed to not going to college?*
>
> *Steve: Because I wanted to run track*
>
> *Interviewer: You wanted to run track? Okay*
>
> *Steve: That was my motivation, was to run track*

For LCC students, the decision to attend college was neither automatic nor always greeted with enthusiasm or support from their family. Emotionally and financially, LCC students received very mixed levels of support in beginning their college career.

Interviewer: So you didn't really need your family's financial assistance then?

Alice: Um, no but they wouldn't, they wouldn't really be willing to give it anyways. They, it was, I kinda… they aren't very supportive of me going to college in the first place, so I kind of do my own thing when it comes to school. Like I tell them how it's going, but I, it doesn't really go past that.

Interviewer: Do they just not approve of college, or…

Alice: Um, I know my dad doesn't, at all. My dad has told me many times to quit school and get a job. He thinks it's a waste of time. He thinks that, you know, I don't have any money and he doesn't understand why I don't have money and, you know, I'm going to be spending this amount of years in college just not working and in his mind it's, you know, you, once you are 18 or of that age you just get a job, you go into the work field and, you know, you start your life.

Interviewer: Was there any kind of emotional support from your family in your decision to go back to school?

Richard: Um, no. There was not. They pushed me towards sort of the trade school. "Well why don't you become a plumber," or they instilled in me this idea that I should be a sanitation worker. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with being a sanitation worker. But that's not what I wanted to do. I think doing so would be, would have been to sell myself short.

Interviewer: Okay, so not a lot of understanding from your family, why you were pursuing your path

Richard: No, there was, in fact what they, here's an interesting cultural thing. They, my family is for the most part Puerto Rican but there is also African American mixed in. And what they would say is, you're changing. You are becoming white. Do you think you are white?

Having high educational goals is not an innately born quality; it is learned from your social circles. Alice's and Richard's families did not participate in the same taken-for-granted assumption that college attendance was mandatory for entrance into the adult world. In the end, LCC students had to learn the importance of having educational goals from social resources outside of their family. Alice's pathway changed significantly when her boyfriend convinced her

to not pursue an occupational associate's degree but instead aim straight for her highest goal of a doctorate, while roadblocks for advancement at Ron's job gave him the impetus to return to school.

> *Alice: So I met [my boyfriend] around the time I was applying to the physical therapy assistant program at my community college. And, I kind of, like the week before we said, you know, if I don't get in, or in the couple weeks leading up to it we considered that even if I don't get it, or even if I do get in that I should still consider not going and just doing physical therapy, going on that route right away. You know, because it was, he was saying it's a waste of time and I agreed with him. You know I didn't really think about it like that, but, you know it would have been a waste of time and then I might not have even gone back for my doctorate and ended up just having an associate's….*
>
> *Interviewer: Okay, so after you kind of stepped back and looked you said well maybe this will actually be something that will stop me instead of…*
>
> *Alice: Right, right. Because I, you know, I guess I didn't think too far into it. But that, you know if I had started working then I might not have gone back and I might have just sort of, and that would have been capped off, like, you know, that would have been it. And, so I really, really thought about that, about if, about the life I wanted to have, if I would be okay with making that much money, if I would be okay with just having an associate's and it's, you know, um… so, that's how I was thinking.*

> *Interviewer: So why did you decide to attend your community college?*
>
> *Ron: Cause I was getting yanked around. I wanted to become a manager at [his workplace]. I was there for 6 years, doing really well, been promoted at all the stores that we went to. I worked at 3 different stores. And then I had all the recommendations from my area directors and general managers and all that stuff. And the process was really ridiculous, and it was based on other people getting around to doing things, and it wasn't working out. I had been working so Kayla could go to school and not have to worry about going to work, and she had been doing good so we kinda decided that I should go back to school as well and see what happened from there. That's basically why.*

Alice, Ron, and others learned the importance of education through social situations outside of their families. Rather than having an innate and automatic inclination towards education, LCC students had to re-learn the habitus given to them by their families in order to

pursue further education. Starting at their community colleges was an important first step, one that LCC students had to fight their predispositions to begin and continue in their education. Without the indoctrinated and automatic nature of attending college, LCC students begin their uphill fight before they even step foot on a college campus. Before even beginning college, we can see that HCC students have significant advantages of knowledge and support that LCC students lack.

PATTERNS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

Between the HCC and LCC groups, there are varying patterns of academic achievement at their respective educational institutions that I believe are tied to their respective levels of social capital at each stage of the process. HCC students have a more consistent supply of social capital from their involved and engaged parents, while LCC students depend on either random influxes of social capital or the social capital provided by the institution. Social support is not a necessary cause for high academic achievement, but in many cases having a stable source of support that encourages education can be a sufficient cause to push on-the-fence students in the right direction. Understandably, then, we would expect more flux in achievement for the LCC groups as their social supports go through phases of transition.

The HCC group is filled with high achievers during their high school years that proceed to middling or high achievement at their previous college and continue in the same vein at Emory. These are students for whom grades are not an issue. They may not make straight A's, but they certainly aren't getting anything less than B's. When asked about her grades at Oxford, Amy provided a typical response:

> *Amy: I did pretty well. Yeah. I mean, my first semester I, I mean there were decent grades but definitely it took me a while to get adjusted academically and then, but by spring of my freshman year it was getting better.*

Interviewer: Okay, so decent like B's at first and then you went up from there?

Amy: Mm hmm, I got some A's (laughs) So, yeah.

HCC students still experience slight shifts in achievement while transitioning between schools. As Amy notes, her first semester was the most difficult and it got easier from there. For the vast majority, though, these variations in grades are slight and do not reflect larger difficulties outside of those associated with adjusting to a new academic environment. Once HCC students reach Emory, their GPAs remain very high and are all well over the 3.0 mark. Most Oxford students either maintain their Oxford GPA or see it go down by about .1 points, while CCT students may see variation closer to .5 points.

The LCC group experiences a very different pattern; during high school, they are middling achievers at best and often do very poorly. Richard actually dropped out of high school and completed his G.E.D. before continuing on to his community college; Ron and Steve did not take high school seriously and barely graduated. This pattern changes, often dramatically, once they reach the college they attended prior to Emory. All of the CCT students in the LCC group experienced high levels of achievement at their community colleges, attaining, on average, a 3.82 GPA. At this point, I would like to offer a brief reminder that these high levels of achievement among CCT students are largely a function of the group being studied; not all students who transfer to universities from a community college experience high levels of achievement at their community college, but the ones who transfer to Emory University certainly do or else they would not have made it through the admissions process. Having noted that, we can still see that the LCC students being observed in this sample are very high achievers at their community colleges.

Once the LCC group begins at Emory, however, their high levels of achievement flounder; they experience high levels of "transfer shock" (Hills 1965). Kayla's GPA fell from 3.83 to 2.93, Ron's from 3.9 to 2.64, Alice's from 3.74 to 1.57, and Steve's from 3.8 to 1.588. Unfortunately, Richard was unable to be reached for a follow up GPA after the conclusion of the fall semester. Overall, the LCC group saw their GPA's drop by an average of over 1.6 points. What happened? We must, of course, recognize the differing levels of rigor associated with attending a community college versus a top-twenty research university. These students are also the ones that were more likely to perform poorly in high school; perhaps their community college education simply did not prepare them for the rigor of coursework at an elite private research institution. However, this is not a fully satisfactory explanation. Cheryl, Alex, Lucy, and Trevor, all CCT students but in the HCC group, experienced significantly less transfer shock, more in the range of .5 points. They experienced similarly high levels of achievement at their community colleges, and all CCT students cited similar levels of ease in their coursework at their community colleges. So while coursework has an impact, we cannot attribute this drastic change only to differences in college rigor.

For LCC students, variation in academic achievement coincides with increasing and decreasing levels of cultural and social support. The little capital they had in high school was positively augmented by an influx of outside capital when they entered their previous institution and these new, higher levels of capital influenced their academic achievement and goals. In high school, CCT students in the LCC group had little family support for education and little motivation to achieve in general. Richard expresses the most extreme example:

> *Richard: I eventually dropped out of high school in 10th grade, I believe that was after my second go at 10th grade actually. And I was 16. And from there I sort of gravitated towards sports, I really, yeah so just playing sports. And my family, you know, not understanding the importance of education, really didn't see an issue or didn't take issue*

> *with me having dropped out of school. So it was pretty normal for them, so it was a lack of reaction there.*

A more moderate and representative situation comes from Alice:

> *Interviewer: So tell me just a little bit about your high school experience. What was that like?*
>
> *Alice: It was not the best. My, I wasn't very focused at that time. Like, I didn't, my parents never pushed me with grades and study and things, so I, you know, and at that point I didn't push myself. So, I mean I didn't do horrible but I kind of just got by, did okay.*

Either before or during their community college career, however, there is a significant change in their social support that enables them to continue in their education. Here a fundamental distinction can be drawn between the CCT students belonging in the HCC group versus the LCC group. Similar to the distinction Lareau found in elementary schools between working class and upper-middle class parents (Lareau 2000), CCT students in the HCC group have parents who are highly engaged in their education from the beginning and thus experience more constant levels of social capital and support throughout their education:

> *Alexander (HCC): Yeah, I mean my mom is very demanding (laughter). So uh, yeah you always have to get high grades in our house, it's always, I mean I was more scared of my mom than my teachers, to be honest (laughter). Cause my mom wouldn't accept like a B for an answer, but my teachers wouldn't care, so yeah. My mom is very, I mean even, even to this day she still likes to check up on our college, she loves to boast about her kids (laughter).*

> *Trevor (HCC): If you have an educated parent they will push you toward a direction that is going to help you eventually yourself. Because my parents always tell me do this, do that; I felt like they just bothering me. Let me do what I want to do! But right now, I'm looking on back into my life, and I'm like, wow, I think I made perfect decisions in terms of my parents directing me to do this and do that.*

LCC students, on the other hand, do not have involved or even supportive parents and thus depend on social support, encouragement, and direction from an outside source. The majority of the LCC students are able to point to a significant other or mentor who significantly changed their views of education and gave them the motivation to continue on:

> *Alice (LCC): And so I did that, and then it's, my mindset changed because I met this guy who, he is doing computer engineering, and he also went to my community college. And so we dated and he, he was very, very driven. And he took two years off after high school and, you know, got focused. Because he also did, like, mediocre in high school, and he would tell me about his experiences and that really got me motivated, so it kind of just switched things around.*

> *Richard (LCC): Yeah, and I sort of coasted through until I was about 18 or 19, when I started dating someone from Columbia University. And she influenced me to get back in to school. She saw something in me, at least academically*

> *Steve (LCC): And came across my professor who was like my mentor, who ended up becoming my mentor at that moment, and he was like, he asked me how I was doing and I'm like "I'm alright," whatever. And we just started talking and I was like, and he said "Drop by my office tomorrow." And then I think he, like, it got better from there, academic wise.*

> *Kayla (LCC): I enjoyed the teachers. I had really good relationships with a lot of teachers, a lot of professors.*

These students' achievement levels went up significantly once they encountered additional resources of social support that their home life did not provide, not just in their community college setting. Alice and Steve were both enrolled in their community colleges for a few semesters before they encountered new levels of social support; only when an outside source of support stepped in did they find the motivation to succeed academically. This is not to say that social resources are necessary for academic achievement, but that they may be sufficient to tip

the scale in favor of achievement and motivation. LCC students do better in school when they have outside social support for their academic efforts.

The above observations are supported by the observable downward trend in achievement once the LCC students leave their base of social support and come to a new university. At Emory, LCC students have few social connections or motivations provided beyond their own personal drive. While this is sufficient for many of them, others were feeling the strain of their newfound academic environment without the social supports they had taken for granted at their previous institution:

> *Kayla: But, I don't know, just overall, it's been harder adjusting to…professors that really don't care if you are overwhelmed, and not really having anybody that cares in depth. Like I had professors that if I was having a really bad day and felt like I was having a mental breakdown my professors were, like, there immediately, and they would talk it out with me and they cared about me genuinely, and I know it takes time to establish those relationships, but I don't have a single class where I feel like the professor genuinely cares to establish a relationship, let alone hear about how overwhelmed I am feeling with the coursework.*

While HCC group members were not immune from experiencing distress while getting adjusted to the new academic environment, they had knowledge and people to fall back on when things got rough. The LCC group depended on external social resources for support as they addressed their academic environments, but, in this new environment where they lacked connections, they had left their social support at their previous college. Their GPAs fell just as they moved away from their social bases; we will discuss the extent of their social and academic difficulties later in this chapter and in the next. For now, we can just note that the LCC group experienced much more transfer shock than the HCC group, possibly due to the removal of the social supports that helped them begin their college career initially.

To sum up the previous two sections, we have seen significant variation between HCC and LCC students on two counts: habitus orientations towards college attendance and academic achievement patterns once they enroll. HCC students have always intended to go to college and make plans to do so during their high school years. Even those who went to a community college knew that transferring was their ultimate goal. There was never any question of not attending college, nor mention of it in our interviews. Once they start college, they have high achievement and largely maintain that achievement throughout their college careers. HCC students follow the institutionalized expectations of college students that most take for granted, thus demonstrating their larger capital resources. LCC students, on the other hand, have to be presented with a reason or impetus to attend or continue in their college educations. Their academic achievement is much more variable and varies with the social support they receive from sources outside of their families. They do not follow a traditional pathway in to college enrollment and do not take part in the widely shared conception of traditional expectations of college attendance. In these ways, we can see that these students do have lower levels of capital resources than their HCC peers.

The above analyses help us identify another fundamental divide between community college transfer students with high cultural capital and low cultural capital: HCC students enroll in community colleges primarily as a matter of convenience; LCC students enroll in community college because they have no other viable options. As a matter of capital resources and habitus, HCC students who attend community colleges do not vary significantly from HCC students who begin their college careers at Oxford College. In this light, these distinctions become almost commonsensical. As we can see in the similarities between Oxford Continuees and the high cultural capital CCT students, students with similar levels of cultural and social capital and who

possess similar educational habitus will have more similar educational outcomes regardless of their institution of origin. Students with lower levels of capital resources and working-class habitus experience the educational system differently from their HCC peers. For these outcomes, attitudes towards college attendance and achievement levels, individual resources are more important for success than institutional background.

INTEGRATION AT EMORY

Through their predispositions towards attending college and the patterns of achievement and social support already observed, we can now justly label the students by their group names: high cultural capital and low cultural capital. But while students may possess different levels of resources, cultural, social, and otherwise, what practical influence do these capitals have on their integration? Now we will turn to the outcomes at the heart of this research: academic, social, and institutional cultural integration at Emory University. Many of the difficulties in transitioning discussed below are common to both groups, but the ways that they address them vary by both their individual capital resources and their institutional backgrounds. The remainder of this chapter will look at the former, leaving institutionally derived differences for Chapter 4. We will see that a lack of cultural capital (knowledge about the educational system and how it works in a particular college setting) and social capital can be detrimental to a smooth transition because it leads to deficiencies in critical transitional information. Students with less knowledge and resources had more difficulty adjusting to a new college financially, academically, and socially.

Before addressing cultural and social capital as they play out in college processes, I would first like to address the role of economic capital. Several students in the sample were currently experiencing significant financial stress that was obviously detrimental to their college

integration. Ron, Kayla, Steve, and Garrett all expressed direct ways that their lack of economic capital was negatively impacting their academic and social integration.

> *Kayla: Yeah. I guess I mean there was a big financial struggle because…they didn't accept all of [Ron's] credits and so he got classified as a Sophomore…and so that resulted in us losing $1000 of financial aid that we had originally budgeted for… we had to buy all of our books off of our loan money because we didn't even get our money dispersed until about a week and a half to two weeks into the semester and by then all of my classes were like "You need to get your books now."*

> *Garrett: The classes were difficult, but the main thing is I was commuting and that's kind of what, you know, started a long chain of events. So basically, our septic tank had broken that summer and it was like $8,000 to replace. So it was really sudden, right before going back to school, so there was like no money for housing.*

Even, or perhaps especially at, a private, well-funded research university, not all students escape financial pressures. But rather than lament any insufficiency of college resources, Ron, Kayla, and Garrett cited their personal situations as the cause of their financial woes. There is a high level of personal responsibility assumed for financial hardship; because it is viewed as a personal issue, they were reluctant to question the college's role in helping them address the issue. Even when the financial aid office provided her with objectively false information, Kayla assumed full responsibility for a mix up in her financial aid paperwork. Garrett, as the only student with financial troubles who was in attendance at Emory for longer than one semester, lamented in hindsight his lack of knowledge about the system and the options available to him and his family:

> *Garrett: There are kind of like unwritten rules of life that, like, I guess you're expected to know. If you don't come from a background where those things are, like, I guess kind of taught to you, you'll just never take advantage of them. Or, sometimes I'll hesitate because the connotation in like your culture is different than what's actually going on. So, again, had my parents known more about the process of, if you are experiencing financial difficulties, just go up there and like, tell them, you know. Because I've had friends in my group that like they had financial difficulties, they just go up there and they tell them*

> *their sob story and, like, you know, they're like, oh, we'll think about it, but, you know, I mean, it ends up working out at least. They meet you halfway. They try, you know? So I figured, again, that would have been fairly easy to do, but that was just never an option.*

Garrett's dismay concerning his lack of knowledge of the unwritten rules is a perfect example of how cultural capital can help mitigate difficult situations. Garrett's parents, having been educated in another country, did not know that it was not a mark of shame to appeal a financial aid offer or file a request for additional assistance in extenuating circumstances; this lack of knowledge led to a lack in economic capital, which in turn compelled Garrett to live off campus, commute, and get a job; all of these activities worked together to disconnect him from the traditional student body. These difficulties were not due to the college being unwilling to help; as Garrett said, many of his friends had done the same thing and had their situation ameliorated. Economic capital apparently only became a problem for Garrett and his family because they did not know enough about the system, or lacked the cultural capital, to feel confident confronting what they assumed to be an already set decision.

It could be said that these students were struggling because they overstepped their financial means; this would be a valid point, except Ron, Kayla, and Steve were all receiving the maximum financial aid given by the school. Subsisting on financial aid money without additional outside resources appears to be a trial in and of itself, regardless of academic ability or social competence. The current financial aid system makes it difficult for students with slightly non-traditional needs (Ron and Kayla, for example, needed to live off campus because they are married and own a dog) to subsist comfortably without drawing on additional resources. For students without externally provided resources to draw upon, financial strain can easily become a heavy burden. Their dependency on the capital provided by the college, economically, culturally,

and socially, can place them in precarious situations when that capital is not readily accessible. The role of economic security will be explored further in the following chapter.

A significant impact of cultural and social capital is that knowledge of college norms allows students to create realistic expectations of what academic and social demands will be placed on them. My interviews indicate that, regardless of the specific issue, the most detrimental thing for each student is simply the one that they were not anticipating and for which they found themselves unprepared. For some (e.g. Alice, Steve, Ron, Kayla, Trevor, Mary, Garrett), the rigor of the coursework was proving to be a strain they had not anticipated. Most of the students who expressed academic difficulties were CCT students; again, we cannot ignore that there is an objective difference in the rigor of coursework between a community college and a private research university such as Emory. However, Oxford students also experienced academic difficulties. Mary found herself struggling in a class that she expected to be an easy A since it was in her major and only an introductory level course. She had taken many harder courses before, but because of a common preconception at Oxford that Emory classes are easier, adding in the fact that this was only a 100 level course, she did not anticipate any difficulties and this was causing her significant stress. Similarly, Ron and Kayla lamented that nobody warned them that they should not take 19 credit hours in their first semester. Their graduate advisor from the Office of Undergraduate Education indicated to them that many Emory students take that many credit hours, and did not give them reason to think that it would be unduly difficult. Both Ron and Kayla ended up dropping one of their courses and attributed their lower GPAs largely to this overload on their schedules that they did not expect to be an issue.

This theme runs true in the social realm as well. A misalignment of expectations about social life at Emory was more detrimental than simply coming in to a new context. We can see

this most clearly among the Oxford Continuees. One would think that Oxford Continuees, having already belonged to the same college culture and making the transition with a large cohort of friends and acquaintances, should adjust relatively easily to social life on a new campus, and many of them do. Kaliban, Bryan, Albert, and Christina all experienced very smooth social transitions, especially in comparison to the other interviewees. While there were some common themes in social stresses from the Oxford sample (e.g. not seeing their friends as much as they had anticipated, lack of a communal dining experience, difficulty making new friends on the Atlanta campus), the biggest problems varied by individual and aligned with their expectation blind-spots, so to speak. Referring back to our water-based metaphor from Chapter 1, an unanticipated wave can easily capsize an otherwise seaworthy boat.

Eleven of nineteen participants provide similar examples, and their experiences share this common theme. The unexpected, whether social, academic, or institutional, is the most detrimental; therefore, the logical solution is to provide students with as much access to accurate information as possible to more closely align their expectations with reality. Access to information (in a way that it will be understood and received) is one of the key benefits of social capital and cultural capital. Since aligning expectations with reality is key, and social and cultural capital can help to increase information access that informs expectations, it is a small and logical step to say that social and cultural capital help students by helping them align their expectations with realistic depictions of college life. Cultural and social capital can help students adjust to and make adjustments for unanticipated stressors and situations that could otherwise negatively impact their GPAs and academic careers. If students do not have access to sources of cultural and social capital outside of the college, any failing of the college to provide them with sufficient information in a way that is accessible and comprehensible to them becomes doubling

troublesome since they cannot properly adjust for these deficiencies. Thus, while a brief orientation may suffice for a student who has already been largely familiarized with college norms and expectations from outside sources, the same orientation may leave another student with less capital struggling to stay afloat. Any assumptions of cultural and social capital resources made by the college are especially detrimental to students who lack outside support.

In sum, we can see that while individual pitfalls may vary from person to person, the primary areas of difficulty were those in which the participants' expectations did not match reality. This presents an interesting dilemma, from a policy point of view: how can we anticipate or predict what students do not know? This proves to be difficult in a more formal setting, since students come in to orientation meetings with varying degrees of knowledge and different expectations about the college. One of my staff contacts suggested perhaps an idealized type of orientation, centered around the concept of universal design:

> *Jessica: Universal design was actually started with kind of architectural details for people with disabilities. For example, a door handle, instead of it being a knob, so if you had arthritis or you had a disability that you couldn't turn it, it's easy to push a level or a level, you know, lever…it's things that were originally designed for people with disabilities that actually help the greater masses….And so I'm wondering though, is there really a universal design for programming or that you, one of the principles of universal design is that you do it in multiple ways…and so it's available for, in any which way, it's presenting the information in multiple ways to do it. So, maybe that's the answer.*

Rather than attempting to predict what students do not know, perhaps the key is providing contacts and resources for all sorts of information and allowing the students to pursue those areas in which they need assistance. By presenting access to information in multiple ways, students with lower reserves of personal capital could more efficiently draw on the capital of the college in a centralized and accessible manner available to all students. Arguably, that is what the college is already doing with their many departments, emails, and information sessions around

orientation time. However, many of these sessions are geared towards freshman and not the specific types of questions that transfer students and Oxford Continuees may have. Freshmen are blank slates, ready to learn about Emory's culture and readily adapt; transfer students and Oxford Continuees come with institutional baggage of policies, procedures, and norms from their previous school that, unless instructed otherwise, they may erroneously presume still apply at Emory. Taking preemptive and corrective action to break old habits could go a long way to preventing the dreaded words that none of the staff members I interviewed wanted to hear: "Nobody ever told me." More specific and practical policy recommendations along these lines will be discussed in the conclusion to this thesis.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have reviewed several key differences between individual students, regardless of their institutional background. Notably, we can separate out CCT students into two groups according to whether they attended community college out of convenience or out of necessity. Knowing this type of background information about these students can inform programs and policies designed to help transfer students; specifically, low cultural capital students may require more institutionalized and organized measures of social support in order to maintain their previous levels of success. Since they do not receive the same levels of cultural and social capital from their homes as the high cultural capital group, if these resources are not supplemented by the college then these students are being set up for trouble. This relates to the ongoing work of Tressie Cottom at Emory University (Cottom 2013), who is researching why For-Profit colleges and universities attract their specific student populations. She suggests that since these populations lack cultural and social capital resources, they are drawn to for-profits because these institutions embed all of the required capital in the admissions process rather than

assuming the student already has prerequisite knowledge. While CCT students at Emory are making a social jump, not all of them have the resources to continue to support their position once they arrive.

We also reviewed how varying levels of capital impact the information and resources available to students when interacting with their institutional settings. Since social and cultural capital are wonderful methods of obtaining information, especially in a college setting, deficiencies in these areas can allow students to form unrealistic expectations of the college environment that cause stress and uncertainty during this period of transition. For students in transition, knowledge truly is power, and in most cases this power belongs to those from high socioeconomic and highly educated backgrounds. Possessing the appropriate habitus and orientation towards college attendance along with enough capital to stabilize achievement levels throughout an educational career gives middle and upper-class students an advantage over those from less affluent and educated backgrounds. Lower-class parents and students have less experience with the educational system and are not as comfortable engaging on a peer-to-peer level with administrators and teachers, where high class parents are used to having a partnership. High class parents and students are more engaged in education, and they are able to pass on more knowledge to their kids about the system. HCC students then are at an advantage from the beginning because they know how to interact with the system and what is expected from them, whereas LCC students are starting from scratch.

Having these fundamental understandings about the different orientations towards and preconceptions of college life between the upper and lower classes explains the findings we have reviewed in this chapter. Being more engaged with and knowledgeable of the education system and college norms allows high socioeconomic students to enter college with more accurate

expectations about what the experience will entail. Having involved parents provides a baseline of social support that is key for sustaining stable patterns of academic achievement regardless of institutional context. And finally, having insufficient knowledge about college processes and norms can negatively impact integration efforts. Regardless of class background, those students whose expectations did not align with reality were blindsided, disillusioned, and were not as successful in the dimension of their expectation blind-spot.

These findings relate back to Lareau's work on the cultural and social capital resources of working class and upper-middle class parents when interacting with their children's elementary schools in a number of ways. First, we can see that these resources are stratified within the student population, and are tightly linked to a student's class position. While these resources are unequally distributed, this does not pose an advantage or disadvantage to students until they are presented with a problem. When faced with a problem, HCC students are able to activate their resources (that have taught them how to speak with people in authority as equals, and give them a sense of entitlement) to come to a swift and satisfactory resolution, one that aligns their reality with their expectations. LCC students, lacking external knowledge and resources to draw on, are dependent on the resources provided by the college. Viewed another way, students with gas in their boats (capital) are able to more easily adjust for an unanticipated wave than students floating in the river. College programs are created with embedded assumptions about the capital levels of their participants (e.g. providing only a brief orientation without explicit links to further resources), and LCC student integration outcomes can often suffer from these implicit assumptions. If the college assumes that all students have similar levels of gasoline in their boats, only those without gas will suffer the consequences.

In the following chapter, we will see that habitus is not only an inborn concept but is also shaped and molded by our college experiences. Regardless of the amount of capital an individual may possess, their capital may go for naught without an understanding of the most efficient method of investment. The concept of habitus plays into an institutionalized difference between these cohorts in how they have learned to interact with their college experience and how they decide to invest their various levels of capital. Individuals not only interact with institutions based on their habitus, but their habitus is shaped by their institutional environment. We have seen which students have sufficient gas (capital) for their boats; now, we will evaluate who knows how to read the map of the river.

CHAPTER 4 – HIERARCHY, HABITUS, AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

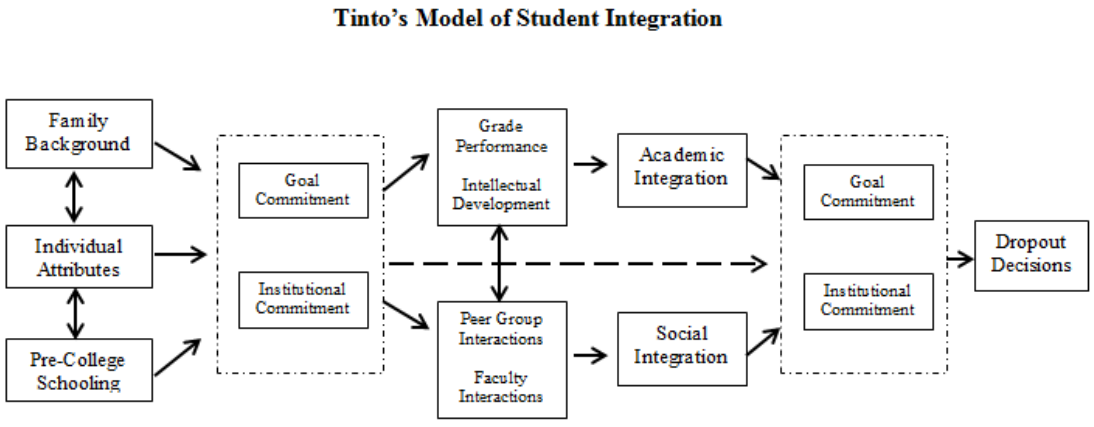
Where the previous chapter addressed how capital resources and habitus can vary by the individual, this chapter will flip the focus around and examine how college culture and context can shape individuals' expectations of college life and their patterns of interaction with college processes. As Friedman points out, habitus is not only reproduced in the social world, the social world also produces new resources for its participants (Friedman 2012). Indeed, Bourdieu himself acknowledged in his later work that habitus is not a set status but rather can be "restructured, transformed in its makeup by the pressure of objective structures" (Bourdieu 2005). How do CCT students and Oxford students systematically vary from each other, outside of their personal resources? In other terms, how do CCT and Oxford students navigate their college experiences given their differing levels of capital? Since the importance of individual capital levels has already been addressed, here I will primarily address how colleges can shape their students expectations and habitus. Variation between the groups falls under two large topics: how students prioritize their various academic needs while enrolled in college, and how students prepare themselves for and eventually address problems that arise during the transition. The first of these topics will work towards an adaptation of Tinto's model of Student Integration for transfer students. The second focuses on how college norms and procedures can influence a student's strategies for interacting with colleges in general. I will review each of these topics in turn, and conclude with some theoretical implications and practical policy recommendations based on these institutionalized differences.

PRIORITIZING COLLEGE LIFE: HIERARCHY VS. INTEGRATION

Tinto's model of Student Integration is designed around, primarily, freshman entering a four-year university (Figure 1, repeated below). While some applications of this model have

been tested with community college students (Ashar and Skenes 1993; Nora and Rendon 1990), less is known about what patterns of interaction and expectations of colleges in general community college students take with them when they transfer. How might this model vary for transfer students; what makes this group distinctive in their patterns of integration? My findings indicate that while Tinto's model shows academic and social integration as working simultaneously on different dimensions of the student's experience, community college transfer students treat financial concerns, academic concerns, and social concerns as a hierarchy. Similar to Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs, CCT students only advance to the next stage once the needs of their current situation are met. This differs from the Oxford Continuees, who, having had a traditional college freshman experience, are taught to more fully integrate different aspects of their lives into a single conception of their "college life" rather than the fragmentation we observe among CCT students.

Figure 1 – Tinto's Model of Student Integration

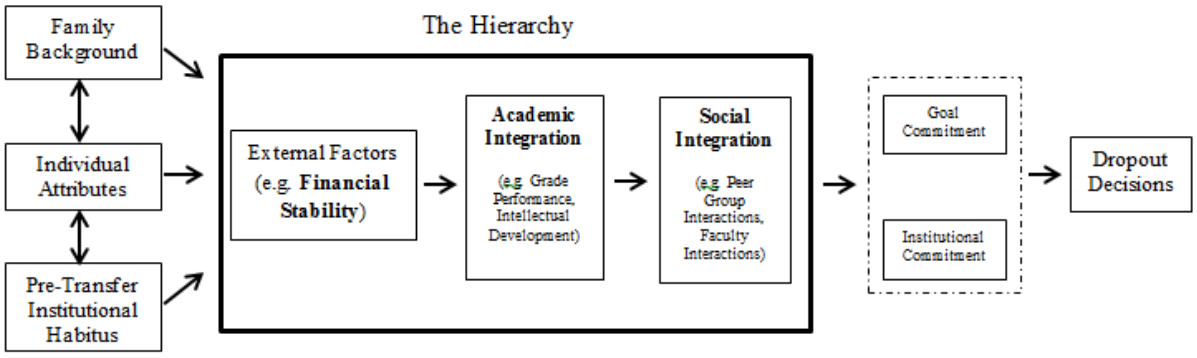


This argument rests on a number of premises that I will address in turn. First, I will demonstrate that there is a difference in how CCT and Oxford student prioritize their financial, academic, and social lives. Next, I will relate these differences in priorities to the college context

from which the students transition. Finally, with knowledge of how these dimensions are prioritized, I will give some practical policy recommendations that could help CCT students more fully integrate into the college environment.

First, do CCT students and Oxford student prioritize their academic careers in different fashions? My interviews indicate that they do. Oxford students view their college career as a cohesive whole; financial concerns, academic concerns, and social concerns flow side by side. This is most easily seen in contrast to the clear prioritization of finances and then academics before social life made by CCT students. Figure 6 displays these different views, integration versus a hierarchy.

Figure 6 – Tinto's Model of Student Integration for CCT Students



CCT students firmly prioritize their financial security over their academic interests, and their academic interests over their social lives. Ron explicitly states his priorities:

> *Interviewer: So, [you are] not active in student life and activities – do you plan to [become active]?*
>
> *Ron: I'd like to be. Like I said, hopefully, it all depends on what happens next semester and the actual differences. If we [himself and Kayla] can take less credit hours and still get by and still get the assistance. We're looking, hopefully we can, we want to cut down to more like 12, 13, or 14 credit hours as long as we can stay the extra semester at the end and they still provide us the financial aid. If that's the case, I think we'll be able to get a lot more involved, especially going forward from next semester.*

For Ron and Kayla, their financial situation had to be stabilized in order for them to be willing to take fewer credit hours, which then would allow them to become active in the student body. Only once their financial situation is secure can they fully invest in academics, and only once their academic situation is secure will they risk branching out into social groups. Because of this, we only see evidence of the hierarchy (or lack thereof) in students who were insecure in either their financial or academic situation. Most students were academically insecure initially upon entering Emory University, and express their academic priorities clearly.

> *Cheryl: I wanted to feel kind of get a sense of what Emory was like uniquely in terms of involvement and in terms of class commitment… I did feel like I didn't want to join clubs or commit to things like that until I know what kind of, what, how much I was going to need to study…*
>
> *Interviewer: Okay, yeah. So just kind of taking some time, get adjusted and then…*
>
> *Cheryl: Right, exactly, evaluate it. Exactly. I just didn't, didn't want to, I wanted to be very cautious coming in about what I committed to.*

> *Alice: So it's definitely a lot different, and now, you know I'm considering pulling back from applying for these different organizations and stuff and trying to focus now on this because, you know, at the beginning I was trying to join everything, and now that I, you know, see how my grades are working out, how my classes are going, I think I'm going to try to pull back a little and focus on this.*

> *Interviewer: So, did you, you said you were pretty active at your community college, did you anticipate maintaining the same level of involvement here at Emory?*
>
> *Lucy: Not for now because I am still kind of seeing how, what's going on in Emory. Like, I mean, like, academically. How much work I need to do in order to get good grades, that kind of thing, so not really.*

This hierarchical prioritization occurs whether or not CCT students planned on being socially active once they arrive here:

> *Alice: I wanted [my social life] to be a lot different because at my community college I felt like I was so focused on academics that I, it was a hard time for me to do anything other than that. I wouldn't go out and hang out with anybody, I would just stay in the room and study. So I did want to change that when I came here. It's, it's still in the works (chuckle) um, a great deal because the academics here are completely different, so I'm still trying to work that out.*

The distinction is thus not whether students plan to be active eventually or not, but rather what priorities emerge when they are faced with a choice between academics and social life. It is highly possible that the increased rigor and amount of coursework required of them once they arrive at Emory makes prioritization necessary if not anticipated, but CCT students illustrate this prioritization pattern regardless of how well they end up performing academically.

Achieving security on one step of the hierarchy does not guarantee success on the next level; rather, it gives the student a solid foundation on which to stand while they build on their next priority. Cheryl, who experienced no significant financial stresses while enrolled, soon built her academic foundation and then turned to her social life. This same pattern holds for Alexander, Lucy, Trevor, and Richard. While academic success does not guarantee a flourishing social life, as in Richard's case, it does free up the students' resources to invest them on another level. Students are aware that they are lacking a healthy social dimension in their lives, but do not place this on the same level of importance as their academic success.

> *Kayla: I mean, funnily enough, socially I haven't had too much trouble. I don't have a lot of time to really establish relationships because I'm really busy with homework, just keeping up with homework.*

This is a far cry from the patterns we see among Oxford students. Oxford students place equal importance on their social lives and academic interests regardless of whether they are struggling academically or not.

> *Garrett: So anyhow… that class… was taking up a lot of my time, and I didn't have enough time to put into my other courses, so that's kind of what led to the present*

> *situation in [this current class] where I was pretty much deciding am I going to go to Dooley's week, or am I going to write this 10 point assignment out of 500 points? And like, some, like I know it's not the best idea, but I was like lenient and I was like, I probably should work on my, like, social life a bit more. So I was like, screw this assignment, it's only 10 points. I'm going to go to Dooley's week this week and just, you know. So that's what I did.*

While no other students showed their priority structure this explicitly, the theme stays consistent. Garrett was also experiencing significant financial concerns throughout his college career, yet he placed equal importance on the academic and social dimensions of his life. Mary, for example, although she was struggling in some of her classes, was just as concerned if not more concerned about her social situation as other Oxford students who were more academically grounded. Even though she was struggling to keep up academically, she did not relate those efforts as negating her investments in her social life.

There is only one statement that shows a priority structure among the Oxford Continuees that more closely aligns with the CCT hierarchy:

> *Interviewer: So did you anticipate maintaining the same level of, like, student involvement as you did at Oxford?*
>
> *Erin: Yes (laughs)*
>
> *Interviewer: Yes?*
>
> *Erin: I, well, I'm, my dad said I'm not allowed to.*
>
> *Interviewer: You're not allowed to?*
>
> *Erin: No, he's like, Erin, no more. You have to work on your academics.*

In contrast to CCT students, Erin explains that this prioritization scheme is not her decision and has actually been imposed on her by her father. She herself is still highly involved in student life and student activities, regardless of her stated increased focus on academics. Since so few Oxford students were experiencing academic difficulties in my sample, there are not many

explicit examples of this prioritization scheme; however, none of the cases examined contradict these patterns. CCT students who have flourishing social lives are all performing well academically, and those who are doing well academically have a strong and solid financial base. There is more variation in the Oxford groups; Garrett, the only student with financial difficulties, expressed difficulties with his academics and social life but prioritized both equally. Mary, another student with academic problems, was not experiencing financial difficulties but equally prioritized her academic and social progress rather than submitting one to the other.

What implications do these different priority structures have? First, as asserted earlier, Tinto's model requires some adjustment to apply to transfer students. Bean's model of Student Departure began to modify Tinto's model by allowing for the influence of outside factors on student decision making; this particular case, financial concerns form the basis of the hierarchy and are often times external to the control of the institution (Bean and Metzner 1985). Additionally, rather than visualizing academic and social integration on separate and equal pathways that proceed side by side, it would be more accurate for transfer students to see each of these factors as reliant on the firm foundation of the preceding factor: finances first, academics second, and sociality third. Recognizing that students who begin under the umbrella of a four-year university have a different prioritization habitus is helpful for those in charge of providing programming and policy; addressing CCT students' concerns in the order that they view them will increase the congruency between their expectations of university life and the realities they are facing. Realizing that CCT students' view of their college life is more fragmented than that of Oxford Continuees can help facilitate simple changes in programming to align the opportunities available with the importance CCT students place on those dimensions.

We can see that the CCT hierarchy is particular to transfer students, in that Oxford Continuees do not share in this prioritization schema; but why? We have learned that habitus is largely shaped by individual capital resources and class background, but here we see high cultural capital CCT students functioning in a similar manner to their low cultural capital peers. Why do their priorities vary by college background and not by individual capital levels? I propose that institutions help to craft their students' habitus, which impacts how they interact with their college experience in the future. Students' habitus not only shapes how they interact with their college, but their college's structure can in turn shape their habitus. I propose that the key difference between Oxford Continuees and CCT students is the nature of their freshman experience; where Oxford Continuees are taught to integrate their college life expectations in to a cohesive whole through the college's expectations of them, students who attend community colleges will, out of necessity, segment their life into financial, academic, and social realms because these dimensions are treated separately at the community college level.

While my interviews did not go in to this level of abstraction and detail, outside sources and my own personal experience can paint the picture of the typical community college experience. The vast majority of students who enroll in community colleges do not live on campus; in fact, the vast majority of community colleges do not even offer on campus housing (Morest 2012). Researchers have long studied the different dynamics at play in a commuting versus a residential institution of higher education (Kodama 2002; Pascarella and Chapman 1983). Students will spend less time on campus, are less likely to be involved in clubs and social activities, and are more likely to attend part-time and work while enrolled (Morest 2012). All of these factors combine to help students at community colleges view their lives in a segmented fashion (e.g. on Mondays and Wednesdays I go to class, on Tuesdays and Thursdays I work, and

Fridays are for personal errands). College is only one part of their world and activities, and certainly is not their only place for social interaction.

> *Interviewer: Just in general, how [was] your social life previously and how [has it] been affected by Emory?*
>
> *Richard: I don't think it's been impacted by Emory, really. Because school sort of supplants work, so outside of this my social life is pretty much the same. Just, I have very good friends back at home, so I talk to them on a regular basis. I have a few friends in Atlanta that don't go to Emory that I talk to, so it's pretty much the same.*

College, in short, is primarily a place to learn and study; not a social hang out location, not a place to build primary friendships. Community college students very well may have friends on campus, but they may know these friends from a variety of outside sources such as living in the same neighborhood, working at the same job, or having attended the same high school.

This view of college is significantly different from the one promoted at a residential campus, especially one as small as Oxford College. There, students are highly encouraged to not be one-dimensional in their activities but to pursue the goal of being "well-rounded" and "balanced." This college view also lines up with the high socioeconomic habitus discussed by Stevens in his work *Creating a Class,* an ethnographic study that describes the different ways that high status versus low status students prepare themselves for college (Stevens 2009). Rather than only focusing on academic preparation, high class students and their parents work for years to create their "story" and make them into well rounded individuals. This mindset remains once they arrive at college. Education at Oxford College is not simply learning in the classroom; it is learning how to interact with your peers, learning leadership skills, and learning the dispositions that colleges reward.

It is easy to see how these different views of college can in turn act on the prioritization schemes once CCT and Oxford students make the transition to Emory. Oxford students can

continue in their already learned habitus and focus on being well-rounded individuals. Meanwhile, CCT students not only have to learn about a new college with new policies, procedures, and norms, but also learn an entirely new way of thinking about their college life in order to fit more perfectly with the college's expectations. For some, this is less of a problem; with sufficiently high capital resources, they may not ever be faced with a decision in which they have to prioritize one aspect of their college life over another, or they may find that their adaptation process goes rather smoothly.

> *Cheryl: I think I've always been interested in going to things and meeting people and trying new experiences and so I definitely, not in my first semester, but every other semester since, have pushed myself if there's an event that I just get an email about or I, you know, reading the paper and I see a lecture coming up, I just push myself to go. And I'm really happy I've done that, because I've met so many great friends and learned so many wonderful things from these lectures and programs. So, whereas at community college, there weren't really those opportunities so I didn't, if anything I was creating those opportunities as President [of the Honors College]*

For those students without large stores of capital, focusing exclusively on their academic success to the exclusion of their social life may be seen as the best way for them to invest their limited capital; after all, they are here primarily to study, not to make friends.

> *Kayla: I haven't had too much trouble with really making I guess "friendships" or whatever. I mean, I've met people to study with. I don't like studying with people too much because I feel like I can study faster on my own.*

> *Alice: I did apply for [a popular student organization]. I doubt I'll get in… But I applied. I was actually, I applied at the point where before I took exams and before I was feeling like how behind I am, so at this point I honestly kind of hope that I don't get accepted because I know if I do that I'll end up spending time with that and it will take away from my studies, so at least if I don't I can say, oh. now I have to just, you know, spend that time studying.*

Unfortunately, it seems possible that it takes a certain level of capital to appreciate the importance of capital; those with high cultural capital resources and backgrounds more fully and

easily adjust to the new integrated habitus they learn at Emory. Without higher levels of cultural capital, students may not fully appreciate the beneficial role that social support can have on ensuring college success and have a more difficult time adjusting to the integrated habitus present at Emory.

What differences do these different habitus have in students' abilities to integrate themselves into the college community? What are the benefits of an integrated versus a segmented view of college life? Importantly, the CCT habitus is more restrictive than would be optimal; with such primary focus placed on finances and academics, few students realize the positive impact that a flourishing social life can have on their academic situations. By ignoring social capital resources until their academic situations are set, they miss out on the beneficial resources that social capital can provide, such as information about tutoring services, knowledge about financial aid appeals processes, and the ability to use social interaction as a de-stressing mechanism when they are frustrated with their coursework. The extent to which CCT students experience these problems associated with their particular habitus varies directly with their incoming levels of cultural capital. I propose that these habitus, while shaped by college background, interact with student capital levels to produce different levels of success.

Since the CCT habitus and prioritization hierarchy leaves little room for pursuing social capital resources until academics are in order, CCT students are more successful socially if they bring in high levels of social capital with them. High cultural capital community college transfer students (HHC CCT students) are more likely to have sufficient economic, cultural, and social capital from outside sources that help supplement any areas where they do not receive these resources from the college. Low cultural capital community college transfer students, on the

other hand, may struggle more as they try to supplement their lack in economic, cultural, and social capital at the same time.

> *Kayla: I've had some problems this semester. It has been a really hard transition. But I don't, I can't really say it's, I mean I know it doesn't do much for your study but I can't say it's much or based off of not being prepared at Palm Beach State or Emory not giving me enough.*
>
> *Interviewer: So then what would you attribute it to?*
>
> *Kayla: I mean, it's definitely an assumption because I don't know people's financial statuses here or at any university really, but I'd say that money comes down to a big thing when you have to do it all yourself.*

Because the CCT hierarchy limits their emphasis on accumulating new social capital, those without already accumulated stores of economic, cultural, and social capital will suffer more than those who already have social resources on which to draw. These differences in capital levels have already been established in the previous chapter; the new piece of the puzzle introduced here is that their capital levels interact with the habitus they receive from their previous institution to create different outcomes. Students will experience different problems depending on the capital resources they bring with them to the institution; how they prioritize their investments in these problems varies according to how their college has shaped their habitus. For CCT students, financial stability is key to academic integration, which in turn acts as the basis for social integration. Oxford Continuees, not burdened by this hierarchy, are free to invest their capitals in whichever problems they deem most worthy. Oxford Continuees then can benefit more easily from the effects of social integration as they act back on academic integration to produce better outcomes.

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

In addition to the differences in prioritization of resources when they encounter difficulties, Oxford and CCT students also have very different habitus surrounding how they

reach for college resources when they face problems. Both groups, on various topics, lamented a lack of knowledge about the resources and opportunities available to them. The difference is that CCT students are also more likely to lay blame on themselves rather than the institution for their lack of information about the resources. To CCT students, it is simply their fault for not researching and finding out more about the opportunities available. Oxford students hold Emory to a higher standard when they encounter difficulties. For example, many Oxford and CCT students experienced social difficulties during their transition, but they view the college's role in these difficulties differently:

> *Amy (Oxford): I mean, I just sort of feel that they, there wasn't, I mean, and it could just be my experience, I'm sure there are a lot of people out there who are transitioning from Oxford and they absolutely love Emory. I'm not at that point quite yet, and maybe I'll never get there. But just, I mean, they've really, I feel that the Oxford/Emory people haven't helped in any way to transition or to get to help Oxford people get involved.*

> *Ron (CCT): There's a ton of information, you've just got to seek it out yourself and realize that there's probably going to be a little bit of misinformation depending on who you are talking about. As long as you can sort through that and know that that's coming then I guess it is okay. Except there's definitely a lot of resources here, definitely put it on your end to FIND these resources. But, I mean, they are available.*

While CCT students may or may not be more active in remedying their educational shortcomings, they are more likely to view it as their individual responsibility to search out those resources rather than the institution's responsibility to provide that information.

> *Interviewer: It sounds like you kind of created your own social integration, would that be fair to say?*
>
> *Alexander: Yeah, because, the way I tell, if you're a transfer student it's sink or swim. My roommate, one of them is a transfer, and he's still very much a recluse, kinda hides out by himself. Like, I got really involved in groups really quickly. I joined [a fraternity], I'm involved in [two on-campus student organizations]. And so I mean, I got a quick base of friends from that.*

For CCT students, individual responsibility and action are key components of their habitus. They do not wait and expect resources to come to them; they will do everything in their power to find and go to the resources. For instance, Cheryl had some difficulties during first semester at Emory; she was struggling in a class and with some health related dietary problems. After her boyfriend broke up with her, she decided to take action:

> *Cheryl: I used EPASS tutoring, so I got a tutor for the class I ended up dropping. I really tried to exhaust every possible resource because I hate to withdraw or feel like I'm giving up on something, and so, you know, and I went to office hours multiple times. I really tried everything I could think of to do… I did go to student counseling because I wanted to re-orient. I didn't want my social anxiety to just like spill in to my academic life and wreck my grades. So I was, so that was good and helpful just because they helped me to like compartmentalize how I was feeling about that versus how I was feeling about school. So that was really positive. And I think those are probably the only, I did go to Second Year Emory, the SYE program, and I did their choose a major workshop which was really great.*

While Cheryl was able to activate her higher levels of capital and find these resources, this is, unfortunately, not always the case. CCT students are not always successful in finding the resources; the important distinction is that they feel it is their responsibility to seek out and ask for assistance.

> *Richard: Emory has a plethora of resources, I know that. I just haven't been introduced to them. I tried to seek them out, but I don't know where to go, even where to begin to find, you know, utilize the library here. It's fantastic, I study here sometimes. But, you know, for if I wanted to research something, who do I go to? Who can I find to help me with these things?*
>
> *Interviewer: Okay. And when you don't know where to start, at the very least, that can be…*
>
> *Richard: It's intimidating and it kind of, you put it off. And so I'm like, well I'll just do it on my, I've done it this far on my own, I'll just do it again.*

As Richard indicates, in addition to viewing their lack of resources as their own personal situation, CCT students are also more likely to figure it out by themselves rather than always seek out resources to help them:

> *Interviewer: Alright. Did you find institutional resources that could help you, both with the academics and then you were saying the work was a problem?*
>
> *Ron: I haven't really sought out too much on the academic part like tutoring or the labs and everything, the language labs and everything. Haven't really done too much, just, you know, tried to power [it] out myself. And uh, just kinda working. Cause it's a lot of work, lot of extra work. I don't think there's anything in particular that any of these things could help me with what I'm struggling with.*

As Ron puts it, many CCT students tend to "power it out" by themselves rather than reach out to any college resources to help them. Because they view their situation as their own personal fault, it is up to them to fix it. Finally, because they view their problems as fully their own, they also tend to doubt whether there are even college resources available to help them with these problems.

There is a different attitude taken on this topic by the Oxford Continuees. Oxford Continuees are more likely to hold college resources to a higher standard. While CCT students know there are resources available but blame themselves for not pursuing them, Oxford Continuees are more likely to compare the level of assistance to Oxford and find Emory lacking.

> *Amy: Emory, I feel, could have done a lot more to reach out to the Oxford kids and maybe even provide them with like a manual of resources or something. But, I mean I'm sure it's all online but it's a matter of knowing the lingo to know what these things even mean.*
>
> ---
>
> *Mary: The club fair, I think, was awful, awful. Maybe it's just because I'm coming from Oxford so I have, like, an expectation of what it would be like, but, I mean, I couldn't even see like the names on the tables, you know, and I wasn't really going to push through a crowd, you know, of people to check out a table so that was very overwhelming to be there. The office of like involvement or whatever, I haven't talked to there, to like*

the director or assistant director of it. I guess it didn't really occur to me to check with them and be like "Hey can you tell me about your programs?" So, it's like, because I kind of feel like that's something you should do, but I don't know.

Interviewer: Alright. How would you describe Emory's communication and information that's been provided to you about these kind of social difficulties? Has there been a lot, or…

Mary: I would say no. I would say there definitely could be more communication

Interestingly, although Oxford Continuees know more about what resources are or should be available to help them in a time of need, they are not more likely to take advantage of those resources. They view the lack of available resources not as a result of their own lack of efforts to find them, but a failure of the institution to effectively communicate their options to them.

Now, I need to provide an important caveat: not all Oxford Continuees feel this way. In fact, the majority are quite happy with their transition and their time at Emory thus far. It is unfair to say that all Oxford Continuees lack motivation or personal impetus to find ways to enhance their education. Many Oxford Continuees take lots of initiative in planning their transition from Oxford College to the Atlanta campus of Emory.

Christina: By the end of last year, [I] kind of already had most of my commitments for this year lined up. So my work here, being an RA, I had already been hired. I knew I would stay on with the [community organization], I'd stay on with [student organization], and I was accepted to [academic organization] here at the end of last semester, so kind of all the things, like, I think it helped a lot that I knew that a lot of the things that I was involved with and that I was pretty decent at, I would still be doing in a different context over here.

Albert: I really wanted to stay involved. There's a lot of concern, I talked to a lot of Continuees when I was a sophomore and there's a lot of concern, like, people just basically drop off. They feel like they were over involved at Oxford so they don't want to do anything here. They stay within their same group of friends they made at Oxford, they don't try to branch out. Those are things I really didn't want happening to me, so I guess those are some goals I imposed on myself to branch out, meet new people here, see, experience the different campus.

These students who took the initiative did not experience the same social integration issues as students who were more apathetic about the process. Motivation and engagement is key for integration for Oxford Continuees.

There is a common conception among the staff members I interviewed that Oxford Continuees are widely seen as a needy population by administrators.

> *Janet: Oh, I think the hard part with Oxford Continuees is that it's a very different environment that they are coming from, and there is a lot of assumptions about whether or not Oxford Continuees have been kind of overly coddled throughout their first two years, and when they get to campus they are unprepared for the, you know, the harsh realities or, and that's probably being a little over dramatic, but I think, in general, that hand holding is something that I hear a lot.*
>
> *Interviewer: For Oxford?*
>
> *Janet: Yeah, a lot of, on this, on the Emory College side, that Oxford students have had their hands held, and so it's a little bit different when they get here. I hear that term all the time.*

To some extent, this appears to be the case. Because Oxford Continuees do not have to take initiative to continue in their education on the Atlanta campus, many of them lack the sheer motivation and willpower commonly found amongst the CCT students. This is, however, more a result of the filtering mechanisms at play when admitting transfer students; only the highly motivated will gain admission, while Oxford Continuees can afford to rely more on college-provided motivation. Here, we can note that there is a systematic difference between the CCT and Oxford students who eventually get to Emory: one group had to take agency and initiative in their education, while the other was able to stay in the institutionalized flow created by the college precisely to remove the requirement of individual initiative beyond initial admission.

Why are Oxford students less satisfied with the resources available to them than CCT students? The obvious answer is that they had grown accustomed to a certain standard of

personalized care at Oxford that CCT students had never experienced. Referring back to chapter 3, differences between expectations and reality often prove to be the biggest stumbling blocks for students in transition. The important difference here is that, when faced with a difficult situation, Oxford students are more apt to remain stagnant and not pursue resources because they don't feel they are readily available to provide what they need. CCT students are similarly not apt to take advantage of resources, but more for lack of knowledge of them than lack of approval of what is available. The high standards of care to which Oxford Continuees are accustomed make them a more highly visible population to administrators than CCT students who "power it out" themselves, but Oxford Continuees are not necessarily more needy than the CCT population.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have reviewed different patterns of interaction with college life and resources that vary consistently depending on which school the student transitioned from. CCT students are more likely to prioritize and treat their college life in a segmented fashion, where Oxford Continuees integrate their expectations of college life into a cohesive whole. Additionally, CCT students are more likely to take individual responsibility when they face difficulties in their transition, where Oxford Continuees hold Emory resources to a higher standard and expect more of them than is currently offered.

What implications do these findings have for policy and practice? Primarily, providing a closer match between college resources offered and the prioritization methodology used by CCT students could allow them to engage in their college experience more fully. Through an extended orientation program, CCT students could be gradually exposed to resources and first help stabilize their financial situations, then be provided with academic resources, and finally be given chances to integrate socially. Under the current system, students are mostly expected to

join clubs and organizations at the beginning of every semester; this proves to be too overwhelming for many transfer students, who then opt to put it off until the next semester. Rather than waiting an entire semester, organizing mid-semester opportunities for engagement could help expedite transfer student integration in a timelier manner. The college can actively help CCT students learn the new and accepted disposition towards integration by gradually leading them through the process instead of letting them feel that they, in the words of Alexander, will either “sink or swim” on the basis of their own abilities.

Although the rationale underlying this next recommendation varies between the cohorts, the program would look the same: providing a more comprehensive, one-stop shop for access to information and resources. For the CCT students, having everything in one, already established place may help them to recognize that they are not alone in their transitioning process; if there is a center specifically designed to help with this transition, students may recognize that they are not the only ones having difficulty. For Oxford students, this could help ease them into the more independent system in place at Emory where finding solutions requires more agency than before. Having a unified information hub for students in transition takes the shame out of not knowing the answer and also lets students know that they have a specific place to turn to when they need assistance or guidance.

Additionally, this one-stop shop could be run by former students in transition; this would minimize the strain on administrators to create an entirely new program from scratch, and simultaneously helps to supplement any social capital that students in transition may lack on the new campus. Using former students in transition can provide students currently transitioning with not only information relevant to their situation, but also a social base that understands their situation and examples of what highly successful students in transition look like on the other side

of what can be a difficult time. I make this recommendation primarily because of the positive reactions I received from CCT students at hearing from another CCT student (myself) within the first few weeks of their arrival to Emory. After several of my interviews, I sat and talked with the participants and answered their questions about the social and academic dimensions at Emory; they were much more at ease after just a brief conversation with a fellow transfer student.

In conclusion, the differences we have seen to be caused by college background are significant but not insurmountable. We have seen that college background can shape the habitus with which CCT and Oxford students view their college life (hierarchical vs. integrated); the point of encouragement here is that since they have been taught once, they can be taught again. Through purposeful interventions informed by these new understandings of the processes at play, both Oxford Continuees and CCT students can benefit from transition programming that more closely aligns with their specific needs.

CHAPTER 5: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

In the previous pages we have learned significantly more about the ways that individual capital levels can interact with college backgrounds to produce different integration outcomes for students in transition. In the pages that remain, I take up the task of reviewing the theoretical implications of these findings and proposing some policy changes that would be beneficial for these student populations. After summarizing the findings and reviewing their theoretical importance, I will review some additional tangential findings that are important for the policy recommendations that follow. Finally, this study is not without limitations nor does it answer all possible questions raised in this field; these limitations and implications for future research will conclude this final chapter.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

In Chapter 3, we saw the importance of individual capital levels for student success. Specifically, we defined two sets of students based on their capital levels: high cultural capital (HCC) and low cultural capital (LCC). These groups vary significantly in both their ways of thinking about college attendance and their patterns of academic achievement and social support. HCC students always anticipate furthering their educations, and those who attend community colleges do so as a matter of convenience rather than necessity. HCC students have significant levels of support and involvement from their parents, who often provide them with the knowledge and support needed for them to continue in their educations. LCC students, on the other hand, need a socially provided impetus to begin and continue in their college education (e.g. prompting of a significant other, positive peer pressure) since they did not always anticipate pursuing a four-year degree. Largely due to their lack of planning for college, they attend community college because they have no other viable option. LCC students do not have involved

or even encouraging parents to aid them in their educational career, and so rely more heavily on the support structures put in place by the colleges they attend and external social means (e.g. significant others, professors). These patterns are reminiscent of Lareau's work in elementary schools (Lareau 2000), and provide a key insight into the interaction patterns and habitus brought with students of varying social backgrounds to institutions of higher education.

After establishing these two groups based on capital levels, we looked at what outcomes are most influenced by capital. Specifically, cultural and social capital work together to provide critical information to students that helps them create accurate expectations about the college to which they are transferring. This is significant because unforeseen circumstances are the single biggest cause of stress for students in transition; regardless of the specific area (e.g. financial, academic, social), the biggest obstacles are those unanticipated. Students with high levels of capital resources are better able to not only create initially accurate expectations for their new environment, but are also able to draw on those resources to address and resolve any inconsistencies. For students without external resources, those provided by the college become doubly consequential for their integration and adjustment. The key for colleges is not just providing access to the correct information, but also providing it in a manner that is accessible to students with varying degrees of capital and background knowledge to interpret and understand the importance of the information.

The staff members I interviewed expressed frustration with the extreme amount of variation in what transfer students want or need from their university; these findings provide insight as to why students need varying degrees of support from their colleges. Transfer students of all kinds enter Emory with varying levels of personal capital resources. Those without significant levels will be more dependent on the supplemental resources provided by the college

to ensure a smooth transition. Students who lack the cultural capital to know about financial aid procedures, the social capital to feel confident in a new social environment, or a basic understanding of common college cultural exchanges are going to have a more difficult transition than students who come prepared for these situations if the college assumes that all students have a requisite level of capital to gain admission to the college. When universities assume certain competencies of their students, students without these competencies will suffer the consequences. The specific areas where they lack knowledge are rendered almost irrelevant; it is not the specific process that proves stressful and difficult, but rather the fact that it was unforeseen, and they were unable to prepare themselves for such a contingency. Since these preparation blind-spots do vary from student to student, college administrators are faced with the difficult task of creating programs to provide each student with the resources he/she did not know that he/she needs.

Chapter 4 reviewed the biggest differences between the cohorts based on whether they transitioned to Emory from Oxford College or a community college. I proposed a revision to Tinto's model to transform external factors, specifically financial concerns, academic integration, and social integration into a hierarchy rather than parallel pathways to reflect the manners in which community college transfer students prioritize the investment of their varying levels of capital when faced with difficulties. This hierarchy is not seen among Oxford Continuees, who, even when faced with difficult academic circumstances, continue to focus on all aspects of their college experience equally. I propose that this differentiation has to do with the segmented nature of college life at a community college versus the integrated experience of a residential college. While this hierarchy seems appropriate for a college setting (e.g. academics come first), it does not set up CCT students for success when they are faced with difficulties. CCT students do not

fully appreciate the positive impact that a healthy social life can have on their academic situation; their firm prioritization pattern negates the possibility of their healthy social life helping their academic situation. An integrated approach has its downfalls as well; Oxford students face the danger of not devoting sufficient time and resources to remedy a borderline academic situation in favor of remaining well rounded. The important consideration here is that these prioritization patterns differ; in order to most effectively help both groups of students, these prioritization patterns must be taken in to consideration.

These student groups also have different methods of dealing with problems that they face. CCT students, who are by this point in their educational careers used to navigating and fighting their way through the system, are more apt to take personal responsibility and blame themselves for any shortcomings of information or resources that they encounter. Oxford students, while not all apathetic, demonstrate less willingness to attribute their difficulties to their own actions and instead are more apt to focus on the shortcomings of the college in providing them with the resources they need. Again, this is not the case for all Oxford students; many experience successful transitions. It is only when faced with a difficulty or a problem that these differences arise.

Combining these institutional differences with the individual differences reviewed in chapter 3, we come to three distinct patterns of interaction with the college: Oxford, HCC CCT, and LCC CCT. These groups are defined based on two dimensions: students with resources to address problems, and students who take agency in their educational careers. If there was more variation in the Oxford sample along lines of capital, we would expect to be able to split the Oxford in to HCC and LCC groups as well. However, I doubt that there would be enough variation in cultural capital resources at Oxford to be able to distinguish between these groups.

The admissions process to get to Oxford as a freshman demands a certain level of capital that appears to be largely sufficient for their students to become accustomed to college culture and practices rather quickly. We did see some variation in cultural capital from Garrett's case, since his parents were educated in another country and lacked familiarity with financial aid processes. Students of immigrants would be another interesting population for study at Oxford that could illuminate capital differences. For now, in this study, we will focus on the three distinctions we are able to make between our present sample: Oxford students, HCC CCT students, and LCC CCT students.

Overall, Oxford students have relatively high levels of capital. Those who lack extensive personal resources (e.g. Garrett) find their deficiencies at least partially compensated for by Oxford College. When faced with problems, Oxford students are apt to focus on deficiencies of college resources rather than their own personal efforts or actions. Since they are used to a college that is highly responsive to their needs, it is difficult to adjust to a college that requires more agency and personal initiative to find resolutions for their difficulties. These tendencies are only visible for Oxford students who experience some sort of difficulty in their transition; where it used to be that the college would activate the proper venues to solve their problems, they have to learn to activate their own levels of capital more efficiently to address their issues. This is not an insurmountable task. The many Oxford students who experience successful transitions have already, to varying degrees, learned to take personal initiative in their education and activate the institutional resources and their own capital.

CCT students face different difficulties than Oxford Continuees in what actions and attitudes they must relearn after transfer. Let's analyze each group in turn. First, we have high cultural capital community college transfer students; in this study, this group is represented by

Cheryl, Alexander, Lucy, and Trevor. These students bring external capital resources with them to their college. When they encounter problems, they are more apt to take personal responsibility for these issues; coupling this with their high levels of capital, this is where we see high degrees of agency and initiative taken by the CCT population. These students have both the capital resources and the personal impetus to address their problems head on and move on with their college experiences. These students are highly successful in their transitions because, essentially, they are the most self-reliant of any of the transfer groups.

Second, we have low cultural capital community college transfer students; in this study, this group is comprised of Alice, Steve, Ron, Kayla, and Richard. These students do not have the same access to external capital resources as their HCC peers; however, they are still willing and apt to take personal responsibility for any problems that they face. This combination leads to students that simultaneously blame themselves for their shortcomings but lack the resources to remedy the problem. In my opinion, these are the students most in danger of suffering negative outcomes. Being self-reliant without the resources to be able to rely solely on yourself leads to retreating from offers of help and opting to "power it out" instead, as Ron says. This is one of the most difficult student populations to help, since they lack the capital to recognize that help is sometimes necessary. These students who have the dangerous combination of a lack of resources to address their problems but plenty of personal responsibility for the results are prone to become very discouraged as they try again and again to remedy their problems alone and see no change in their circumstances. These students, to be successful, need to learn how to accept outside resources and help so they can more appropriately address problems that arise.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Before reviewing the possibilities for future research that stem from this study, I will briefly list a few additional findings that do not take long to explain and yet provide helpful insights for policy recommendations. Specifically, I want to acknowledge the institutional flows that lend themselves to the perpetuation of the current system and make it difficult for transfer students to fight through the system. Many CCT students mentioned that, although they tried to use the transfer resources their community colleges offered to them, these resources were very finely honed to only be of help to students who planned to transfer to the local public university system rather than an out-of-state private university. This is not a fault of the community college, per se, since this is the function in which they most often assist their students. Few community college students plan to transfer out of state to an elite private university; the fact that the CCT students in this study made it to Emory shows that they were already highly successful in steering their educational career without institutional assistance.

Oxford students experience just the opposite difficulty; Amy and James' girlfriend both attempted to transfer to another university after graduating from Oxford, and the institutional flow kept them in the system. Significant financial benefits of staying within the Emory University system or issues with GPA and credit hour equivalencies made it impossible for Amy and James' girlfriend to successfully break out of the institutionalized expectation that they transition to Emory. This creates a significant difference between the nature of CCT and Oxford students in this study. While all of the CCT students had to successfully fight against the system, or swim upstream, to get to Emory, Oxford students had to be passive in order to get to the same place. Oxford Continuees benefit from their initial levels of capital that got them to Oxford in that it placed them in an institutionalized flow that helped them with their future transitions

(whether they wanted it or not), where CCT students used their capital levels in the transfer rather than their initial admission to their community college.

An additional finding about social integration is common to both groups of students. There are common barriers that the two groups share because of their social position at Emory, quite outside of their personal capital resources or their institutional backgrounds: barriers at Emory to the involvement of new upperclassmen in student activities. Students from both cohorts expressed annoyance that student groups on campus seemed to only be interested in recruiting new freshman members, leaving the sophomore and junior transfer students and Oxford students feeling unwelcomed into the main venue for student social interaction. Staff members affirmed this conception; while they did not provide specifics, staff members have been working towards and hoping for a more inclusive student activities environment that embraces transfer students and Oxford Continuees even though they only offer two or three years of membership as opposed to the four years freshman bring to the table. This would indicate that students who will be at the college longer after transfer will end up having more successful transitions not only because it gives them more time to make connections but also because having a longer time ahead of them makes them more attractive to student activities groups. Coupling this with the CCT hierarchy of priorities that often postpones their efforts at social integration for at least one semester when their academics settle down, and we can see the additional disadvantage of this hierarchy for effective social integration.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This research presents a number of very practical policy recommendations. Some recommendations pertain to each group individually, while others would be of assistance to all students in the sample and possibly other transfer students as well.

CCT Recommendations

Some significant changes could be made based on what we know about how CCT students prioritize their transition experiences. Primarily, rather than a single orientation event at the beginning of the semester, orientation services should be made available throughout the first semester of their transition and unfold in stages more similar to their priority pattern. The current orientation program, which I observed in the fall of 2012 and 2013, does a thorough job of addressing academic policies and regulations such as G.P.A. and G.E.R. requirements, but falls short in social outlets. One transfer ice cream social is offered, the night before the mandatory session for academic orientation; however, the ordering of these activities might be out of sync for CCT students who are still insecure in their academic standing. I would propose offering continued social activities for transfer students later in the semester, once they have been given an opportunity to adjust academically and are ready to address their social life. The college should begin approaching students with social opportunities on the students' terms, when they are ready to address their social situations, not before. Adding social activities later in the same semester could speed up a process that students already engage in, which is to postpone their social activities until the beginning of the next semester when clubs are perceived to be more open to new members again.

While the staff members I interviewed expressed some reticence towards this next idea, I believe it would be helpful to have a transfer student association on campus to help facilitate social gatherings for transfer students. College staff members dislike these types of associations because they are seen as isolative rather than integrative. The ideal is for transfer students to assimilate in to the larger student body. While noble, I believe the benefits of having a transfer student group outweigh the potential detrimental side effects. Rather than having a transfer

student association as an end in and of itself for social integration, I propose that this organization could serve as a unified hub for transfer students who want to learn more about student organizations from fellow transfer students. As an initial rather than a final destination, a transfer student association could help students adjust to their social environment with help of students who understand their situation as a transfer student.

Oxford Recommendations

The best recommendation I can make for Oxford students is to continue improvements in forming a unified link between Oxford and the Atlanta campus. Oxford students were most disillusioned by the huge differences in the social dynamics between the small campus of 900 students and the large campus with almost 8,000. Most frequently cited was the absence of communal dining options and how infrequently they get to see their Oxford friends on campus. The students who adapted the best to their new environment felt prepared for the differences through their involvement with organizations on the Atlanta campus. Christina was involved with organizations on the Atlanta campus throughout her time at Oxford; Albert and Kaliban worked on the Atlanta campus for the summer prior to their fall enrollment. They all cited their involvement and familiarity with the Atlanta campus prior to their fall enrollment as a significant and contributing factor to their smooth transition. With such a unique situation and connection between these campuses, this resource should be capitalized on. Rather than expanding the practice of having Emory representatives travel to Oxford, the benefits of this visiting relationship should be more prevalently marketed to Oxford students as an effective means of assisting with their future integration. By encouraging this type of agency in their educational careers, administrators can also help to plant the seeds of initiative needed for students to be successful on the Atlanta campus.

As a side note but also an important one, in the interests of promoting a smooth transition and four-year educational pathway for Oxford Continuees, Oxford College academic advisors should be advising students not just for their two-year associate's degree, but also their four-year baccalaureate degree. The seeds of this change are already in place, but I would like to encourage that it come to fruition. Oxford Continuees are idealized transfer students in that they know exactly what institution they will arrive at in two years' time and Emory knows that they are coming as well. This linkage should not be overlooked when it comes time to choose classes and plan out a major pathway. There is little to no reason why students should take unnecessary courses in the Oxford/Emory transition (outside of their own desires, of course). A streamlined four-year advising process would help ensure that all Oxford students, regardless of personal initiative, are given an equal shot at graduating on time.

Joint Recommendations

While these are unique groups, they are not entirely dissimilar and some policy recommendations would be beneficial for all students in my sample. One I have already addressed in a previous chapter, but will reiterate here because I believe it to be one of the most important policy recommendations to stem from my research: a one-stop-shop information hub for students in transition, organized and run by previous students in transition. I use the term students in transition to encompass not only transfer students, but also Oxford Continuees. This type of organization would solve problems for both groups, although for different reasons. For CCT students, especially those in the LCC group, having an established information resource to help them on their search for needed information will help remove the stigma of asking for institutional aid. Since they are used to addressing things on their own and believe they should be solely responsible for their educational outcomes, establishing an institutionalized mechanism

for getting needed information could go a long way to encouraging them to take that first step and ask for help. For Oxford Continuees, the problem is not so much asking for help as it is learning to take that first step. Oxford Continuees do not lack the capacity to accept help; rather, some of them struggle taking the initiative to contact resources rather than waiting for resources to come to them. A college "helpline" or "life vest," if you will, can help convey the message that there are resources available to assist them but that they must take the first step. For both groups, making the first step easier in asking for assistance could go a long way in making struggling students more comfortable.

My final suggestion, if implemented, would face significant administrative pushback if not executed properly, so I will attempt to be as specific as possible. While Oxford Continuees are not transfer students, in the eyes of the administration or otherwise, they do experience a transition from campus to campus that makes portions of their experience akin to transfer students; indeed, this is one of the basic premises that began my research. Based on the similarities between the groups and the experience that I believe Oxford Continuees have to offer to transfer students, I would recommend creating joint orientation social activities for Oxford and transfer students. These groups are unique in that they are upperclassmen starting over on a new campus; however, Oxford students are not entirely alone in this process. They bring with them knowledge and connections to the Atlanta campus that transfer students lack, while transfer students (at least those studied here) have demonstrated significant educational impetus that could positively influence Oxford Continuees' patterns of interaction with campus resources. Additionally, by placing Oxford Continuees in a leadership and teaching position by tasking them with helping transfer students to adjust, they themselves will learn more about the campus resources and culture as they teach it to brand new students. Joint activities, if executed

carelessly, could undermine administrative efforts to unify Oxford Continuees as Emory students from the beginning and emphasize that they are not freshman; by treating it as a peer-leader role rather than joint orientation, I believe that some of these difficulties could be avoided.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

No study is able to address every question brought up by the relevant literature; out of necessity, I have had to bracket many relevant topics of discussion from this thesis. First, I do not analyze the effects of race or gender in any depth. Rather, by ensuring that these characteristics were equally distributed between my groups under comparison, I, in effect, controlled for their effects to more clearly illustrate the effects of capital and institutional background on students in transition. This type of study is novel and has not been studied in this manner previously, so it was necessary to control for as many extraneous factors as possible. I have already noted the systematic differences in motivation between CCT and Oxford students in this sample; CCT students had to fight the system at every step while Oxford Continuees had to only go with the flow of the institutional undercurrents to get here. Future research could adjust for this by following a cohort of Oxford students before their initial admission at Oxford College and evaluating their motivational patterns up to that point and how they are affected by the institutional flows set up from Oxford College to Emory College.

Additionally, this study has small sample numbers dictated by time constraints; regardless, this study has been very successful in its aim to generalize about processes rather than entire populations. This is a singular case study out of all possible studies. Future research can expand on the basis provided by this study to include more comparison groups and a larger sample size to validate these findings and expand them to include horizontal transfer students and students who began at Emory as freshmen. Because of the unique nature of Oxford College,

this study cannot be exactly replicated at any institution other than Emory; however, the general principles discovered in this research can be applied to various types of transfer students in institutions around America.

To expand on these findings, future research should study horizontal transfers to confirm whether their prioritization pattern matches their institution of origin as I indicate in this study. Is there something special about community colleges, or do we see similar prioritization patterns in all commuter institutions? Additionally, this study would be bolstered by a more methodical review of the differences between freshman and transfer orientation programs at various colleges. Freshman orientation at Emory is much more comprehensive than transfer or Oxford orientation; is this the case at all colleges? Does variation in orientation programs coincide with different levels of success? Which orientation foci are most effective for helping CCT students adjust to an integrated habitus? Finally, Emory University is a unique case in that it is a private, top-twenty research university. How do CCT students fare at colleges that may assume less external capital resources of them? Would their habitus more closely align with a four-year commuter institution? All of these are topics that can be addressed through future research.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of this study, we have learned significantly more about the nature and causes of transfer student difficulties. Both differences in individual resources and institutional background play important roles in the ways that students interact with the college they attend after their transition. Cultural capital, social capital, and habitus all impact the resources that students bring to the table; in other words, how much gas students have in their boats. Institutional backgrounds work to shape and mold students' habitus and their investment priorities for capital resources at their transfer institutions; referring to our metaphor, these

predispositions can be seen as their maps. Different amounts of gas and different maps are bound to impact the end result of where your boat ends up; through this study, we have gained a clearer understanding of the habitus and processes at play in the transition process made possible by the persistent students who dare to swim upstream. By appreciating their struggles and the obstacles they face, we can work to change institutional policies to help these students who do not fit the mold of a typical student, to assist those who dare to be different and rise above their social origins, to aid those who swim against the current.

Works Cited

Anon. 2011. “Building American Skills through Community Colleges.” Retrieved December 10, 2013 (http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/100326-community-college-fact-sheet.pdf).

Aschaffenburg, Karen, and Ineke Maas. 1997. “Cultural and Educational Careers: The Dynamics of Social Reproduction.” *American Sociological Review* 62(4):573–87.

Ashar, Hanna, and Robert Skenes. 1993. “Can Tinto’s Student Departure Model Be Applied To Nontraditional Students?” *Adult Education Quarterly* 43(2):90–100.

Bailey, Thomas, Davis Jenkins, and Timothy Leinbach. 2005. *What We Know about Community College Low-Income and Minority Student Outcomes: Descriptive Statistics from National Surveys*.

Bean, John P., and Barbara S. Metzner. 1985. “A Conceptual Model of Nontraditional Undergraduate Student Attrition.” *Review of Educational Research* 55(4):485–540.

Bensimon, Estela, Alicia Dowd, and Brianne Davila. 2009. “Dimensions of the ‘Transfer Choice’ Gap: Experiences of Latina and Latino Students Who Navigated Transfer Pathways.” *Conference Papers -- American Sociological Association* 1.

Berger, Joseph B., and Gary D. Malaney. 2003. “Assessing the Transition of Transfer Students from Community Colleges to a University.” *NASPA Journal* 40(4):1–23.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (La Distinction: Critique Social Du Judgement)*. Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005. “Habitus.” Pp. 43–52 in *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, edited by Jean Hillier and Emma Rooksby. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1977. *Reproduction in Education, Culture and Society*. London: Sage.

Bradburn, Ellen M., David G. Hurst, and Samuel S. Peng. 2001. *Community College Transfer Rates to 4-Year Institutions Using Alternative Definitions of Transfer*. US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved July 31, 2013 (http://www.immagic.com/eLibrary/ARCHIVES/GENERAL/US_ED/NCES1197.pdf).

Cabrera, Alberto F., Maria B. Castañeda, Amaury Nora, and Dennis Hengstler. 1992. “The Convergence between Two Theories of College Persistence.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 63(2):143–64.

Calcagno, Juan Carlos, Thomas Bailey, Davis Jenkins, Gregory Kienzl, and Timothy Leinbach. 2008. “Community College Student Success: What Institutional Characteristics Make a Difference?” *Economics of Education Review* 27(6):632–45.

Carlan, Philip E., and Ferris R. Byxbe. 2000. “Community Colleges under the Microscope: An Analysis of Performance Predictors for Native and Transfer Students.” *Community College Review* 28(2):27–42.

Cejda, Brent D., Kirsten L. Rewey, and Alice J. Kaylor. 1998. “The Effect of Academic Factors on Transfer Student Persistence and Graduation: A Community College to Liberal Arts College Case Study.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 22(7):675–86.

Coleman, James S. 1988. “Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital.” *American Journal of Sociology* 94:S95–S120.

Cottom, Tressie McMillan. 2013. “‘Like Your Mom Without All the Guilt’: Social Resources, Structural Motivation and Stratification in the Admissions Process at For-Profit Colleges.”

Davies, Timothy Gray, and Karen Casey. 1999. “Transfer Student Experiences: Comparing Their Academic and Social Lives at the Community College and University.” *College Student Journal* 33(1):60.

Davies, Timothy Gray, and Rita Kratky. 2000. “Vital Connections Transfer Program: Learning the Transfer Process from the Transfer Student.” *College Student Journal* 34(3):409.

Diaz, Patricia E. 1992. “Effects of Transfer on Academic Performance of Community College Students at the Four-Year Institution.” *Community Junior College Research Quarterly of Research and Practice* 16(3):279–91.

DiMaggio, Paul, and John Mohr. 1985. “Cultural Capital, Educational Attainment, and Marital Selection.” *American Journal of Sociology* 90(6):1231–61.

Ditchkoff, Stephen S., David N. Laband, and Kent Hanby. 2003. “Academic Performance of Transfer versus ‘Native’ Students in a Wildlife Bachelor of Science Program.” *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 31(4):1021–26.

Dougherty, Kevin. 1987. “The Effects of Community Colleges: Aid or Hindrance to Socioeconomic Attainment?” *Sociology of Education* 60(2):86–103.

Dougherty, Kevin, and Gregory Kienzl. 2006. “It’s Not Enough to Get through the Open Door: Inequalities by Social Background in Transfer from Community Colleges to Four-Year Colleges.” *The Teachers College Record* 108(3):452–87.

Dowd, Alicia C., John J. Cheslock, and Tatiana Melguizo. 2008. “Transfer Access from Community Colleges and the Distribution of Elite Higher Education.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 79(4):442–72.

Duggan, Molly H., and Worth J. Pickering. 2008. “Barriers to Transfer Student Academic Success and Retention.” *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice* 9(4):437–59.

Dumais, Susan A. 2002. “Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success: The Role of Habitus.” *Sociology of Education* 75(1):44.

Eaton, Judith S. 1988. “Minorities, Transfer, and Higher Education.” *Peabody Journal of Education* 66(1):58–70.

Eggleston, Latrice E., and Frankie Santos Laanan. 2001. “Making the Transition to the Senior Institution.” *New Directions for Community Colleges* 2001(114):87–97.

Elling, Theodore W., Bob Algozzine, Krystal Foxx, Donna Ginn, and Elaine O’Reilly. 2013. “What Happens After Transfer? Engagement and Success of Transfer Students at UNC Charlotte.” Retrieved September 14, 2013 (https://education.uncc.edu/ceme/sites/education.uncc.edu.ceme/files/media/pdfs/What%20happens%20after%20transfer.pdf).

Ellis, Martha M. 2013. “Successful Community College Transfer Students Speak Out.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 37(2):73–84.

Freeman, Melissa, Valerie Martin Conley, and Gordon Brooks. 2006. “Successful Vertical Transitions: What Separates Community College Transfers Who Earn the Baccalaureate from Those Who Don’t?” *The Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* 13(2):141–50.

Friedman, Sam. 2012. “Cultural Omnivores or Culturally Homeless? Exploring the Shifting Cultural Identities of the Upwardly Mobile.” *Poetics* 40(5):467–89.

Glass Jr, J. Conrad, and Anthony R. Harrington. 2002. “Academic Performance of Community College Transfer Students and ‘Native’ Students at a Large State University.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 26(5):415–30.

Goldrick-Rab, Sara, and Fabian T. Pfeffer. 2009. “Beyond Access: Explaining Socioeconomic Differences in College Transfer.” *Sociology of Education* 82(2):101–25.

Granfield, Robert. 1991. “MAKING IT BY FAKING IT Working-Class Students in an Elite Academic Environment.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 20(3):331–51.

Gray Davies, Timothy, and Ellyn M. Dickmann. 1998. “Student Voices in the Transfer Process: Do We Hear Them? Do We Listen?” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 22(5):541–57.

Grubb, W. Norton. 1991. “The Decline of Community College Transfer Rates: Evidence from National Longitudinal Surveys.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 62(2):194–222.

Halle, David. 1996. *Inside Culture: Art and Class in the American Home*. University of Chicago Press.

Handel, Stephen J. 2007. “Second Chance, Not Second Class, A Blueprint for Community-College Transfer.” *Change* 39(5):38–45.

Handel, Stephen J. 2011. *Improving Student Transfer from Community Colleges to Four-Year Institutions: The Perspectives of Leaders from Baccalaureate-Granting Institutions*. College Board.

Hills, John R. 1965. “Transfer Shock: The Academic Performance of the Junior College Transfer.” *The Journal of Experimental Education* 33(3):201–15.

Hoachlander, Gary, Anna C. Sikora, Laura Horn, and C. D. Carroll. 2003. “Community College Students.” *Education Statistics Quarterly* 5(2):121–28.

Horn, Laura, Stephanie Nevill, and James Griffith. 2006. *Profile of Undergraduates in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions, 2003-04: With a Special Analysis of Community College Students. Statistical Analysis Report. NCES 2006-184*. ED Pubs, P.

Ishitani, Terry T. 2008. “How Do Transfers Survive after ‘Transfer Shock’? A Longitudinal Study of Transfer Student Departure at a Four-Year Institution.” *Research in Higher Education* 49(5):403–19.

Ishitani, Terry T., and Sean A. McKitrick. 2010. “After Transfer: The Engagement of Community College Students at a Four-Year Collegiate Institution.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 34(7):576–94.

Jackson, Dimitra. 2010. “Transfer Students in STEM Majors: Gender Differences in the Socialization Factors That Influence Academic and Social Adjustment.” *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. Retrieved (http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/11374).

Kalogrides, Demetra, and Eric Grodsky. 2008. “Community College Transfer and Baccalaureate Attainment.” *Conference Papers -- American Sociological Association* 1.

Kane, Danielle. 2011. “The Gendered Transition to College: The Role of Culture in Ego-Network Evolution.” *Poetics* 39(4):266–89.

Kodama, Corinne Maekawa. 2002. “Marginality of Transfer Commuter Students.” *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* 39(3). Retrieved July 1, 2013 (http://www.degruyter.com/dg/viewarticle/j$002fjsarp.2002.39.3$002fjsarp.2002.39.3.1172$002fjsarp.2002.39.3.1172.xml;jsessionid=4D8FF80D2D80E4195E5C15C223A72400).

Kuh, George D., Ty M. Cruce, Rick Shoup, Jillian Kinzie, and Robert M. Gonyea. 2008. “Unmasking the Effects of Student Engagement on First-Year College Grades and Persistence.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 79(5):540–63.

Kuh, George D., Jillian Kinzie, Jennifer A. Buckley, Brian K. Bridges, and John C. Hayek. 2011. *Piecing Together the Student Success Puzzle: Research, Propositions, and Recommendations: ASHE Higher Education Report*. John Wiley & Sons. Retrieved December 9, 2013 (http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=E2Y15q5bpCoC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=%22the+conditions+that+foster+student+success+in+college+has+never+been+more+i

mportant.%22+%22in+the+economic+ladder+(Bowen+1978%3B+Bowen+and+Bok+1998%3B+Boyer+and+Hechinger+1981%3B%22+&ots=ZvHQkmvoHQ&sig=t6xjohyo2Kor8bv-UJMr4qG9GZU).

Laanan, Frankie Santos. 1996. “Making the Transition: Understanding the Adjustment Process of Community College Transfer Students.” *Community College Review* 23(4):69–84.

Laanan, Frankie Santos. 2001. “Transfer Student Adjustment.” *New Directions for Community Colleges* 2001(114):5–13.

Laanan, Frankie Santos. 2007. “Studying Transfer Students: Part II: Dimensions of Transfer Students’ Adjustment.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 31(1):37–59.

Laanan, Frankie Santos, Soko S. Starobin, and Latrice E. Eggleston. 2010. “Adjustment of Community College Students at a Four-Year University: Role and Relevance of Transfer Student Capital for Student Retention.” *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice* 12(2):175–209.

Lamont, Michèle, and Annette Lareau. 1988. *Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments*. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. Retrieved December 10, 2013 (http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2131347).

Lareau, Annette. 2000. *Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Lee, Valerie E., and Kenneth A. Frank. 1990. “Students’ Characteristics That Facilitate the Transfer from Two-Year to Four-Year Colleges.” *Sociology of Education* 63(3):178–93.

Lee, Valerie E., Christopher Mackie-Lewis, and Helen M. Marks. 1993. “Persistence to the Baccalaureate Degree for Students Who Transfer from Community College.” *American Journal of Education* 80–114.

Linton, Maureen F. 2008. *A Study of Transfer Students’ Perceptions of the Adjustment Interventions Used by Four-Year Colleges to Prepare Students to Complete the Baccalaureate Degree Requirements*. Temple University.

Martin, Nathan D. 2013. “Forms of Social Capital: Family Resources, Campus Networks, and Dominant Class Advantage at an Elite University.” *Research in the Sociology of Work* 24:359–86.

McCormick, A., S. Sarraf, Allison BrckaLorenz, and A. Haywood. 2009. “Examining the Transfer Student Experience: Interactions with Faculty, Campus Relationships and Overall Satisfaction.” P. 2010 in *annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Vancouver, BC Retrieved on January*, vol. 20. Retrieved July 1, 2013 (http://cpr.iub.edu/uploads/McCormick%20Sarraf%20BrckaLorenz%20Haywood%20ASHE%2009.pdf).

Metz, George. 2002. “Challenges and Chances to Tinto’s Persistence Theory.” Columbus, OH: ERIC. Retrieved August 5, 2013 (http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED471529.pdf).

Morest, Vanessa Smith. 2012. *Community College Student Success: From Boardrooms to Classrooms*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Mullin, Christopher M., and Kent Phillippe. 2009. *Community College Enrollment Surge: An Analysis of Estimated Fall 2009 Headcount Enrollments at Community Colleges. Policy Brief 2009-01PBL*. American Association of Community Colleges. One Dupont Circle NW Suite 410, Washington, DC 20015. Tel: 202-728-0200; Fax: 202-833-2467; Web site: http://www.aacc.nche.edu. Retrieved July 31, 2013 (http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED511056).

Nora, Amaury, and Laura I. Rendon. 1990. “Determinants of Predisposition to Transfer among Community College Students: A Structural Model.” *Research in Higher Education* 31(3):235–55.

Pascarella, Ernest T., and David W. Chapman. 1983. “A Multiinstitutional, Path Analytic Validation of Tinto’s Model of College Withdrawal.” *American Educational Research Journal* 20(1):87–102.

Pascarella, Ernest T., John C. Smart, and Corinna A. Ethington. 1986. “Long-Term Persistence of Two-Year College Students.” *Research in Higher Education* 24(1):47–71.

Peng, Samuel S. 1977. *Transfer Students in Institutions of Higher Education*.

Pennington, Ron. 2006. “Rethinking Grade Transfer Shock: Examining Its Importance in the Community College Transfer Process.” *The Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* 14(1):19–33.

Prager, Carolyn. 1993. “Transfer and Articulation within Colleges and Universities.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 64(5):539–54.

Rab, Sara Youcha. 2004. “Swirling Students: Putting a New Spin on College Attrition.” *Dissertations available from ProQuest* 1–154.

Radford, Alexandria Walton, Lutz Berkner, Sara C. Wheeless, and Bryan Shepherd. 2010. *Persistence and Attainment of 2003–04 Beginning Postsecondary Students: After 6 Years*. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011151.pdf).

Rhine, Tammy J., and Dawna M. Milligan. 2000. “ALLEVIATING TRANSFER SHOCK: CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR MORE SUCCESSFUL TRANSFER STUDENTS.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 24(6):443–53.

Schlossberg, Nancy K. 1989. “Marginality and Mattering: Key Issues in Building Community.” *New Directions for Student Services* 1989(48):5–15.

Stevens, Mitchell L. 2009. *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Harvard University Press.

Tobolowsky, Barbara F., and Bradley E. Cox. 2012. “Rationalizing Neglect: An Institutional Response to Transfer Students.” *Journal of Higher Education* 83(3):389–410.

Townley, Greg et al. 2013. “Exploring the Role of Sense of Community in the Undergraduate Transfer Student Experience.” *Journal of Community Psychology* 41(3):277–90.

Townsend, Barbara K. 2002. “Transfer Rates: A Problematic Criterion for Measuring the Community College.” *New Directions for Community Colleges* 2002(117):13–24.

Townsend, Barbara K., Nancy McNerny, and Allen Arnold. 1993. “Will This Community College Transfer Student Succeed? Factors Affecting Transfer Student Performance.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 17(5):433–43.

Townsend, Barbara K., and Kristin Wilson. 2006. “‘A Hand Hold for A Little Bit’: Factors Facilitating the Success of Community College Transfer Students to a Large Research University.” *Journal of College Student Development* 47(4):439–56.

Volkwein, J. Fredericks, Margaret C. King, and Patrick T. Terenzini. 1986. “Student-Faculty Relationships and Intellectual Growth among Transfer Students.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 57(4):413–30.

Wang, Xueli. 2013. “Baccalaureate Expectations of Community College Students: Socio-Demographic, Motivational, and Contextual Influences.” *Teachers College Record* 115(4). Retrieved September 14, 2013 (http://www.tcrecord.org/DefaultFiles/SendFileToPublic.asp?ft=pdf&FilePath=c:%5CWebSites%5Cwww_tcrecord_org_documents%5C38_16924.pdf&fid=38_16924&aid=2&RID=16924&pf=Content.asp?ContentID=16924).

Appendix 1 –
Table 2: Participant Demographic Information and Pseudonyms (listed in order interviewed)

Name	**Institution**	**Race/Ethnicity**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Class Year**
Kaliban	Oxford	Black/White	Male	23	Super-Senior
Bryan	Oxford	Hispanic	Male	21	Senior
Cheryl	Comm. College	White	Female	21	Senior
Alexander	Comm. College	White	Male	23	Senior
Erin	Oxford	White	Female	20	Junior
James	Oxford	Black	Male	23	Alum
Alice	Comm. College	White	Female	21	Junior
Lucy	Comm. College	Asian	Female	21	Sophomore
Steve	Comm. College	Black	Male	20	Sophomore
Albert	Oxford	Asian	Male	21	Junior
Amy	Oxford	White	Female	21	Junior
Chris	Oxford	Asian	Male	22	Senior
Mary	Oxford	White	Female	21	Junior
Christina	Oxford	White	Female	20	Junior
Garrett	Oxford	Black	Male	22	Super-Senior
Ron	Comm. College	White	Male	26	Sophomore
Kayla	Comm. College	White	Female	23	Junior
Trevor	Comm. College	Black	Male	25	Junior
Richard	Comm. College	Hispanic	Male	27	Sophomore

Appendix 2 – List of Codes

- Code System [2575]
  - Staff Interviews [0]
    - Demographic [0]
      - Role at Emory [6]
      - Time in Role [6]
      - Interaction w/ Students [12]
    - Transfer Student Process [7]
      - Transfer Students [0]
        - Demographics [7]
        - Culture [10]
        - Activities [5]
        - Struggles [1]
          - Academic [4]
          - Social [13]
          - Institutional [20]
        - Institutional Resources [10]
        - Institutional Difficulties [25]
    - Oxford Transition [7]
      - Oxford Students [0]
        - Culture [19]
        - Oxford Bubble [1]
        - Activities [5]
        - Struggles [1]
          - Academic [12]
          - Social [15]
          - Institutional [8]
        - Institutional Resources [24]
        - Institutional Difficulties [16]
    - Differences b/t students [2]
      - Institutional [14]
      - Individual [9]
    - Suggestions/Crossover [20]

- Student Interviews
  - Demographics [0]
    - Racial/Ethnic themes [21]
    - Social Capital [43]
    - Cultural Capital/Culture Shock [60]
    - Human Capital [6]
    - Class Year [19]
    - Age [19]
    - Behind/Ahead [17]
    - Family Info [16]
    - Siblings [20]

- Parental status (married, divorced) [19]
- Par. Ed Lvl [21]
- Par. Occupation(s) [21]

High School [0]
- Educational Narratives [34]
- Enjoy High School [22]
- Academic Performance [22]
- Student Life Involvement [24]
- Social Capital/Struggles [18]

Decision to Attend College [0]
- Why this College? [27]
  - Applied to Emory [8]
- Admissions Experience [16]
- Decision Metacognitions [9]
- Financial Role in Decision [23]
- Parental Role in Decisions [11]
  - Parent Financial support [21]
  - Parent Emotional Support [18]

Previous College [0]
- Enjoy Experience [22]
- Academic Performance [39]
  - Faculty Interactions [16]
  - Previous Academic Advising [14]
- Social Life [22]
  - Student Life Involvement [32]
  - Outside Stressors [20]
- Financial Aid [0]
  - Status [20]
  - Experiences [19]
- Work status [27]
  - On campus/Off campus [17]
  - Full Time/Part Time [18]
  - Work Study [14]
  - Motivations [23]
- Feelings of Superiority [2]

Plans [1]
- Plan to Continue [28]
- Plans for Involvement [21]
- Planning Cognitions [12]
- Change in Plans [13]
  - Catalyst for Change [8]
- Major/Concentration [25]
- Individual Prep [27]
- Institutional Prep [24]
  - Institutional Norms [7]
- Hindsight/Perspectives [2]

- Transitioning [1]
  - Why Emory [17]
  - Admissions Experience (Transfers) [16]
  - Informed about process [13]
  - Financial Aid (Emory) [0]
    - Status [21]
    - Experience [25]
    - Comparisons [8]
  - Academic Advising (Emory) [33]
    - Differences/Comparisons [17]
  - Orientation/Oxford Day [2]
    - Attendance [17]
    - Experience [20]
    - Suggestions [27]
    - Motivations/Thoughts [6]
    - Other "Orientation" Experiences [9]
  - Transitional Anxiety [21]
  - Transitional Problems [20]
    - Specific Problem [11]
    - Actions Taken [11]
    - Institutional resources [13]
  - Preconceptions/Expectations [16]
  - Family/friend support [17]
  - Connections to Emory [17]
- Emory [0]
  - Evaluations of Emory [36]
  - Comparison to Expectations [15]
  - Most Enjoy [23]
  - Least Enjoy [22]
  - (Un)anticipated Stresses [1]
    - Academic [16]
    - Social [6]
    - Personal [20]
    - Missing Old School [4]
  - Satisfaction Levels [19]
  - Broader Horizons [8]
- Comparisons [0]
  - Differences between institutions [56]
  - Expectation of Differences [23]
  - Diversity [31]
  - Competition [21]
  - Preparation for Emory [22]
  - Smoothing the Transition [5]
- At Emory [0]
  - Negative Views of CC/Lack of [5]
  - Negative Views of Oxford [10]

- Academics [1]
  - Current assessment [33]
  - New GPA/Transfer Shock [18]
  - GER Completion [17]
  - Enjoy Classes [20]
  - Difficulty Level [25]
  - Study Time [17]
  - Study Groups [15]
  - Major [4]
  - Faculty Interactions [31]
  - Difficult Experiences [6]
  - Feelings of inadequacy/superiority [9]
- Social Life [0]
  - Adaptation to Social Life [29]
  - Changes in Social Life [25]
    - Dense networks [7]
    - Sparse Networks [14]
  - Student Life Involvement [30]
  - New Friends [27]
  - Oxford Bubble [10]
  - Living Situation [19]
    - Motivations for Decision [11]
  - Sense of Community [26]
    - Post Semester Evaluation [9]
  - Party Culture [6]
  - Blame Self/Individual Factors [13]
  - Blame Emory/Institutional Factors [5]
- Work [0]
  - Currently Working [31]
  - On campus/off campus [15]
  - Full time/part time [16]
  - Work study/not work study [15]
  - Motivations [20]
- Changes in Plans [23]

Research Predictions [1]

- Institutional Factors [25]
- Individual Factors [14] Sets [0]