

Cultivating Social Capital for College Success:
A Case Study of Vietnamese-American Students at Two-Year Colleges

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Abstract

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Much of the research on Vietnamese-American's educational and socio-economic outcomes have come from the culturalist lens. While cultural factors are important considerations, I argue that focusing on cultural factors alone is a limited lens for two reasons: 1) It ignores the structural factors that can potentially influence how cultural wealth is manifested. 2) The value of cultural wealth is product-driven and context-specific. Therefore, to understand how Vietnamese-American students at the community college cultivate their social capital for college success¹, this study considers not only the students' cultural wealth but also their institution's structural factors. Conceptual Framework: In this study, cultural wealth is defined using Yosso's six forms of *community cultural wealth (CCW)*. *Structural factors (SFs)* is organized in two dimensions: *explicit* and *implicit structural factors (ESFs and ISFs)*. *Social capital for college success (SCfCS)* is composed of five elements as illustrated in this visual.² I conducted a qualitative *case study* and used *ego-centric network analysis (ENA)* as an additional methodological lens to approach this research problem. Data was collected at two two-year colleges in the Pacific Northwest³. There were three groups of participants: focal students

¹ In this study, I call this process the *SCfCS-cultivation process*.

² A visual of the construct of SCfCS is available in the appendix, link to appendix 3A.

³ To preserve anonymity and confidentiality of participants, all names are pseudonyms.

(N=17), institutional agents (N=10), and alters (N=8). The main method of collecting was interviewing, supplemented with document analysis and non-participatory observations.

Research Questions: The framing ideas and methodological choices above prompted me to pose the following research questions about Vietnamese-American students' *SCfCS-cultivation process* at two-year colleges: How do they cultivate their SCfCS? More specifically, how does their CCW mediate their cultivation of SCfCS, and how do SFs in their college environment facilitate or impede that SCfCS-cultivation process? To answer these overarching questions, I used the following four subsidiary questions to direct my investigation: 1) What forms of *community cultural wealth (CCW)* do these students possess? 2) What *structural forces (SFs)* in the college environment might facilitate or impede their *SCfCS-cultivation process*? 3) What are the *dyadic* and *holistic characteristics* of their *ego-centric network structure (egonet)*? 4) What forms of *social capital for college success (SCfCS)* have they cultivated? Three main groups of findings emerged from this study. 1) This study finds that there is a disconnect between the community college system's self-identification as an *open-access* institution and their students' actual experience. From the system's perspective, *open-access* is defined in terms of admission procedures and academic prerequisites. However, for the focal-student participants in this study, the possibility of college is strongly dependent on their acquisition of *college-feasibility resources*⁴, much of which comes from *kin ties*. I argue that this disconnect encourages the system to re-examine and broaden their definition of *college access/re-access* and to build community partnerships that provide students with college-feasibility support. 2) This study finds that *tie strength* is indicated by *multiplexity*, *comradery*, and *trust*, and that a student's *SCfCS portfolio* is not correlated with his/her network *size* and *range*. These findings have led me to argue that *multiplexity* makes it possible for students with small homogeneous egonets⁵ to still have access to diverse forms of *SCfCS*⁶. 3) Findings regarding SFs have led me to argue that there is a reciprocal relationship between schooling⁷ and student identity; furthermore, I argue that while ESFs determine a student's tangible competencies and technical skills, ISFs

⁴ *College-feasibility resources* refer to resources that make it college life possible, i.e., childcare, housing, transportation, financial support (living expenses), etc.

⁵ *Egonets*: ego-centric social network structure

⁶ *SCfCS*: social capital for college success

⁷ Schooling refers to the *structural forces* within the college environment and is composed of *explicit structural forces (ESFs)* and *implicit structural forces (ISFs)*.

shape his/her worldview⁸. Two socialized worldviews that emerged from this study are what I termed the *Colonialistic Lens* and the *Meritocratic Lens*. Data from this study shows that focal-student participants display a high degree *system justification*⁹ and that Vietnamese-American students tend to benefit from *stereotype promise*. I describe these experiences and their cyclic relationship with one another as the *promise cycle*. Furthermore, I went on to argue that repeated participation in the *promise cycle* shapes a student's *Meritocratic Lens*. Data also shows that focal-student participants in this study have a hyper-favorable view of the English language and Americanism, which I referred to as their *Colonialistic Lens* and argued that it has its roots in internalized colonialism and is perpetuated by the institution's Eurocentric positionality. Through an in-depth examination of Vietnamese-American students' *SCfCS-cultivation process*, findings from this study can be transferred to our understanding of other underserved student populations and their pathways to college success. As a two-year college practitioner, I hope that we can acknowledge the *cultural wealth* that students bring and at the same time recognize the impact of *implicit structural forces* on students' worldviews and educational experiences. If practitioners operate with these ideas in mind then, then we might be more effective in our college-success and student-retention efforts.

⁸ Worldview refers to the lens that a student sees him/herself, the world and his/her place in that world.

⁹ *System justification* is one of the measures used to capture *trust*.

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Dedications

To the immigrant students and families,
with the hope that understanding leads to structural equity.

&

To Mom and Dad, for all your unconditional love and sacrifice.

Kính tặng Ba và Má, vì lúc nào cũng sống cho con cái.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is two-folds; it acts both as a primer and as a summary for the rest of this dissertation. It is organized into three sections. In the first section, entitled Background & Literature Review, I will present the key ideas that have shaped my conceptual framework and prompted both the overarching and subsidiary research questions. In the second section, named Methodology, I will discuss the main decisions I made around data collection and analysis as well as my rationale behind those decisions. In the final section, I will sum up the most significant discoveries in each of the four findings chapters.

INFORMING LITERATURE & FRAMING IDEAS: CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing the Research Questions

Much of the research on Vietnamese-American's educational and socio-economic outcomes has come from the Culturalist Lens. From a cultural perspective, these studies explain that the socio-economic variance within the Vietnamese diaspora is a result of their differing transnational capital, i.e., the skills, knowledge and monetary resources they brought with them from Vietnam. Along similar lines of argument, Vietnamese-American students' educational success is explained as a function of their cultural wealth, i.e., cultural ties and parental supervision provided the right amount of constraints, home environment provided the right learning atmosphere, kin relationships provided the necessary forms of institutional capital, etc.

In this study, I argue that while *cultural factors* are important considerations, focusing on cultural factors alone is a limited lens because it ignores the *structural factors*, which have the ability to influence how forms of *cultural wealth* is manifested. Drawing on Bourdieu and Yosso's work, I propose that the significance of *community cultural wealth (CCW)* is context-specific, situationally-valued, and product-driven. Therefore, in order to understand how *CCW* mediates their acquisition or cultivation of *social capital for college success (SCfCS)*, we have to include *structural factors (SFs)* as part of the equation. How does their *community cultural wealth* mediate that process? How do *structural forces* in their college environment facilitate or impede that process? Accordingly, this study examines the SCfCS acquisition process by considering the roles of Vietnamese-American students' CCW and their institution's SFs. Moreover, this study focuses specifically on the postsecondary leg of their educational journey

because numbers show that while most Vietnamese students graduate from high school and enroll in college, only two-thirds actually complete a degree.

Piecing together the ideas above, this study aims to examine the *SCfCS-cultivation process* of Vietnamese-American students at the two-year college. To examine this process, I posed the following overarching research questions: How do Vietnamese-American students at the two-year colleges cultivate their *social capital for college success*? More specifically, how does their *community cultural wealth* mediate their *cultivation of SCfCS*? And how do *structural forces* in their college environment facilitate or impede this *SCfCS-cultivation process*? To investigate these overarching questions, I used the four subsidiary questions below to operationalize the investigation: 1) What forms of *community cultural wealth (CCW)* do these students possess? 2) What *structural forces* in the college environment might facilitate or impede their *SCfCS-cultivation process*? 3) What are the *dyadic and holistic characteristics* of their *ego-centric network structure*? 4) What forms of *social capital for college success* have they harvested or cultivated? These subsidiary questions are scaffolded/upheld by the theoretical framework in the visual under this paragraph. In the next section, I will discuss some of the key framing ideas behind this theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

Social Network Theory & Ego-centric Network Analysis (ENA). Bodies of literature that examine minority students' postsecondary pathways have suggested that *social network analysis* is a highly innovative and deeply insightful lens for exploring the correlations between minority students' social capital and their educational behaviors and outcomes (Granovetter, 1985; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Cochran et al., 1979). Building on that body of literature, this framework makes use of *social network theory*, which explores the antecedents and consequences of one's *social network structure*. More specifically, this study employed *ego-centric network analysis (ENA)* as a methodological lens to examine the focal students' *SCfCS-cultivation process*. ENA was the appropriate and useful methodological tool because it provided specifics on how to collect and analyze the dyadic and holistic ego-centric network characteristics of sixteen focal-student participants. At the dyadic level, I examined their ties in the following two dimensions: 1) tie strength and 2) perception of support. At the holistic level, I examined their network structure in the following three dimensions: 1) size, 2) composition, and 3) range/heterogeneity.

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). In the context of this study, the consequences of network structure as mentioned in the paragraph above refer to the various forms of capital that students have access to as a result of their social ties. These forms of capital are grouped into two broad categories: *community cultural wealth (CCW)* and *social capital for college (SCfCS)*. *Community cultural wealth* draws on Yosso's underpinning premise and postulates that minority students possess valuable resources in their families and communities that can be fuel their educational journeys. She organizes these forms of wealth into six categories: *aspirational capital*, *resistant capital*, *navigational capital*, *familial capital*, *linguistic capital* and *social capital*. I adapted most of Yosso's original definitions of these capitals, except for *social capital*. Yosso defines *social capital* as having access to institutional resources from social ties. In this study, for transparency purposes and to prevent overlaps between this and other forms of SCfCS, I have refined *CCW-social capital* to include only institutional resources from cultural ties, i.e., ties within a student's cultural community, excluding kin members. (The rationale and steps that went in behind this amendment process are elaborated in chapters two and three, literature review and methodology, respectively.) As for the other five types of capital, much was kept intact. *Aspiration capital* refers to the educational hopes and dreams that students bring with them on their schooling journey, their drive for a better future through education. *Resistant capital* refers to the skills that students have developed as a result of engaging in oppositional behaviors that challenges systemic inequity. *Navigational capital* is the skills and abilities that students have harvested as a result of maneuvering through institutional landscapes that were not designed for people like themselves. *Familial capital* is defined as resources that students have acquired from kin ties; in this study, kin ties include both immediate and extended family members, i.e., cousins, aunts, parents-in-law, etc. Lastly, *linguistic capital* refers to the communication skills that students have attained from speaking multiple languages.

Social capital for college success (SCfCS). These six forms of cultural wealth, together with favorable structural conditions, as posited/hypothesized in my theoretical framework, can help students cultivate five forms of educational support. I clustered these five forms of support under one broad category called *social capital for college success (SCfCS)*. *SCfCS* pools together the work of two postsecondary scholars: Deil-Amen and Karp. Anchoring her model in the lived experiences of minority students at the community college, Deil-Amen modified Tinto's Interactionalist Model (1973) and introduced the concept of *socio-academic integration*.

She argues that while integration is a critical antecedent of student retention, unlike their four-year institution counterparts, minority students at the community college experience *social integration* and *academic integration* intermittently and simultaneously. *Socio-academic integration* is composed of four components: 1) *sense of belonging*, 2) *sense of competence*, 3) *reinforcement of goal commitment*, and 4) *access to institutional resources (from any social tie)*. These elements are four of the five tangible types of support in *SCfCS*. The fifth element comes from Karp's model of student retention, which argues that we cannot overlook fundamental factors, such as childcare, transportation, living expenses, housing, etc., especially when it comes to nontraditional adult students at the community college. Karp groups these factors in a descriptive phrase called *college-feasibility resources*. Altogether, *social capital for college success (SCfCS)* encompasses the following five elements or constructs: 1) *sense of belonging*, 2) *sense of competence*, 3) *reinforcement of goal commitment*, 4) *access to institutional resources (from any social tie)*, and 5) *college-feasibility resources*.

Structural Forces/Factors. As stated, one of the fundamental arguments in my framework is that *CCW* has the potential to manifest as *SCfCS*, if given the right structural conditions. For a visual analogy, this *SCfCS-cultivation process* can be likened to the seed germination process in horticulture. With suitable soil and climate, a seed will have a higher chance of sprouting into a sapling. Likewise, under favorable *structural conditions*, *CCW* will have more likelihood of converting into *SCfCS*. In this study, I refer to these *structural conditions* as *structural forces (SFs)*; furthermore, SFs are conceptualized in two parts -- *explicit* and *implicit structural forces*, as inspired by Eisner's definition of the curriculum. *Structural forces* are explicit and implicit factors in the college environment that have the potential to shape a student's educational experience. Mirroring Eisner's ideas of the implicit and null curriculum (Eisner, 2005), ***implicit structural forces*** refer to the hidden messages, the indirect norms/values/protocols, the avoided conversation topics, the unavailable academic subjects, etc.; in other words, they are factors that the college does not have printed in their official literature, but yet are powerful forces that permeates throughout the college atmosphere and undoubtedly can influence a student's educational experience. On the other hand, ***explicit structural factors*** are academic programs, student services, formal roles and networks, bureaucratic procedures, public statements/decrees, etc. that the college has advertised in their official literature, i.e., college website, meeting minutes, course syllabus, student handbook, etc. Data on *explicit*

structural factors was collected, organized and analyzed in four dimensions borrowed from Woodhill's model: *control*, *action*, *association* and *meaning*. According to Woodhill's model, which is a framework designed to examine the organizational structure of an institution, *control* refers to the policies that regulate the college. *Action* is the functions and services available at the college. *Association* is the formal roles and relationships within the college. Lastly, *meaning* is the value/belief systems that the college has publicly stated. Together, these four dimensions offered an operational frame for collecting, organizing and analyzing data on *explicit structural forces*.

In sum, the purpose of this study is to explore the role of *community cultural wealth (CCW)* and *structural forces (SFs)* within the *SCfCS-Cultivation Process* of Vietnamese-American students at the two-year colleges, as suggested by literature on the Vietnamese diaspora's socio-economic and educational outcomes. This body of literature encourages the following overarching questions: How does Vietnamese-American students' *community cultural wealth (CCW)* mediate their *college success*? More specifically, how do the institution's structural forces facilitate or impede their *cultivation of social capital for college*? To address these Olympic College questions, I drew on literature around minority students' two-year college education and proposed a framework that encompasses four core components: *community cultural wealth*, *structural forces*, *ego-centric network structure*, and *social capital for college success*. From this framework, stemmed the following subsidiary research questions that guided the data collection and analysis processes of this study:

1. What forms of *community cultural wealth (CCW)* do these students possess?
2. What *structural forces* in the college environment might facilitate or impede their *SCfCS-cultivation process*?
3. What are the *dyadic and holistic characteristics* of their *ego-centric network structure*?
4. What forms of *social capital for college success (SCfCS)* have they harvested/harnessed?

In other words, what forms of *SCfCS* have been cultivated?

Overarching Argument of This Study

Narratives of the experiences and outcomes of Vietnamese immigrants in the American education system are primarily shaped by culturalist perspectives, which ignores the role that structural inequalities can play in constraining the choices and opportunities of individuals. I argue that by accounting for structural forces, we are able to glean a more comprehensive

understanding of the ways in which Vietnamese-American students at two-year colleges cultivate resources for educational success – in particular, how institutional shortfalls and potentials can shape these students’ process of cultivating *social capital for college success*. Results from this study support that argument by presenting four ways in which *structural forces* matter in the *SCfCS-cultivation process*: **(1)** While it is important that we honor and celebrate the multiple forms of cultural wealth that students bring, it is problematic to simply stop there, specifically in regards to forms of cultural wealth such as *resistant capital*. *Resistant capital*, while it highlights the student’s mental strength, it is also a signal of the inequity in the system and imply the following reflective questions: What is it in the system that requires students to need *resistant capital* in order to reach college success? What is it about our education system that requires students to have the skills and endurance to swim upstream in order to reach college success? Why? What is it that we are trying to accomplish? **(2)** While *explicit structural forces* determine a student’s technical competencies, *implicit structural forces* shape a student’s worldview. Given its deep and enduring impact, I propose that two-year institutions invest more attention and resources in professional-development efforts that examine the institution’s *implicit structural forces*. **(3)** Results show that for the focal students in this study, *tie strength* is characterized by *multiplexity*, *comradery*, and *trust*; furthermore, these characteristics are reliable indicators of favorable conditions for cultivating *social capital for college success*. This finding urges two-year institutions to design student experiences that foster *multiplexity*, *comradery* and *trust* in student-PEER, student-IA and student-COMM relationships. **(4)** Results show that for first-generation and nontraditional students, access to *college-feasibility resources* is a strong predictor of college access/re-access. Merging these last two findings, I assert that institutions have the potential/opportunities to support students in cultivating *college-feasibility resources* and one way to accomplish that goal is to foster PEER, IA and COMM relationships that are characterized by *multiplexity*, *comradery* and *trust*.

METHODOLOGY: CHAPTER 3

To address the research questions posed above, I conducted an *interpretive case study* that took place at two community colleges within the same college district in the Pacific Northwest¹⁰. Data collection, spanning over the course of seven months from July 2018 to

¹⁰ To preserve anonymity and confidentiality of participants, all names are pseudonyms.

January 2019, included the following sources: official documents, fieldnotes from nine non-participatory observations of college events/activities, interview transcripts from sixteen social-network interviews with focal students, fieldnotes from five participatory observations of focal students, interview transcripts from thirteen follow-up interviews with focal students, and interview transcripts from twenty-five semi-structured interviews with three groups of participants, i.e., ten with institutional agents, seventeen with focal students, and eight with alters. A summary of all data collection methods employed in this study is presented in a chart in the appendix, link to appendix 5A. In addressing subsidiary research questions #1, #2, #4 and the first half of 3 (i.e., the dyadic characteristics of the student's ego-centric network structure), I performed deductive qualitative analysis that is anchored in student voice and in-lined with my positionality as a constructivist qualitative researcher. As for the second half of research question #3, regarding holistic ego-centric network characteristics such as *size*, *composition* and *range*, I followed the guidelines and formulas outlined in ENA¹¹ methodology. A matrix of research questions by data sources is available in the appendix, link to appendix 5B.

Research Approach & Research Design

I approach this study from *constructivist perspective*, which posits that individuals create their own meaning through personal interpretations and therefore one's truth depends on one's positionality. This research perspective is appropriate given that this study is *a qualitative interpretive case study*. The *interpretive paradigm* in this research design was a conscious decision, as it aligns with my *constructivist positionality* as a researcher, is concerned with understanding the phenomenon subjectively, from the participants' frame of reference.

Qualitative case studies are most suitable for studies where context conditions (i.e., *structural forces*) are relevant to the phenomenon (i.e., *the SCfCS-cultivation process*). Moreover, it is appropriate for studies that investigate *why* and *how* questions, such as the overarching research questions of this study. How does Vietnamese-American students' *community cultural wealth* mediate their acquisition of *social capital for college*? And how do *structural forces* within the college environment facilitate or impede this *SCfCS-cultivation process*?

Research Context

Participants in this study were recruited from two "sister colleges" in the Pacific Northwest: Rainier College and Olympic College. The Pacific Northwest is an appropriate

¹¹ ENA: Ego-centric Network Analysis

research context for several reasons. First of all, this city has the fourth highest Vietnamese population in the United States, both those from previous waves as well as recent immigrants. Secondly, Rainier College and Olympic College will provide interesting contextual contrasts. Even though they are often referred to as “sister colleges” being within the same district, each college has its own very unique college culture. While Rainier College is an AANAPISI¹² institution, Olympic College has more equity-based events such as First Year Experience Initiative and Speak-Up Speaker Series. These unique characteristics made for a rich comparison of their *structural forces*.

Data Collection: Sampling Strategies

Participants in this study were divided into three groups, i.e., institutional agents (IAs) (N=10), focal students (FSs) (N=17), and their alters (ALTERs) (N=8). I used *criterion sampling* with *maximum variation* to recruit FS and IA participants. Because this is a case study, *criterion sampling* is a suitable sampling strategy as it helps bound the case. For FS recruitment, my predetermined criterion was that the FS had to be a current Vietnamese-American student at Rainier College or Olympic College. For IA recruitment, my predetermined criterion was that the participant had to be a present employee at Rainier College and/or Olympic College. As for *maximum variation*, this sampling strategy helped me saturate and diversify students’ perspective of the phenomenon. Drawing on literature around minority students’ postsecondary success and Vietnamese diaspora’s socio-economic outcomes, I diversified my FS participant group by the following criteria: immigrant-generation status, English proficiency, socio-economic status, academic program, formal education background, etc. As for IA participants, I tried to have representation from different sectors of the college as well as different roles. The last group of participants is ALTERs. I recruited for this group based on referrals from FS participants.

Data Collection: Methods of Collecting Data

The main method of collecting data in this study was interviewing, more specifically, semi-structured and social-network interviews. *Semi-structured interviewing* is a useful method for exploratory research because of its open-ended and flexible nature. I was able to go into these interview sessions with prepared open-ended questions drawn from my framework, and at the same time, I had the flexibility to probe and encourage interviewees to elaborate when their responses were too brief. Altogether, forty-eight semi-structured interviews were conducted

¹² AANAPISI: Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution

with three groups of participants: ten with IAs, seventeen with FSs, eight with alters and thirteen brief follow-ups with FSs. The other type of interview employed in this study was *social-network interviewing*, data from which was used to address the third subsidiary question regarding FS's egonet structure characteristics. In these interviews, I asked each student the same set of questions about each of the alters that they had indicated in their ego-centric network map. These questions were designed to capture the dyadic characteristics of the focal student's relationship with each alter (i.e., *tie strength* and *perception of support*) as well as the type of support transmitted through that relationship (i.e., the five forms of *SCfCS*). SN interviews were only conducted with sixteen focal students as one student dropped out.

Participatory Student Shadowing. Aside from interviewing, I also shadowed some focal students to build rapport. They varied in length between one to three hours depending on the nature of the activity, i.e., a work shift, a class session, a home visit, etc. It is important to stress here that these shadowing sessions were intended as a way to build rapport for a more enriching conversation during the interview, not as a main method of collecting data. Using shadowing as a method of data collection would not have aligned with the constructivist approach because this research approach posits that we honor student voice and student perspective in our analysis. As a result, shadowing of focal students was used as a way to build rapport with students rather than a main method of data collection.

Non-participatory Observations of College Events and Activities and Collection of Official Documents. In addition to interview data, I also used observational field notes to address the second subsidiary question regarding *structural forces*. These were non-participatory observations where I attended faculty meetings, school events, and workshops at Rainier College and Olympic College. For all of these observations, I either took notes during the activity or immediately after, depending on the flow of the event. Lastly, I also collected official documents from both colleges for analysis. I examined Rainier College and Olympic College's official publications, such as school websites, brochures, event/course flyers, job descriptions, meeting minutes, official statements, class syllabi, course catalog, class schedule, etc.¹³

¹³ Appendix 5A is a visual that summarizes all the data collection strategies used in this study. Appendix 5B is a matrix research questions by data source.

Approach to Data Analysis

I followed two guiding principles while collecting and analyzing data for this study: 1) Data collection and data analysis are iterative processes that naturally overlap and occur simultaneously (Creswell, 2007). 2) Data analysis means making sense of your data, a process that “consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion,” (Creswell, 2007, p. 148).

Approach to Analysis of Holistic Ego-Centric Network Structure. First, I organized the demographic information of all seventeen focal-student participants. This information came from both the student questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. Next, I tackled the second half of the third subsidiary research question, regarding *holistic ego-centric network structure*, i.e., *network size*, *composition* and *range*. To analyze *size*, I simply counted up all the *alters* that the student had indicated on his/her ego-centric network map (ENM) and created bar graphs to present this data. To analyze *composition*, I transferred the data from their ENM to an Excel spreadsheet. Each row represents one student’s network. Each *alter* is designated one Excel cell that is color coded according to their alter type; a screenshot of this spreadsheet is in the appendix, link to appendix 6A. After that, I counted up the number of each alter type and created graphs and charts in order to get some perspective of their network *size* and *composition*. These visuals are in the appendix, link to appendix 7. To analyze *range*, I employed the following formula: $K(100^2 - \Sigma\%^2)/100^2(K-1)$.

Approach to Qualitative Analysis. In keeping with the iterative nature of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007), as you will see in the description below, the steps I took during qualitative data analysis spiral back and forth between coding and conceptual reframing. First, I began with a step that Creswell refers to as *sketching ideas*, where I went through the data to identify and formulate themes, ideas, issues, etc. My reason for doing this even though I had a well-defined conceptual framework was to make sure that I was not limiting my findings to just the concepts in my framework. In other words, I did not want to only see what I was looking for and blind to everything else. Next, I used the themes that emerged from *sketching ideas* together with the constructs in my conceptual framework to write my initial codebook. I then used this initial codebook for the first round of *focused coding*. After the first round of *focused coding*, I

realized that there were overlaps between some of the concepts that I was using. Specifically, I needed to refine the third form of *community cultural wealth*. After this first round of coding and countless times of repeatedly listening to FS interviews to familiarize myself with the data, I decided to make two modifications to my original framework for better transparency. Consequently, I made the following two modifications to my framework: 1) I refined *CCW#3 (access to social capital)* by renaming it with a more descriptive term – *access to institutional capital from cultural ties*. 2) I re-organized SCfCS into five subgroups, i.e., *sense of competence, sense of belonging, reinforcement of goal commitment, institutional support from any social tie, and college-feasibility resources*. With more specificity and clarity in my framework, I revised my codebook. I used this revised codebook to conduct the second round of *focused coding*. Lastly, I administered *axial coding*, where re-organized codes and themes in order to address each of the four subsidiary research questions.

Significance of Findings & Rationale for Undertaking This Research

Through examination of these seventeen Vietnamese-American students' postsecondary journeys, I hope to gain insights that can contribute to our understanding of other underserved student populations and their pathways to college success. If educational practitioners can recognize the *cultural wealth* that students bring and identify the *implicit structural forces* that shape their college experiences, then they can be more intentional and effective in their college-success initiatives.

My rationale for conducting this research was ignited by data on the economic consequences of postsecondary attainment; however, throughout this research process, I have also gained a deep appreciation for the importance of educational equity in a democratic society. The debate on American educational goals has long been a tug-of-war between “political ideals and economic realities,” (Labaree, 1997). From the place of political value, equal educational opportunity for all is not only an ethical obligation but also a practical necessity for a healthy and viable democratic society. Education has the potential to cultivate our commitment to civic duty and foster our sense of belonging in a shared community. These merits alone are significant in their own rights; however, it is even more powerful when we take into account the socio-economic effects of education (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Attewell & Lavin, 2007; Herd, Goesling, & House, 2007; Schwartz, 2010). Our economy's demand for college-educated workers is growing at a faster rate than the number of graduates that colleges are able to produce

(Prince, 2008; Jenkins, 2008). Approximately 15.6 million jobs were created within the last ten years and nearly half of them required some postsecondary education (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). Moreover, those with a bachelor's degree made 98% more an hour than those without (Leonhardt, 2014). They are also more likely to be insured, have higher job satisfaction, have lower criminal records, have lower unemployment rate, etc. (Baum & Ma, 2007; Grubb & Lazerson, 2005). These benefits and other economic gains have been shown to be associated with postsecondary education regardless of whether it leads to a degree or not; however, it has also been established that those who complete their degrees enjoy greater rewards (Bahr, 2014; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). There are social consequences connected to these personal earnings. The ability to earn a family-sustaining wage has socio-economic and inter-generational implications because economic security is a crucial factor in every family's well-being. **In sum**, college completion of nontraditional students such as those in my focal group needs to be examined more closely, if not for reasons of democratic equity, then for its potential to close the economic gap and provide every family with a sustainable income.

College access without attainment has significant consequences on both the economy and the well-being of students and their families (Goldrick, 2010; Belfield & Levin, 2007; Fike & Fike, 2008); therefore, college retention is a research area worth investigating. One approach to increasing student retention is to examine student success; by learning from the lived experiences of successful students, we can have a better understanding about the resources they perceive to be effective (Louie, 2012; Portes & Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Bankston & Zhou, 1997). Practitioners can then transfer this information to similar groups, creating favorable conditions for other populations to acquire those resources.

FINDINGS: CHAPTERS 4-7

Findings in this study are divided into four chapters (chapters 4-7); each addresses one subsidiary research question. Here, I will summarize key findings from each of those chapters.

Chapter 4: Community Cultural Wealth (CCW)

Findings in chapter 4 address the first subsidiary question: What forms of *community cultural wealth (CCW)* do Vietnamese-American students at the community college possess? I divided this chapter in two parts. In part 1, I presented the defining characteristics of recent Vietnamese immigrants using indicators that previous scholars have used to define the previous

three waves. In part 2, I discussed how the six forms of *community cultural wealth* have manifested for these students.

Part #1 (The Most Recent Group of Vietnamese Immigrants): Three-fourths of the FS participants in this study are first-generation Vietnamese-Americans who recently immigrated to the United States. Group characteristics of this most recent wave is distinct from the previous three waves in the following ways: 1) transnational capital they brought, 2) have kin and cultural ties who are already have established lives in the host country, 3) manner of immigration, and 4) time of immigration.

Part #2 (Manifestations of CCW): **A)** Their *aspirational capital* is firmly rooted in the people in their egonets. For most, those people are kin ties; interestingly however, for a few, those people are COMM ties. *Resistant capital* manifested differently from what Yosso had defined. For this group, *resistant capital* means having the practical skill-sets and mental endurance to push through the current, refusing to be part of the status quo. Like two sides of a coin, there is a connecting and inter-looping relationship between these two forms of capital; in other words, *aspirational capital* is the fuel that drives *resistant capital*. **B)** This group displayed much evidence of *navigational capital*, which came from multiple sources, i.e., kin ties, peer ties, and cultural ties. **C)** *Institutional resources from cultural ties* came in two forms, as information flow and source of referrals. Moreover, two types of cultural institutions seemed to be the common breeding grounds for valuable cultural ties -- Vietnamese church and Vietnamese language school. **D)** Results on *familial capital* affirms previous research in that Vietnamese students do get an overwhelming amount of resources from kin ties. More specifically, in this study, these resources came in the following forms: 1) encouragement & emotional support, 2) financial assistance, 3) sharing of life responsibilities and 4) information flow.

Chapter 5: Structural Forces

Chapter 5 discusses findings around *structural forces*, which addresses the following subsidiary questions: What forms of *community cultural wealth (CCW)* do Vietnamese-American students at the community college possess? It is also divided into two parts: explicit and implicit structural forces.

Part #1 (Explicit Structural Forces). Findings around *explicit structural forces*, like other findings in this study, are anchored in student voice. They are organized in four categories

borrowed from Woodhill's model: *control*¹⁴ (policies and regulations), *action* (functions and services), *association* (formal roles and relationships), and *meaning* (institutional values). **A) Action:** Students spoke highly of non-academic student support services at Rainier College and I-BEST Pathways at Olympic College. First-generation EL students frequently take advantage of services at the following three offices: the WALL¹⁵, the AANAPISI Center, and the BTSD¹⁶ Transitions Center. This is not surprising as these offices are well-integrated in the course curriculum and departmental agenda of BTSD. **B) Association:** Faculty office-hour is a conduit for meaningful relationship building, yet the college district does not have a systematic method of giving all instructors the capacity and incentive to offer office hours consistently. **C) Meaning:** There is a disconnect between student interpretation and institutional understanding of *open-access*, one of the highly-valued missions of the Pacific NW College District as well as two-year colleges, in general. Within the system, "open-access" refers to the absence of entrance exams and other academic prerequisites. For students, on the other hand, "open-access" means having access to the support that allows them to pursue higher education.

Part #2 (Implicit Structural Forces). Whereas *explicit structural forces* dictate the technical skills that students receive, *implicit structural forces* color their socialized lenses, shaping how they see themselves, the world, and their place in that world. Two socialized lenses that have emerged from the data in this study are: *Colonialistic Lens and Meritocratic Lens*. **A)** I argue that students display colonialistic views of the English language and Americanism as a reflection of Eurocentric interactions. **B)** Students display *meritocratic views* of educational success as a result of *stereotype promise*.

Chapter 6: Ego-centric Network Structure

Findings in this chapter are also presented in two main parts, each addressing per segment of the third subsidiary question: *What are the dyadic and holistic characteristics of their ego-centric network structure?* The first part focuses on dyadic characteristics, specifically, the three indicators of *tie strength: multiplexity, comradery and trust*. The second part focuses on holistic characteristics, particularly, *size, composition, and range/heterogeneity* of the focal

¹⁴ *Control* provides background information about the college and therefore will be presented in the Methodology Chapter, under the subheading *Institutional Profile*.

¹⁵ WALL: Writing And Language Lab, a tutoring center designated for ELL students at Rainier College.

¹⁶ BTSD: Basic & Transitional Studies Department, a pre-college department commonly found in two-year colleges.

participants' *egonet*¹⁷ structure. The following two paragraphs will summarize key findings around each level of analysis.

Part #1 (Dyadic Ego-centric Network Structure). The elusive nature of *tie strength* has always made it a challenge for scholars to capture and measure. Contributing to this landscape, findings in this study demonstrate that a strong tie is indicated by three characteristics: *multiplexity*, *comradery* and *trust*. *Multiplexity* refers to two dimensions in a relationship: role and type of support. For the focal students in this study, a multiplex tie means that the alter holds multiple roles and/or is a provider of multiple forms of support. For example, Grace was ThúyQuỳnh's ESL instructor, confidant and mentor all at the same time. She not only advised ThúyQuỳnh on academic matters, Grace also lent an empathetic ear and connected ThúyQuỳnh to social and legal services in the community when ThúyQuỳnh was going through her divorce. The relationship between ThúyQuỳnh and Grace is a *multiplex tie* because of Grace's various roles and her diverse forms of support.

The second indicator of *tie strength* is *comradery*, which refers to relationships where the alter is a *navigational partner* who provides companionship as well as tangible support in an organic manner. HuệMai and Miên's relationship exemplifies this characteristic. They met at an ESL orientation five years ago and have remained close friends ever since, even though they were placed in different ESL levels. HuệMai and Miên are perfect *navigational partners* for each other because their new lives in America carried many similarities. Both immigrated to the US at about the same time via marriage. At the time of their arrival, neither had any friends or family here except for their husbands and in-laws. They were both pregnant with their first child around the same time, so both stopped out and came back at the same quarter. The support between HuệMai and Miên is bi-directional and goes beyond academic matters. In many ways, their similar situation allowed them the opportunity to be each other's *navigational partner*, to learn and adapt together. This *comradery* aspect of their relationship characterized it as a strong tie.

The third indicator of *tie strength* is *trust*, which is composed of *system justification* and *interpersonal openness*. *System justification* refers to a trust in the system, trust in the benevolence of the institution and the agents who work within that institution. The focal students in this study consistently spoke highly of the work and support that instructors, advisors

¹⁷ In this dissertation, *egonet* is a short for *ego-centric social network*.

and staff personnel at the college provide. They believe that institutional agents have students' interests at heart and are doing all they can to help students improve their skills and move through to graduation. For example, here is an excerpt from TườngVy that is quite representative of this sample and their perception of the support that they're receiving from IAs on campus:

Well, teachers help me by showing me how to study. They give me good lessons in class. They have group assignments to help me practice speaking. Like I tell her that I have trouble speaking, so she sets me up with group members that allow me to practice speaking. And encourages me to get a tutor. And encourages me to take classes on ESL computer, ESL health, ESL math and things like that. And staff, like whenever I can't log in to a computer, this uncle (i.e., computer staff) helps me. And whenever I have any questions about classes, then I go to the Transitions Center to ask Lilian.

The other half of *trust* is *interpersonal openness*, which is one's willingness to share personal time, personal space and personal information. From this angle, the focal participants seem to display a low degree of *interpersonal openness* with faculty and advisors because of the following reasons: 1) They perceive their relationship with IAs as a "professional relationship," restricted by the IA's job description. This influences their perception of what is considered as an appropriate topic for conversation. 2) They have low confidence in their oral English skills. 3) They are overly respectful of the IA's time and considerate of sharing access to the IA with other classmates. Taken together, *system justification* and *interpersonal openness* make *trust* a complicated and contradictory indicator of *tie strength* for this group of Vietnamese-American students.

Part #2 (Holistic Ego-centric Network Structure). At the holistic level analysis, I examined *size*, *composition* and *range/heterogeneity* of focal students' network structure. **Size.** Quantitatively, each focal student has an average of five *alters* in their network. Qualitatively, however, due to *multiplexity*, this number did not seem to make much of a difference in terms of the student's access to various types of *social capital for college success (SCfCS)*. **Composition.** Overall, these students have very diverse network composition. With the exception of three students (TườngVy, HuệMai and NgọcCầm), everyone else has at least three *alter types* in their network. Moreover, IA and PEER ties are the most common, while COMM ties are the least.

Even though IA and PEER ties are the most common types of tie, KIN ties are the most prolific/prevalent/numerous. Meaning that, overall, KIN ties are most in numbers, even though not every student mentioned a KIN tie in their network. **Range/Heterogeneity.** With the exception of *Tường Vy*, everyone else has an IQV (Index of Qualitative Variation) above 0.5, with most being closer to 1.0. These numbers mean that, on average, most focal students have high variability in their networks.

Chapter 7: Social Capital for College Success (SCfCS)

This chapter presents findings that address the last subsidiary question: *What forms of social capital for college success (SCfCS) have these students cultivated or harvested?* Similar to chapters 4 (CCW) and 6 (Network Structure), part of the discovery in this chapter is the re-organization and refinement of SCfCS¹⁸. In short, the revised SCfCS is composed of the following five elements: 1) *sense of belonging*, 2) *sense of competence*, 3) *reinforcement of goal commitment*, 4) *institutional resources*, and 5) *college-feasibility resources*. A visual of this revised construct is available in the appendix, link to appendix 3B.

From this revised construct, three key findings around SCfCS emerged: 1) The students in this study have very diverse SCfCS portfolios. 2) They report having more access to support for building *a sense of competence* than support for building *a sense of belonging*. 3) They have a lot of access to *college-feasibility resources*, much of which came from KIN ties. Each of these three findings will be briefly elaborated in the following paragraph.

Part #1 (Diverse SCfCS Portfolios). Almost every focal-student participant in this study has a diverse SCfCS portfolio. This diversity is demonstrated by the colorfulness in the chart below, where each form of SCfCS is represented by a unique color. An interesting point worth noting here is that network composition and network size do not seem to correlate much with SCfCS diversity. In other words, contrary to conventional logic, some students have access to diverse forms of SCfCS even though their network structure is neither heterogeneous nor numerous, such is the case with students like *Tường Vy*. I hypothesize that this is the result of having multiplex ties in their networks.

Part #2 (Support for building a sense of competence). The stories that focal students have shared regarding the type of support that they receive from IAs led me to conclude that they

¹⁸ For a detailed account of the thought process behind this re-conceptualization of SCfCS, please refer to chapter 3, under the subheading “Approach to Qualitative Analysis”.

get more *sense-of-competence support* as opposed to *sense-of-belonging support*. Furthermore, I hypothesize that this heightened *sense-of-competence support* from IAs is likely a result of *stereotype promise*, which is when minority students rise to the occasion to the high expectations of authoritative figures around them. Weaving together data from student and IA interviews, I noticed that *sense-of-competence support* came through in varied and tangible ways, from meaningful encouragement and personalized guidance to referrals and references. Often times, IAs went beyond their professional duties to support these students, presumably as a consequence of *stereotype promise*.

Part #3 (College-feasibility resources from KIN ties). Consistent with results from previous studies on nontraditional students at two-year colleges, data in this study upholds the belief that college success is positively correlated with college-feasibility support. As Anna, BíchChâu's *alter* stated during our interview, "*There's a lot that happens before education can happen.*" This is particularly true for first-generation students with children and/or family responsibilities. Of the twelve first-generation students in this study, eight stopped out due to life challenges and eventually came back because they were able to find family members who could help them address those challenges. This goes to show that having access to the resources to meet family-and-work challenges is a critical element to college success. For the students in this study, they have devised access to these resources by implementing one of the following three strategies: 1) They recruited extended family members to help with childcare and other family responsibilities, as is the case with ThanhĐiệp, MinhHằng and HuệMai. 2) They cobbled together short paths to build longer roads, as is the case with MinhHằng and MinhTuyết.. 3) Couples rotated family responsibilities and took turns to pursue education, as is the case with MinhTuyết and ThanhĐiệp.

It is clear that having access to *college-feasibility resources* is a critical factor of college success when we examine the reasons why students leave and the resources that allowed them the option to come back. Taking this information a step further, I argue that it suggests that two-year colleges re-examine the idea of "open access." If the lack of *college-feasibility resources* is preventing students from returning to the classroom to pursue their education, yet the institution is not providing structural support to help students meet those life challenges, then it poses the question of whether community colleges are actually "open access" post-secondary institutions as claimed to be.

CHAPTER 2

INFORMING LITERATUR & FRAMING IDEAS

Introduction

Studies that have attempted to explain the educational variance of immigrant students generally come from two camps: *structuralists* and *culturalists*. *Structuralists* underscore the impact of *social forces/structures*; using those forces to account for benefits and constraints that students experience. However, much of the literature that focuses specifically on Vietnamese American students has come from the *culturalist* camp. From a *culturalist* approach, *transnational capital* and *cultural capital* were used to explain the in-group variance of Vietnamese-American student outcomes. For example, they argue that the reason why Vietnamese immigrants from the first wave have fared better than their second-wave counterparts is because first-wave immigrants came with more *transnational capital*, i.e., formal education, familiarity with Western culture and language, etc. Aside from *transnational capital*, some studies also use *cultural capital* to explain Vietnamese immigrant students' educational outcomes. For example, Zhou & Bankston credited the academic success of Vietnamese students to their abundance of *cultural capital*, i.e., their success frame, co-ethnic constraints and support, education-friendly home environment, etc. **In sum**, much of the literature on Vietnamese-Americans have explained their outcomes from a cultural perspective. In the next section, I will discuss these studies in detail.

VIETNAMESE DIASPORA & CULTURALIST PERSPECTIVE

Vietnamese-American Outcomes and Their Transnational Capital

The story of Vietnamese diaspora is often described in three waves, roughly divided into the following timeframes: 1) The first wave occurred around 1975, immediately after the end of the Vietnam War. People in this wave were educated professionals and military personnel with ties to U.S. or Rainier College Vietnamese government. 2) The second wave began in the late seventies and lasted throughout the eighties. Members of this wave - "boat people" - were mainly people from rural areas and fishing towns. 3) The third wave overlaps with the second wave; it began in the eighties and went into the early nineties. People from this wave were mostly Vietnamese Amerasians and political prisoners. These immigration waves are distinct not only because of the time of immigration, but also because of the wave member's identity in

their native country (i.e., who they were when they were in Vietnam) and therefore, the *cultural capital* they brought with them to America.

Of these three waves, the first and second waves are most different from one another – each came with different forms of transnational capital that ultimately influenced their outcomes in the United States. The first wave consisted of high-ranking officials associated with U.S. military or the Rainier College Vietnamese government. They left around April of 1975, as the war came to an end, for fear of being persecuted by the incoming regime. Of the three waves, members of the first wave came with the most transnational socio-economic capital (Ima & Rumbaut, 1989; Hsu, Davies & Hansen, 2004; Phelan et al, 1991). Because of their high socio-economic status in Vietnam, they were able to bring with them rich forms of capital such as formal education, English ability, knowledge of western culture and monetary security (Ima & Rumbaut, 1989; Hsu, Davies & Hansen, 2004; Phelan et al, 1991). These advantageous forms of economic and human capital helped first-wave immigrants adapt successfully into post-immigration life in the United States (Kibria, 1993; Rutledge, 1992; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988).

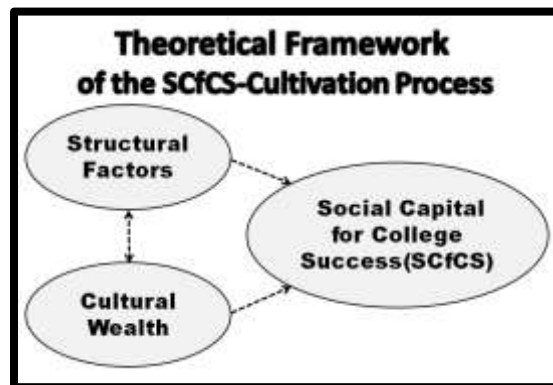
The second wave of Vietnamese migration began in the late seventies and lasted throughout the eighties. This group is often referred to as the “boat people,” for the fact that many of them left on small makeshift fishing boats and came through refugee camps in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Australia. This was made up of working-class people from fishing villages and Chinese-Vietnamese entrepreneurs. They had with low levels of formal education, lacked English-language ability, and arrived to the United States penniless. Even though Vietnam had had direct Western influence from 1858 all the way up until 1975, through French colonization and U.S. military presence, not everyone in Vietnam was exposed to Western culture. Only well-to-do families living in major cities such as the former capital of Saigon were introduced to Western customs and language; ordinary people in the rest of the country did not have this advantage. For this reason, most immigrants from the second wave did not come with the same transnational capital as did the earlier arrivals. The “boat people” came with limited exposure to Western culture and language, bureaucratic/navigational knowledge and economic means (Ima & Rumbaut, 1989). Much of the literature on Vietnamese immigrant adaptation has focused on of this disparity in transnational capital between the two waves to explain their differing socio-economic outcomes in the United States.

Vietnamese-American Students' Educational Success and Their Cultural Wealth

Aside from *transnational capital*, some studies also used *cultural wealth* to explain Vietnamese immigrant students' educational outcomes. For example, Zhou & Bankston credited the academic success of students in their study with strong cultural value. They found that despite living in a poor, working-class neighborhood, Vietnamese students who showed strong orientation towards family values were more likely to achieve academically (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore, 1992; Rumbaut & Irma, 1988; Zhou and Bankston, 1994; Bankston, 1996). These students come from families where they have cooperative family dynamic that positively shapes their attitudes about school and actively creates favorable learning environments at home, where siblings tutor each other is a norm (Zhou and Bankston, 1994; Bankston, 1996). Other studies, also focus on cultural values, but expand beyond the bounds of family. These studies argue that Vietnamese immigrant students' educational success is due to their tight ethnic community (Caplan et al, 1992; Kibria, 1993; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). This network includes extended family members, neighbors, community leaders, volunteers from community-based organizations, etc. They become a kind of vigilante group that provides Vietnamese youth with the necessary support or reprimand as appropriate (Caplan et al, 1992; Kibria, 1993; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). Together, these studies demonstrate that Vietnamese immigrant students have rich *cultural wealth* in their families and ethnic communities. As numbers will show in the next section, these forms of *cultural wealth* may have worked well in high school but not in post-secondary institutions. As a result, despite having these diverse forms of cultural wealth, Vietnamese American students still suffer from low college graduation rates.

In sum, existing studies on Vietnamese Americans tend to explain their outcomes with *transnational* and *cultural wealth*. For example, the transnational capital that first wave Vietnamese immigrants brought with them to America has helped them achieve high socio-economic status in their host country. For example, the *cultural wealth* in families and communities has helped Vietnamese immigrant students reach academic success despite living in poor working-class neighborhoods. While there is value in recognizing the cultural wealth available in Vietnamese families and communities, it is not enough to stop there. I argue that we cannot explain students' educational outcomes with cultural factors alone because *cultural wealth* in itself does not have any intrinsic value. In other words, we could say that the capital power of *cultural wealth* is situationally and contextually dependent. Its value comes from

structural factors of the host society within which it exists. When *cultural wealth* is supported, it can manifest into various forms of social capital such as a sense of belonging, a feeling of competence, a reinforcement of their educational/occupational goal commitment, tangible forms of institutional resources, and/or resources that help make college a feasible pursuit. In other words, context matters in whether a form of *cultural wealth* has capital value or not. In the following section, I will bring in theoretical and empirical pieces on *cultural capital* in order to unpack what I mean when I say that the capital power of *cultural wealth* is situationally and contextually dependent.



BEYOND CULTURAL EXPLANATIONS

The idea of non-monetary capital (i.e., social capital, cultural capital, human capital), is one of the most influential theoretical concepts in contemporary sociology and is one of the most successful ‘exports’ from sociology to other fields of social sciences, particularly the field of education (Portes, 2000). Even though this concept was found in literature dating back as early as 1920, the initial conceptualization of it did not occur until the late 1970’s (Loury, 1977). Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), a French sociologist, is often credited as being the first social researcher to have systematically analyzed the concept of capital (Portes, 2000). He was interested in understanding social stratification and power dynamics in this society. As a result, he developed a framework to explain how *cultural capital* is reproduced and how it connects to the reproduction and execution of power. His framework looks at cultural and social reproduction of French society in the late 19th century in order to explain why students from high socio-economic status (high SES) families do better academically than their low SES counterparts (Bourdieu, 1986).

A Olympic College concept in Bourdieu's capital theory is the idea of reproduction, in which, he emphasizes structural restraints that lead to unequal access of institutional resources based on one's socio-economic status (Bourdieu, 1986). There are three types of capital in his framework: 1) economic capital, 2) *cultural capital*, and 3) social capital. He defines *cultural capital* as symbolic resources or goods that are passed down from one generation to the next, (especially within upper-class families), in order to maintain group solidarity and to preserve their class status and dominant position. He further explains that *cultural capital* comes in three forms: 1. embodied *cultural capital*, which refers to dispositions of mind and body, either inherited or learned, i.e., appreciations of cultural goods, 2. objectified *cultural capital*, which refers to cultural goods, e.g., pictures, books, instruments, etc., and 3. institutionalized *cultural capital*, which refers to institutional recognition, e.g., educational qualifications. These forms of *cultural capital* are then reproduced into other forms of capital through a process called "reproduction." This reproduction process is based on broader sociological theories such as habitus and field of practice. Habitus is a person's attributes, "those internalized structures, dispositions, tendencies, habits, ways of acting, that are both individualistic and yet typical of one's social groups, communities, family and historical position," (Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010, p. 56). In other words, "habitus" is a personal attribute that a student has internalized but was influenced by social structures. *Field of practice* is another key concept in Bourdieu's reproduction theory. It refers to the "rule of the game" within which *cultural capital* operates. It is connected to time and place, i.e., context. Often times, it is not explicit and may change depending on who is involved. Bourdieu's reproduction theory suggests that within *fields of practice*, *cultural capital* can reproduce other forms of capital, one of which is *social capital*, which he defines as resources and/or relationships that help students generate institutional benefits and advancement. His framework emphasizes the complexity and interconnectedness between capital and our social environment, suggesting that capital is deeply reliant on the context of a particular social space.

Bourdieu's work has been widely read and debated since its publication in the late 1980's. One scholar in particular was Prudence Carter. She adds a critical lens to the link between cultural and social capital by asserting that the value of *cultural capital* is not only context-specific and but also product-driven (Carter, 2003). Drawing on Carter's insight, I argue that there is no inherent value in any specific form of cultural wealth, instead, its value comes

from the environment in which it is used and the product of which it seeks to acquire. Under this lens, the value of cultural wealth and the process of how it can reproduce other forms of capital come from the alignment between what students have and what society accepts/requires, i.e., the accepted form of currency, one could say. Simply looking at the capital that students possess is only half the equation. For example, Caplan et al's study on Vietnamese students found one of the contributing factors to their educational success is having a home environment ideal for studying (Caplan et al, 1992). However, this is only a valued form of capital if the student is in a class that assigns a lot of homework or requires a lot of out-of-class learning. On the other hand, if the student is in a class where class participation is more heavily weighted then the ideal learning environment at home will not help much. This alignment is a strong indicator of whether the student would manage to acquire the social capital they need or not. It is important to note here that the point I am making is not to suggest that we should "fix" students and mold them to fit the current system. Instead, my argument here is that we have to recognize the importance of this alignment so that we can modify the system to fit our current student population, i.e., find ways to accept the currency that students come with.

Scholars have praised Bourdieu's *reproduction theory* for explaining educational inequity by focusing our attention on *structural forces* rather than our students. However, in doing so, his theory implies that dominant forms of *cultural capital* are more valuable because they have better capital power in generating institutional resources. For this reason, some scholars have criticized that his framework employs a narrow lens of *cultural capital* that views communities of color as "places of cultural poverty," (Yosso, 2005). In response to this, Tara Yosso (2005) builds on Bourdieu's idea of capital and extends it by arguing that minority students from communities of color also have valuable forms of *cultural capital* in their homes and communities. In her *Community Cultural Wealth Model (CCW)*, she outlines six forms of capital, these include: *aspirational capital*, *linguistic capital*, *familial capital*, *social capital*, *navigational capital*, and *resistant capital*. *Aspirational capital* refers to the educational hopes and dreams that students bring with them on their schooling journey, their drive to have a better future through education. *Resistant capital* refers to the skills that they have developed as a result of enacting in oppositional behaviors to challenge systemic inequity. *Navigational capital* refers to the skills and abilities that students have learned from their lived experience of maneuvering through institutional landscapes that were not designed for people like them. *Social capital*,

according to Yosso, refers to institutional resources from social ties. However, after the first round of analysis, for transparency purposes, this form of CCW was amended to a more descriptive name - *institutional resources from cultural ties*. (The reasoning behind this decision will be elaborated in chapter 3, the Methodology Chapter.) *Familial capital* refers to resources passed through the student's kin ties, both immediate and extended family members. *Linguistic capital* refers to the communication skills attained from speaking multiple languages and being connected to their linguistic heritage.

Yosso contributed to the field by broadening the concept of cultural capital, by introducing additional forms of capital in the students' cultural community and defending their significance. These forms of capital reflect the resources that Vietnamese immigrant students have available, as shown in empirical studies on this population. Bankston and Zhou found that one of the reasons why Vietnamese students do well academically is because they have the necessary support and constraints in their co-ethnic networks – this support encourages them to engage in constructive behaviors and the constraints discourage them from damaging behaviors (Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Bankston, 1996). Their network extend beyond immediate family members and include individuals from the extended family, neighbors, people from ethnic non-profit associations, community leaders, followers, etc. (Kibria, 1993). Another form of cultural wealth repeatedly stressed in studies on Vietnamese immigrant students is their strong family value. Caplan, Choy and Whitmore attributes this to their academic success by arguing that family value helps create a home environment that indorses learning, (Caplan et al, 1992). Rumbaut and Irma added that Vietnamese families are well organized with highly disciplined members where older siblings tutoring younger ones is a norm (Caplan et al, 1992; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). These studies also found that students who are truly bilingual with strong Vietnamese literacy are more likely to succeed in school than LEP students (Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). Of the few studies out there on Vietnamese immigrant students' educational outcomes, we still see a correlation between the forms of cultural wealth in these studies and the ones outlined in Yosso's CCW. Therefore, I use Yosso's CCW as a framework to identify the different forms of community cultural capital that Vietnamese immigrant students possess and then to analyze how they facilitate the SC acquisition process. Part of understanding how CCW facilitates the SC acquisition process is to investigate how they mediate relational dynamics such as strength of tie between students and individuals who hold access to

institutional resources (or social capital for college success). For example, one of the forms of cultural wealth that Vietnamese students are said to have is educational guidance from older siblings (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore, 1992; Rumbaut & Irma, 1988; Bankston, 1998). Existing studies only address the academic and navigational assistance that younger students receive from their older brother/sister. Although this direct correlation between familial resource and educational outcome is important, it is an incomplete analysis of the resource if we leave it at just that. Perhaps, the younger siblings are also benefiting from a stronger relationship with counselors and teachers at school because they are inheriting those relationships from their older brothers/sisters. Or, perhaps the academic and navigational skills they learned from their older siblings help to strengthen relationships with teachers/counselors. In these cases, their cultural wealth is a mediating factor in their social capital acquisition process. Again, this study focuses on looking at CCW not as a direct and sole explanation to Vietnamese students' college success, but as a mediating factor in how their *SCfCS-cultivation process*.

In sum, the above section, I argued that the cultural factors alone is a limited lens for how we understand student success because there is no intrinsic value in one's cultural wealth; its capital power is situationally-valued. As Bourdieu suggests, it is context-specific; and as Carter argues, it is product-driven. For this reason, we cannot fully understand student success if we ignore *structural factors*. Building on Bourdieu's concept of *cultural capital*, Yosso broadened it to include other forms of capital found in communities of color. She termed these the six forms of *Community Cultural Wealth (CCW)*, which include: *aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital*. Integrating *CCW* with *structural forces* poses the following question: what happens when students' *cultural wealth* is supported by the institution's *structural forces*? My framework theorizes that when students' *cultural wealth* is supported by their context (i.e., the institution's *implicit and explicit structural factors*), then they will have the potential to acquire tangible resources for college success, i.e., *social capital for college success (SCfC)*. I refer to this acquisition process as the *SCfCS-cultivation process*. In the next section, I will present data around Vietnamese-American students' academic outcomes and argue that *college success* is the appropriate research angle for this population, as opposed to high-school completion or college access.

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES of VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN STUDENTS

Data on Vietnamese American students are hard to come by. As a subgroup of the Asian American (A.A.) community, numbers on Vietnamese students are usually aggregated together with other subgroups and presented under the broad category of Asian Americans. In recent years, more and more scholars have pushed to have disaggregated data so that it would represent our students more accurately (Museus, 2009; Teranishi, 2007; Teranishi et al., 2004; Louie, 2012). However, because we are still in the infancy stage of this effort, much of the large-scale data out there is still for Asian Americans as a whole. As a whole, Asian Americans are one of the most high achieving minority groups in America when it comes to educational attainment. So much so that in their recent book, Zhou and Lee characterized this group as “hyper selected,” a term that they coined to describe the dual positive selectivity of this group -- not only is the average Asian immigrant more educated than their counterparts in Asia, but they are also more highly educated than the average American (Zhou & Lee, 2015). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, ninety-six percent of Asian Americans complete high school between the ages of 16 and 24 (2016). Furthermore, trends from previous years show that approximately 80% of Asian Americans who complete high school continue on to college, in 2-year or 4-year institutions (White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Report, 2015). Fifty percent of Asian Americans graduate with at least a Bachelor’s degree, compared to the national average of 28% for all groups (White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Report, 2015). Furthermore, four out of five East and Rainier College Asians who enroll in college eventually earn at least a Bachelor’s degree (Deconstructing AAPI Educational Attainment, 2010). With numbers like these, it is tempting to point to the model minority myth and assume that Asian American students in higher education are doing uniformly well.

However, aggregated data of a group as diverse as Asian Americans can be problematic because it hides the disparate outcomes and unique experiences of individual sub-groups, especially that of the more recent Rainier College East Asian (SEA) immigrants, such as Cambodians, Hmong, Laos, and Vietnamese. Educational outcomes of SEA students are vastly different from the overall Asian American population and other A.A. subgroups. As a whole, 50% of AAs have Bachelor’s degrees, but that number drops by half when we look specifically at SEAs, only 25% of whom have a BA or higher. Students from SEA communities are more

likely to be English Learners (ELs), first-generation college students (FGCS), and/or low-income students who begin their postsecondary education at a community college. Each of these characteristics is an important determinant of one's educational outcome; therefore, clumping all Asian American students together is a misinterpretation of the subgroups within this population.

At first glance, SEA students may seem like a homogeneous group because they have similar characteristics and outcomes. However, when we look carefully at where students drop-out along their educational journey, we see a difference between Vietnamese students and other SEA sub-groups. Unlike other SEA students, Vietnamese students have strong numbers in high school completion and college attendance, (CARE, 2011); therefore, I argue that the educational hurdle for Vietnamese students revolves around college success/completion instead of high school completion or college access. Data shows that most Vietnamese students are graduating from high school (72%), and many are enrolling in college (59%) (Federal Higher Education Policy Priorities and the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community, 2010). However, one in every three Vietnamese students who enroll ends up exiting before graduating; in other words, 37% of this population fall into the some-college-no-degree (SCND) category (SEARAC, 2013; American Association of Community Colleges, 2014). These are unfortunate cases where college access does not necessarily lead to college attainment. Alas, in spite of the rich *cultural wealth* that Vietnamese American students have in their families and communities, many enroll but do not complete college. College attendance without completion has significant consequences on both the economy and the socio-economic well-being of students and their families. For this reason, college attainment is an educational research area we cannot ignore.

In sum, aggregated data of Asian American students is not an accurate representation of all the subgroups within this diverse population. Rainier Collegeeast Asian (SEA) students have drastically different educational outcomes than Asian American students as a whole, as well as other subgroups such as East Asians and Rainier College Asians. Furthermore, when we look closely at SEA data, we see that Vietnamese students depart from their educational journeys at a different exit point compared to other SEA students. For Vietnamese American students, numbers show that many do enroll in college after graduating from high school; unfortunately however, one in every three of those who enroll ends up dropping out. For this reason, college success is the appropriate angle for looking at educational outcomes of Vietnamese Americans, as opposed to high school completion or college access. In the next section, I will explain why I

have opted to focus on the community college (two-year college) context versus four-year universities or private institutions.

VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN STUDENTS at TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

This section presents a description of two-year-college student population, particularly Asian American community college students (2YR-AAs) and how they are different from their counterparts at four-year colleges (4YR-AAs). The community college is an appropriate site for this research because it is usually the first postsecondary destination for minority students (Portes, 2008; Teranishi et al., 2004). Community colleges play a pivotal role in expanding access to higher education, especially for first-generation college students who have limited socio-economic capital and/or need to upgrade their academic skills (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009; Portes, 2008; Teranishi et al, 2004; Bailey & Morest, 2006; Bailey, Jeong & Cho, 2010). Some institutional characteristics that make the community college a reasonable choice for this group include: open-door policy, availability of foundational courses, reasonable tuition (in respect to research universities), smaller class size for introductory courses, availability of wrap-around services, and location. With these institutional characteristics, the community college is often the first choice for nontraditional¹⁹ and/or minority students

Community college students are often different from university students in many ways, even within one ethnic group. In fact, one report found that Asian Americans from high-income families are three times more likely to begin their postsecondary education at a four-year institution in comparison to their low-income counterparts (CARE, 2010). Furthermore, community college Asian American students (2YR-AAs) and university Asian American students (4YR-AAs) are different in many other ways. The 2YR-AAs are more likely to be older (i.e., 27 years old average), first-generation, have delayed their postsecondary education by at least two years (32% did not attend college immediately after high school), attend part-time (63% are part-time students), and/or have off-campus jobs, (CARE, 2011; Ross et al, 2012; NCES, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2012). In a longitudinal study, researchers found that one in every five 2YR-AAs needed foundational English and one in every two

¹⁹ According to the NCES, *nontraditional students* are categorized based on variables such as enrollment patterns, financial and family status, and high school graduation status. In the community-college literature, the term “*nontraditional student*” is often used to describe students who are slightly older adults (24+ y/o) with family commitments and/or economic circumstances that make it difficult for them to make progress towards successful completion. In this dissertation, I echo this language in order to be consistent with the literature.

reported they had never taken math beyond Algebra II in high school (Cominole et al, 2007; NCES, Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Study, 2007), which suggests that 2YR-AA students are more likely to have started their postsecondary education in Basic Studies. This turned out to be consistent with my sample, i.e., of the seventeen total focal-student participants, thirteen began their education in Basic Studies (BTSD).

As one of the more recent immigrant groups, many Vietnamese Americans are ELs. In fact, 88% report that they don't speak English at home and 67% self-identify as English Learners (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). (To put these numbers in perspective, this is compared to 35% for the general A.A. population, 39% for Cambodian Americans, 38% for Lao Americans, and 37% for Hmong Americans, (Census, 2014). Locally, we also see a similar trend. One out of every two Vietnamese students is EL (51.5%), which is 10% more than any other Rainier Collegeeast Asian subgroup in Washington, (SEARAC, 2013). In spite of the language barrier, studies have repeatedly shown that ELs – when matched in age and ethnicity – tend to have higher GPAs than their non-EL counterparts (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2005; Abedi, 2002). Interestingly however, despite their high GPAs, ELs graduate at a lower rate than non-ELs. Locally, of the 169 ELs in the Roadmap Region who enrolled at a community/technical college in the fall of 2011, only 27% had completed by summer 2016, and 43% were still enrolled (Loeb, 2016; Navigation Supports for Older ELLs, August 15th, 2016). That means that only one out of every three ELs actually graduate within six years of enrolling in two-year colleges. This local data aligns with existing research on EL retention rates; in fact, one study found that ELs make-up a substantial number of students known as “lost in attrition” during the first year (Maxwell et al, 2003). Scholars have identified possible explanations for why this is the case; those reasons include: being unfamiliar with the U.S. college system, having competing obligations (i.e., family responsibilities, full-time employment, etc.), overcoming linguistic difficulties, and feeling alienated under the EL label, (Almon, 2010; Almon, 2015; Bailey, 2007; Jenkins & Weiss, 2011; Bunch & Endris, 2012; Kanno & Cromley, 2012; Karp, 2011).

In sum, as one of the more recent immigrant groups, Vietnamese Americans are predominantly ELs, as reported in the last Census data (87% LMs and 67% ELs). This Census data aligns with local numbers, where we see that one out of every two Vietnamese students is an EL (51.1%). From existing studies on minority student populations, we know that ELs and other minority students usually begin their postsecondary journey at two-year colleges (Suárez-

Orozco, C. & Suárez-Orozco, M. M., 2009). For these reasons, I decided that the community college was the appropriate site for this study. In the next section, I will discuss some of the ways that scholars have thought about college success and college retention, particularly for minority students at the community college.

STUDENT-RETENTION THEORIES & SOCIAL CAPITAL for COLLEGE SUCCESS (SCfCS)

Tinto's model has its shortfalls, for example, it was not culturally responsive, not applicable to nontraditional student in institutions other than four-year research schools; also, there was not enough emphasis on external factors and offered an incomplete description of commuter students' integrative experience. Despite these shortcomings, it still had some important additions to the higher ed. landscape, two of which Deil-Amen borrowed for her conceptualization of *socio-academic integration*. She borrowed from Tinto the idea that integration is *subjectively* measured and the idea that integration is a conduit that can lead to student-persistence. Through integration, students are able to harness social capital such as a *sense of belonging*, a *sense of competence*, a *reinforcement of their goal commitment and procedural agency*. Besides integration, some studies have also found that *college-feasibility support* makes a huge difference as to whether students dropout or persist (Almon, 2012; Bunch & Endris, 2012; Karp, 2011; Karp & Bork, 2012; Portes, 2008; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). *College-feasibility support* is especially relevant for *nontraditional students*, many of whom have family-and-work commitments that can interfere with college success. For this reason, the addition of Karp's framework, which focuses on college-feasibility support to address these conflicting life challenges, is a necessary element in any college success model. By combining Deil-Amen and Karp's I will be able to address the shortfalls while leveraging on the strengths of Tinto's model. In the following paragraphs, I will begin with a discussion of Tinto's model, then move on to Deil-Amen's and lastly, Karp's. Through it all, I hope to present a clear analytic argument for why the combination of Deil-Amen and Karp's frameworks is appropriate for this study.

Scholars in higher education have presented many theories and models to address issues around college success and student retention. Some of the most prominent are Alexander Astin's Theory of Involvement (1999), Bean & Eaton's Psychological Theories (2000), Vincent Tinto's Interactionist Model (1975) and his revised version, Theory of Student Departure (1993). While Bean's and Astin's theories are important, Tinto's has been the most studied, tested,

revisited, and critiqued, evidenced by the fact that it has been cited in over 700 studies (Bensimon, 2007). Despite many criticisms, scholars have also recognized Tinto's contribution to the field. His was the first retention framework that diverts the blame from students and unloads the responsibility on institutions; instead of focusing only on student characteristics and backgrounds, his theory is more expansive and suggests that school dynamics also have a role in influencing students' decision to leave or to stay.

Tinto grounded his theory in sociological concepts borrowed from Arnold Van Gennep's Rites of Passage Theory (1909) and Emile Durkheim's Suicide Theory (1954). Rites of Passage Theory states that individuals progress through identifiable psychological stages as they move from one environment to another. Durkheim's Suicide Theory states that individuals who lack intellectual and social integration into society are more likely to commit suicide. In the context of student retention, Tinto translates these theories to mean that students progress through college in three stages. At the end of the three stages (i.e., Separation Stage, Transition Stage, and Incorporation Stage), they either move towards graduation/transfer or departure, depending on the level of integration they have experienced along the way. As they go through these stages, they interact with the institution on two dimensions: socially and academically. He calls these *social integration* and *academic integration*. *Academic integration* generally includes activities where students engage academically, for example: using the library, visiting the tutoring center, meeting with academic advisors/instructors, working on class assignments with classmates outside of class, etc. On the other hand, *social integration* involves activities such as participating in extracurricular activities, attending cultural or social events on campus, volunteering for campus events, etc. These integrations, together with their entry characteristics (i.e., academic tendencies, personal traits, family background, etc.), will either positively or negatively shape the student's decision to persist or depart. Overall, *integration* has generally been accepted as a reliable predictor of student retention.

Nevertheless, there has also been some criticisms. Much of the controversy over Tinto's model falls within two lines of argument: 1) It was conceived from a culturally limited lens and therefore cannot be applied to diverse populations. 2) It was based on traditional students at four-year universities and therefore cannot be applied to minority students at other types of institutions, i.e., community two-year colleges. Scholars in the first camp believe that Tinto's theorization of how students make progress from Separation to Incorporation is not culturally

responsive enough (Tierney, 1992; 1999). They believe that this is problematic for two main reasons: A) This process resembles the idea of assimilation from immigrant studies. It asks the student to conform to the dominant college culture instead of focusing on the opposite side of the coin, i.e., how campus dynamics may influence the student's sense of integration. B) Its idea of "separation" as a prerequisite for "incorporation" may not be true for students from some racial groups. In recent years, Tinto has revisited his own model and recognized this shortcoming. He acknowledges that for some minority students, such as Latino, Black, Native American and Asian students, breaking ties with old communities, i.e., friends, family, ethnic relations, etc. may not be advantages. On the contrary, it can even lead to adversary affects (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Herndon & Hirt, 2004).

Tinto's second group of critics argue that because he developed his framework based on traditional students at four-year universities, it is therefore not an accurate depiction of minority students at the community college and their educational journeys. Scholars from this camp believe that Tinto's framework is inapplicable to community college students for two reasons: A) It lacks sufficient emphasis on external factors. B) It lacks a complete description of commuter students' integrative experience. External factors refer to family-and-work issues such as childcare, transportation, employment, paperwork/bureaucratic processes related to citizenship, healthcare, home, employment, etc. Community college students are typically returning students, those who had been away from the classroom for some time. They are usually older; according to reports from the American Association of Community Colleges the average age of community college students is 28 (AACC, 2016). Most are either the sole or one of the key providers for their family. Increasingly, community colleges are also seeing more and more students from the "sandwich generation," individuals in their thirties and forties, responsible for raising their own children as well as caring for their aging parents. They tend to be commuter students who live and work off-campus and enroll part-time. Scholars argue that given these characteristics of a typical community college student, Tinto's model is too limited because it does not address these family-and-work factors. As for the second reason, scholars believe that community college students do not have the same environment for social and academic integration as that of four-year university students. They are usually commuter students who live off-campus and have competing responsibilities that prevent them from participating in social events on campus. As is the case, sources of social integration for these students might look different than they do for

traditional students at universities. For example, it might come in the form of a group-study session at Starbucks or a group project discussion during break. Here, the line between social and academic integration is blurry because they are happening simultaneously and indistinguishably.

There is a growing body of literature in response to the criticisms discussed above. Contemporary scholars in higher education are redesigning Tinto's college retention model to fit diverse student populations in different school contexts. For this study, I drew on the work of two scholars in particular: Regina Deil-Amen and Melinda Mechur Karp. I conceptualized *social capital for college success (SCfCS)* as Deil-Amen's *socio-academic integration* (Deil-Amen, 2011) and Karp's *college-feasibility resources* (Karp, 2011). In the next few paragraphs, I will argue for why *socio-academic integration* and *college-feasibility resources* are necessary forms of SCfCS for Vietnamese American students at the community college.

DEFINING SOCIAL CAPITAL for COLLEGE SUCCESS (SCfCS)

Socio-Academic Integration

In the following paragraphs, I will attempt to make explicit why Deil-Amen's *socio-academic integration* and Karp's *college-feasibility resources* are suitable as operational definitions of social capital for the student population in this study, i.e., Vietnamese American students at the community college. Deil-Amen adapted Tinto's theory to better fit community college students' lifestyle and school environment. Building on his idea of *integration* as a subjective experience, she examined students' perception of integration to unearth mechanisms that bring about that process. Students choose to persist when they perceive that there is intellectual and social congruence between themselves and the values, social rules and academic quality of the institution. This congruence with the academic and social systems of the college reinforces the student's commitment to their institution and to their own educational goals. Tinto calls this alignment between the student and the institution *social integration* and *academic integration*. Deil-Amen blended these two concepts and introduced the term *socio-academic integration*.

Deil-Amen's concept of *socio-academic integrative moments* is used to describe opportunities for specific instances of interaction in which components of social and academic integration are simultaneously intertwined. "These processes revolve around events, activities,

interactions, and relationships reflecting moments that combine academic and social integrative elements,” specifically via the following types of interactions: 1) in-class interactions and dynamics, 2) formal or spontaneous study groups, 3) social-capital relevant interactions and mentor relationships with trusted IAs, 4) consistent access to communication with similar students, and 5) academically-relevant clubs and activities. Deil-Amen came to her conclusion based on data from a multi-method study that utilizes surveys, interviews and observations from 125 students at 14 two-year colleges in a large urban city in the Midwest. This term expresses the interconnectedness between the two forms of integration, as some previous studies had suggested (Stage, 1989; Pascarella & Terenini, 1983; Stage, 1989; Tinto, 1975). Deil-Amen argues that for this population, “a distinction between social and academic integration is a false conception [because] it creates a false dichotomy that obscures the nature of the fused socio-academic encounters that dominate the integration experiences of commuting two-year college students and their subjective understandings of the student-institution interaction.” She also borrowed from Tinto the idea that integration is not a direct link to a student’s decision to persist. Tinto believes that there is an indirect relationship between persistence and social & academic integration; social & academic integration can lead students to have stronger commitment to the institution and to their educational goals. For Deil-Amen, she argues that through *socio-academic integrative moments*, students gain the following forms of resources: *sense of belonging & competence, reinforcement of commitment to the institution and to the student’s educational goals, and access to institutional resources from social ties.*

Students at all fourteen sites in her study noted that *socio-academic integrative moments* were critical factors in their persistence. More than that, she also found that previous measures for social integration, such as involvement with campus activities, do not apply to this group. On the other hand, academic integration is also not what it used to be, for this group, academic integration take more of a social form than previously measured. Her study takes a leap from quantitative research where the emphasis was on the frequency of contact. However, she writes that for community college students, “limited contact between students provided meaningful integrative moments valued not only for the depth or length of contact, but for their contribution to a sense of connection from shared experiences and challenges. Being part of the learning community was not necessary for [this group] to accomplish this integration. Both formal and spontaneous informal study groups as well as “friendly” casual and limited interactions between

students were sufficient to create a sense of comfort, belonging and information-sharing.” Embedded with socio-academic integrative moments were components that facilitated information gathering and the construction of specific strategies in a way that resembled both strands of scholarship on the concept of social capital. Deil-Amen’s findings also identify IAs (faculty/instructors) as primary sources of social capital, both in and out of the classroom. Students in her study reported that faculty/instructors were crucial in transmitting valuable information to students. Students talked about interactions with faculty as even more valuable/pivotal for transmitting social capital than their exchanges with counselors and advisors. Students in her study also say that guidance from proactive faculty was invaluable to their persistence - proactive faculty help students gain a degree of agency within the organization that allowed them to overcome procedural obstacles. This is partly why student-faculty interaction is incredibly important. This relationship is nuanced and serves multiple functions. Contact with faculty outside the classroom served academic support and identity-boosting function, particularly for nontraditional and underserved students. She also found that in-class interactions were dominant mechanisms for achieving socio-academic integration. Deil-Amen’s findings are consistent with previous research on community college students, in that for this population, academic integration seems to be more important than social integration (Townsend & Wilson, 2009; Bers & Smith, 1991). In fact, purely social interactions were devalued and even described as unwanted or a distraction.

College-Feasibility Resources

Although *socio-academic integration* is a critical piece, we also cannot ignore external factors that are part of the lifestyle of a typical community college student. We won’t have a complete picture of their college story if we do not address this area. Prior research shows that first generation students at the community college are more likely to have lower persistence rates due to conflict between the demands of work, family and school, (Wessel et al, 2006; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). For this reason, I brought in Karp’s idea of college-feasibility resources. A theoretical piece on this comes from Bean and Metzner, who asserted that external variables such as employment obligations, family responsibilities and outside encouragement, all have a direct and important effect on a student’s academic outcomes (1985). When students are concerned with solving day-to-day problems, they cannot focus on their school work to the extent that they would like or should. Community college students are likely to be adults with

employment obligations and family responsibilities, they are more likely to confront conflicts between the demands of work, family and school.

In one study, Braxton et. al, applied this argument to commuter students and argued that even though external factors are important, organizational context of the college can make a difference. Students are more likely to persist when they feel that their school puts their best interest first. They conclude that when the college environment supports work-school-family demands, then students are more likely to have better outcomes. One ethnographic study on student mothers found that women who had children in off-campus daycares have higher transportation expenses and more difficulty in juggling the demands of work, family and school. All this meant they had less time to spend on campus, connecting with faculty, resources and studying. Students who did not complete their degree often say that they feel pressure of family and work acutely during their time in school (Goldrick-Rab, S. 2010). Even though some cited tuition as a challenge, many say that the biggest difficulty in their journey was being able to balance between school and work (Price, 1993; Karp, 2011; Samuel & Scott, 2014; Choy, 2000; Pusser et al., 2007). More than half of the students said that family commitments were major reasons why they did not return, even though they wanted to (Foster, Strawn, & Duke-Benefeld, 2011). Certainly, having assistance to help students meet life's challenges would improve college completion rates. For example, 80% of respondents agreed that a more varied course offering would help, such as weekend and/or evening courses. Almost two-thirds of students thought providing daycare and health insurance would help. *College-Feasibility Resources* are activities and programs designed to meet students' life-needs as they arise. They are resources that help students overcome the various challenges they face outside of the classroom, (Karp, 2011; Fike & Fike, 2008). Although these resources do not deal directly with academic content, they definitely encourage academic success. They may include structured programs, such as student success courses, one-on-one services regarding academic/career/financial aid advising, learning communities, etc. They could also be wrap-around services such as social support groups, school foodbank, on-campus work, childcare centers, student health insurance, flexible class offerings, etc. Some non-academic activities are built into the curriculum, for example: required study groups, mandatory visits to the tutoring center, obligatory check-ins with instructors/advisors, etc.

In sum, the goal of the section above is to explain why Deil-Amen's *socio-academic integration* and Karp's *college-feasibility resources* are appropriate definitions for social capital for college success for Vietnamese American students at the community college. Building on Tinto's work, Deil-Amen asserts that *socio-academic integration* is a student-centered and subjectively-measured concept to better understand student retention. *Socio-academic integration* is achieved when a student is able to harness the following forms of capital: 1) *a sense of belonging*, 2) *a sense of competence*, 3) *reinforcement of goal commitment*, and 4) *access to institutional resources*. *A sense of belonging* refers to experiences or resources that lead to feelings of acceptance and membership. *Sense of competence* refers to experiences or resources that build a student's academic self-efficacy, the confidence in their ability to succeed as a college student. *Access to institutional resources* refers to interactions with any type of social tie that lead to institutionally-valued forms of resources. Lastly, *reinforcement of goal commitment* refers to experiences or resources that help students strengthen or refine their educational goals. Besides *socio-academic integration*, a student-retention framework of nontraditional adult students cannot exclude some attention to wrap-around services. Case in point, half of the focal-student participants in my study are low-income adults with dependents, evident by the fact that they are FAFSA²⁰ recipients. For this reason, I also included Karp's *college-feasibility resources* as part of my conception of SCfCS.

CONCEPTUALIZING STRUCTURAL FORCES (SFs)

One of the Olympic College arguments in this study is that we must extend beyond the *culturalist lens* to explain *student outcomes*, as *cultural wealth* does not have an intrinsic value; instead, it is *context-specific*, *product-driven*, and *situationally-valued*. As a response, this study attempted to examine *community cultural wealth* in conjunction with *the structural forces in the college environment*. Inspired by Eisner's conception of the curriculum (Eisner, 2005), this study defines *structural forces* as the formal factors that a student interacts with throughout the school day and theorizes it in two domains: *explicit structural forces* and *implicit structural forces*. *Explicit structural forces* refers to the publicly announced programs, services, roles/relationships, procedures, mission statements, etc. - factors that the institution has advertised or announced in their official literature. *Implicit structural forces*, on the other hand,

²⁰ FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid

is mirrored after Eisner's implicit and null curriculum (Eisner, 2005). It is the hidden messages, the implicit norms/values/protocols, the academic subjects that we do not teach, the conversation topics that we avoid, etc. - factors that institutions do not have printed in their official literature, yet, permeate throughout the college atmosphere.

In analyzing data on *explicit structural forces*, I organized it into four areas, borrowed from Woodhill's model: *control*, *action*, *association*, and *meaning*. These four areas from Woodhill's model presents an operational frame for examining the formal resources available at both research sites, Rainier College and Olympic College. In Woodhill's model, *control* refers to the rules and policies that regulate the college. *Action* refers to the functions and services available. *Association* refers to the official relationships, roles and social network systems within the college. And lastly, *meaning* refers to the explicit beliefs and value systems that the college has declared.

In the next section, I will attempt to draw the connection between *social capital for college success* and *ego-centric network analysis (ENA)* to argue for why ENA is the appropriate methodological lens for examining the *SCfCS-cultivation process*.

SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY & EGO-CENTRIC NETWORK ANALYSIS (ENA)

As I have repeatedly stated throughout this chapter, a pure cultural explanation of Vietnamese students' academic success is limited because it ignores the context. In response, this study goes beyond the cultural explanation by examining the various forms of cultural wealth that Vietnamese students have in their families and communities (Yosso, 2005) as *mediating* factors within their *SCfCS-cultivation process*. The social dynamic nature of this process lends itself to network analysis. A network analysis perspective focuses on the web of relationships that students are embedded in, including the environment around those relationships (Daly, 2015). Under this lens, a student's outcome is explained through that student's relationships, not only his/her attributes. From a network analysis perspective, the *SCfCS-cultivation process* is one that unfolds through interactions with other human beings; this study specifically focuses on the following types of ties: IA ties, KIN ties, PEER ties, and COMM ties. In order to capture how *CCW* is facilitated by *structural forces* in the college environment and manifested into *social capital for college success*, I examined the dyadic and holistic characteristics of sixteen Vietnamese-American students' informal social egonets.

This section is roughly divided in two parts. First, I will talk about social network from a theoretical perspective and how this theoretical stance is linked to the theoretical framework of this study; next, I will discuss social network as a methodological approach, where I will elaborate on the specific egonet measures I used and why they were appropriate indicators for this study.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Social network analysis has its theoretical roots in relational sociology and date as far back as ancient Greek civilization. Under this lens, the most fundamental unit of our social reality is relational, made up of a web of social relationships. Social relationships are moderated by symbolic values while at the same time have a constant tendency to become institutionalized. In other words, our position in society dictates how we behave, but at the same time, the way we behave can also change our position in society. From this perspective and at the micro level of ego-centric network, individual identities are not pre-formed, instead, they are formed during the transactional process of social interactions, which are both subjective and objective. By objective, meaning that in some ways, our relationships and interactions within those relationships have already been normed by society and history. For example, there are prescribed expectations in how students and teachers interact. However, at the same time, these interactions are subjective, meaning that they are complicated by our senses and dispositions. This dimension represents the conditions and characteristics of intersubjective communication. Therefore, a social network analysis has to capture both the subjective and objective dimensions. For example, even though we all have preconceived notions of what a teacher-student relationship looks like, there is also room for variation within that expectation range, depending on the teacher/student's disposition(s).

Modern social network analysis as we have it in the field of education now did not come about until the early twentieth century with the work of Jacob Moreno, when he put forth the fundamental insight that our position in a social structure has consequences for how we behave. This became one of the fundamental principles in SNA - the idea that one's structural position can influence one's nodal outcome. Then, in the 40's and 50's, a group of researchers from MIT studied the connection between group communication network structure and that their ability to solve problems and concluded that relational structure matters. This result intrigued researchers from many fields in the social sciences. By the 90's, network analysis had already had a strong

foothold in the social sciences and was beginning to expand into other fields such as physics and biology.

Research on social networks can generally be divided into two spheres, *theory of network* and *network theory*, depending on whether the study focuses on the antecedents or on the consequences of network variables. Studies that examine the antecedents of network variables are considered within the *theory of network* sphere. These studies seek to understand why a network has certain composition and why nodes within that network have certain characteristics. It is concerned with how the network structure has evolved and factors that influence that evolution. On the other hand, studies that examine the consequences of network variables are considered within the network theory sphere. These studies examine network properties in order to understand how it leads to certain outcomes. As opposed to the other group, these studies seek to understand nodal outcome as a function of network structure. My study belongs to this latter group - *network theory* - for it looks at the resources that have come about as a result of the relationships.

Ego-Centric Network Analysis as a Methodological Approach

Within the network perspective, relationships between actors, sometimes referred to as nodes, play the Olympic College focus. These social relations that can be represented as a set of nodes connected by lines, where nodes represent the actors and lines represent their relationships with one another. One of the attractions of this perspective is the fact that it is adaptable to many levels of analysis. Actors can be individuals, teams, departments, organizations, industries, etc. and lines can be friendships, communication patterns, alliances, email exchanges, etc. This flexibility makes it possible to examine nearly any social relation. More than that, it “can combine quantitative, qualitative, and graphical data, allowing for a fuller description of the social world,” (Daly, 2015, p.18). This approach differs from the traditional attribute-based approach common social sciences. It takes into account the web of relationships in which actors are embedded and how that embeddedness both constrain and provide the actors from/with opportunities. This view places strong emphasis on the actor’s environment, i.e., their context, which is conceptualized as consisting of other actors and the relationships between them. In explaining individual achievement, “[a network lens] would not only examine the attributes of the individuals but also the relationships that constrain their choices and actions and/or provide opportunities for achievement,” (p. 19). Olympic College to the network analysis perspective is

the idea that relationships can either constrain or provide opportunities (Borgatti et al. 2013), by shaping the ego's behavior (positively or negatively) and by being a conduit of resources (providing or withholding). In the context of college success, relationships can yield access to resources and support; additionally, they can also positively influence a student's behaviors and attitude, such as strengthening their sense of belonging or reinforcing their educational goal commitment. In this study, these relational gains will be conceptualized as social capital for college success, which is operationalized as socio-academic integration and college-feasibility resources.

In network analysis, there are two main approaches for capturing the relationships between actors, i.e., the focal students and their alters - whole network analysis approach and *ego-centric network analysis approach* (or *ego network analysis*). In general, whole network analysis aims to collect a few types of ties among everyone within a closed network, while ego network analysis aims to collect many ties connected to a few focal nodes. For this study, I used the latter approach, where the focal nodes are focal-student participants, i.e., the seventeen Vietnamese American students at Rainier College and Olympic College. For each student, I performed two levels of ego network analysis: holistically (also sometimes referred to as the node level) and dyadically. At the holistic level, I operationalized the following measures: size and composition. At the dyadic level, I operationalized the following measures: strength of tie and perception of support. A more detailed explanation of these measures is in the methodology chapter.

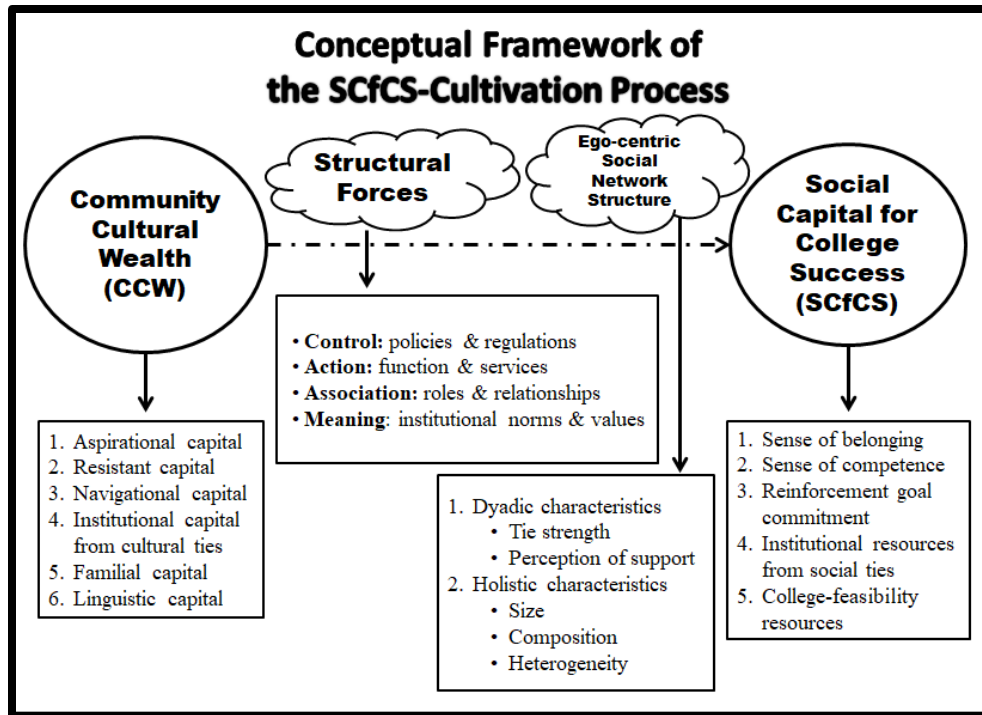
Ego-Centric Network Analysis (ENA) in Qualitative Research: An Added Value

As described above, *ego network analysis (ENA)* is a subcategory of social network analysis (Granovetter, 1985; Stanton-Salazar, 1997), which has been recognized as a highly innovative and deeply insightful lens for examining the impact of social capital on educational outcomes and behaviors of low-SES and immigrant students (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Cochran et al., 1979). Unfortunately, many studies that use social network analysis (SNA) have been quantitative studies (Ahn, 2010; Hill et al., 2014). SNA quantitative studies, though beneficial, are limited because they only reveal half the story. They can only tell us whether a relationship exists, the quantity of those relationships, and/or the type of relationships they are. This sort of data alone cannot fully explain the unequal distribution of social capital amongst our students. For example, in a study that looks at the composition of

these students' networks, they found that the minority students in their study actually had the same types of informants as their white counterparts, yet each group had very different educational outcomes. Why is that the case? A qualitative case study that analyzes the students' egonets can further quantitative findings and add valuable information to the puzzle in two ways: 1) A qualitative case study has the capacity to capture nuances of a relationship that quantitative studies cannot, such strength of tie and perception of support. 2) It can provide an insider perspective (Jack, 2010), which can be beneficial for practitioners because as Karp points out, "efforts to implement non-academic supports may be moot if we do not understand how students perceive these efforts," (2011, p. 21).

We know that interactions both in and out-of-the classroom matter for students; they can either facilitate or impede student success (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Cejda & Hoover, 2010). Quantitatively, a student's degree of integration might be measured by the number of student-faculty/staff interactions, the density of contacts (including peers) on campus, the number of attendance at campus events, etc. However, this is not necessarily how a student perceive his/her socio-academic integration. So, while we know that socio-academically integrated students are more likely to succeed (Deil-Amen, 2011; Karp et al, 2010; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Bensimon, 2007), we have limited knowledge in how to measure this integration, especially lacking are non-quantifiable measures that reflect the student's perspectives. How do students perceive their own socio-academic integration? Knowing how students perceive their own socio-academic integration is important as this information can shape the community college's retention efforts. College retention initiatives may be more effective if their efforts match-up with students' interpretation. For this reason, an ego network analysis approach to qualitative data is fitting for the aim of this study. **In sum**, analyzing a student's social network in a qualitative study adds value because it allowed me to address the non-quantifiable elements of the relationships/ties in the network. Additionally, ENA is the appropriate methodological tool for this study because it gave structure for me to describe the dyadic and holistic characteristics of a student's ego-centric social network.

My conceptual framework is an incorporation of all the elements elaborated above. The visual below summarizes this framework and each of its constructs.



Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the *SCfCS-cultivation process* of Vietnamese-American students at the community college from a *social network theory perspective*. To which purpose, I posed the following overarching research question: How does the *community cultural wealth (CCW)* of Vietnamese-American students at the community college mediate their college success? To address this overarching question, I examined four domains discussed above in my theoretical framework: 1) the students' *community cultural wealth*, 2) the colleges' *explicit and implicit structural forces*, 3) the *dyadic and holistic characteristics* of students' *egonet structures*, 4) the students' *social capital for college success (SCfCS)*. As a result, below are the main and subsidiary research questions that guided this study:

How do Vietnamese-American at the two-year colleges cultivate their *social capital for college success*? More specifically, how does their *community cultural wealth* mediate their *cultivation of SCfCS*? And how do *structural forces* in their college environment facilitate or impede this *SCfCS-cultivation process*?

- 1) What forms of *community cultural wealth* do they possess?
- 2) What *structural forces* in the college environment might facilitate or impede their *SCfCS-cultivation process*?

- 3) What are the *dyadic* and *holistic characteristics* of their *egonet structure*?
- 4) What forms of *social capital for college success (SCfCS)* have they acquired/harvested/cultivated?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

From July 2018 to January 2019, I spent seven months in the field collecting and analyzing qualitative data in order to understand how Vietnamese-American students at the community college harvest *social capital for college success*, a process that I have termed the *SCfCS-cultivation process*. During this time period, I collected official literature for document analysis, attended four campus events, interviewed ten faculty/staff members, eight alters and seventeen Vietnamese American focal student participants and shadowed five of those seventeen students. These activities were carried out with the goal of being able to understand and describe the necessary conditions that facilitate or inhibit how students cultivate/acquire *SCfCS*. Guided by existing literature on nontraditional and underserved students in post-secondary education, I decided to investigate this cultivation process by examining the following factors: students' *community cultural wealth*, 2) the *structural factors* within their school environment, 3) their *egonet structure*, and 4) the *social capital for college success* they have harvested. These four factors lead to the following four operational research questions:

How do Vietnamese-American at the two-year colleges cultivate their *social capital for college success*? More specifically, how does their *community cultural wealth* mediate their *cultivation of SCfCS*? And how do *structural forces* in their college environment facilitate or impede this *SCfCS-cultivation process*?

- 1) What forms of *community cultural wealth* do they possess?
- 2) What *structural forces* in the college environment might facilitate or impede their *SCfCS-cultivation process*?
- 3) What are the *dyadic* and *holistic characteristics* of their *egonet structure*?
- 4) What forms of *social capital for college success (SCfCS)* have they acquired/harvested/cultivated?

RESEARCH TRADITION

Constructivist Approach to an Interpretive Case Study

I employed qualitative interpretive case study, a design appropriate for when 1) contextual conditions are relevant to the phenomenon of study, 2) the focus is on investigating “how” and “why” questions, and 3) the behaviors of participants cannot be manipulated

(Cronbach, 1975; Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). As Merriam explains, a qualitative case study design serves best when “the overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences,” (Merriam, 2009, p.23). Moreover, it inherently allows the researcher to solicit rich, thick descriptions that can be used to develop conceptual categories, and these conceptual categories in turn helps us identify relationships between variables, (Merriam, 2009). This approach is appropriate for this study because the goal is to understand how social-capital-for-college-success happens by way of describing the necessary conditions that enable it to occur. In other words, what are the necessary conditions that fuel the *SCfCS-cultivation process*? To describe those necessary conditions, I needed to draw relationships between the following variables: formal resources in the environment, students’ cultural wealth, their social capital, and their egonet structure.

In keeping up with an epistemological orientation that aligns with *interpretive case study design*, I approached this research from a *constructivist* stance, which builds on the premise that knowledge and reality are socially constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). *Constructivism* posits that one’s truth and reality depends on one’s positionality; it values the idea that individuals create their own meaning through personal interpretations. Participants give us, the researchers, a glimpse into their reality by sharing their lived experiences and world views, which might provide insights to help us understand their behavior or more broadly, the phenomenon in question. This philosophy of inquiry fits with the nature of my study as I wanted to understand my focal students’ perception of their experiences (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 1998). This epistemological lens also shaped my approach to data collection and data analysis in the following ways: 1) It allowed me to interview and observe participants as sources of data. 2) It encourages me to be aware of my subjectivity throughout the research process by engaging in attentive memoing (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and the process of iterative analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009).

RESEARCH CONTEXT

To investigate the *SCfCS-cultivation process* of Vietnamese-American students at the community college, I conducted my study at two sister colleges in the Pacific Northwest - Rainier College and Olympic College. Even though the unit of analysis in this study is the focal-student participants, a description of the environment is important because it helps me

understand the context within which the cultivation process occurred, or the context within which students have acquired their *SCfCS*. These environments provide a base for students to interact with college staff, faculty, community members, and peers. For this importance, below is a brief description of the local Vietnamese community as well as the two community colleges where I conducted my research.

Vietnamese Community in the Pacific Northwest

This city in the Pacific Northwest is one of the metropolitan cities with the highest Vietnamese populations in the nation, according to the U.S. Census (2012) and PEW Research Center Data 2015. In fact, Vietnamese language is ranked as the fourth top home-language of students attending PNW Public Schools, (SPS, Fast Facts, 2013). Moreover, this region is an appropriate location for a study on Vietnamese-Americans not only because of the high population number but also because of the diversity within that number. The Vietnamese-American population here is diverse in terms of socio-economic and immigrant-generation status, a mixture of long-time residents who were part of the earlier waves as well as those who had come within the last decade or so.

As illustrated in the map in the appendix, link to appendix 4A, Vietnamese residents in the Pacific Northwest concentrate primarily in South County, with dense pockets in neighborhoods around Beacon Hill, Little Saigon/International District, and Delridge/White Center. A drive through these neighborhoods confirm their presence in social, economic and religious sectors -- NGO Vietnamese Friendship Association (est. 1978), Northwest Vietnamese News (est. 1986), Lam's Seafood Market (est. 1991), Co Lam Temple (est. 1992) and NGO Helping Link (est. 1993). Although we don't have concrete data, we can infer from these establishment dates that the current Vietnamese community in the Pacific NW is partly made up of members from the second and third waves.

The other part that makes up this community is those who have immigrated here in recent years. Again, we lack explicit and concrete numbers because most data on Asian Americans are aggregated; however, we can infer that the Pacific NW also has many recently-immigrated Vietnamese-Americans of based on the following observations: There is a steady enrollment of Vietnamese patrons/students in community programs designed to serve newly-arrived immigrants. For example, The International School, an alternative high school serving predominantly students new to the U.S., has three Vietnamese Instructional Assistants to support

their students. In my interviews with ESL faculty at Rainier College and Olympic College, many report that they have a strong presence of Vietnamese students in their classes.

There are a few local NGOs that aim to serve the Vietnamese community here in the Pacific NW. At the beginning of this research, two community organizations that I thought would be particularly relevant to this study were Helping Link and Vietnamese Friendship Association. They do similar work in that they offer adaptation support around culture and language to Vietnamese families, students and adults; specific programs include: ESL classes for parents, Saturday school for high school students, computer classes for seniors, citizenship classes for adults, etc. I thought they were important because they might provide space and opportunity for students, parents and community members to network and learn from each other. For example, a newly-arrived student in a citizenship class might learn about resources in the community or processes about the U.S. education system from one of the volunteers or another classmate. However, in all of the interviews with focal students, no one mentioned these two CBOs.

Institutional Profiles: Pacific NW College District – Olympic College & Rainier College

Rainier College and Olympic College are two sisters colleges within the Pacific NW College District; they are appropriate sites for this research because they are Olympic Collegely located within the Vietnamese concentrated areas. Olympic College is a convenient train ride away from Beacon Hill and the International District while Rainier College is within walking distance of White Center²¹. These are accredited two-year public institutions often referred to as sister colleges because they are in the same college district. Together, they served over 16,000 this past fall of 2018. Both are popularly enrolled by low-income, students of color. According to their data dashboard, 55% of students of color at Olympic College received state funding in fall 2018-2019 and 41% did at Rainier College. In alignment with national data, a majority of students at Rainier College and Olympic College are adults with dependents; the median student age at Rainier College is 28 and 25 at Olympic College. As a community two-year college, they offer a wide range of credentials, from high school completion programs to professional/technical certificates to academic/transfer degrees. Their completion numbers for the 2017-2018 academic year are as follow: At Olympic College, 858 students earned an

²¹ These neighborhoods have high populations of new immigrants and Vietnamese-American communities, as illustrated in this map in the appendix, link to appendix 4A.

academic transfer degree, 575 earned a prof/tech degree/certificate, and 122 earned a high school diploma. At Rainier College, the numbers are 395, 381 and 151, respectively. Both have a robust Basic & Transitional Studies Departments (BTSD), which is where most first-generation EL students begin their postsecondary education; this was predicted in the literature (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Louie, 2012; Portes & Fernandez-Kelly, 2008) and found to be true in this study as well, where three-quarters of the focal-student participants are either current or former BTSD students.

Policies & Regulations That Govern College Operations. In 2005, the Washington State Legislature passed a law that required all state agencies to undergo ongoing organizational quality assessment. For the Pacific NW College District, this assessment process is managed through the Northwest Commission on College and University (NWCCU), a non-governmental, voluntary-membership association. This accreditation process is a self-examination process where each college is required to examine its own mission statement, goals, operations, and achievements. It is a “process of recognizing educational institutions for performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public;” it means that “a higher education institution’s own goals are soundly conceived, that its educational programs have been intelligently devised, that its purposes are being accomplished and that the institution is so organized, staffed and supported that it should merit public confidence,” (<https://www.nwccu.org>). Full-scale accreditation is conducted every seven years in addition to ongoing independent assessment to ensure that the Washington State Quality Award Standards (WSQAS)²² are met, as specified in RCW 43.17.390 (<https://www.sbctc.edu>).

Commissioners who conduct accreditations are peer evaluators. They offer commendations for accomplishments and recommendations for improvement from the accrediting body. When an institution is granted accreditation, it applies to the entire college, all departments that are in operation during the time of the most recent comprehensive evaluation. Having been accredited indicates that the institution as a whole is substantially achieving its mission and meeting the Commission’s expectations for compliance with accreditation criteria. Accrediting decisions are made by the representatives elected by the membership and representatives of the public, not by staff of an accrediting association. Once accredited, an

²² Washington State Quality Award Standards (WSQAS) are available in the appendix, link to appendix 7B.

institution is expected to continuously comply with the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards²³.

Accreditation criteria might differ from region to region, however, the principles are generally the same. For the Pacific Northwest, the principles for eligibility include:

- *Intent to foster excellence through the development of criteria and guidelines for assessing educational quality and institutional effectiveness;*
- *Intent to encourage institutional improvement through continuous self-study and evaluation;*
- *Intent to ensure the educational community, the general public, and other organizations that an institution has clearly defined and appropriate educational objectives, has established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, appears in fact to be substantially accomplishing them, and is so organized, staffed and supported that it can be expected to continue to do so; and*
- *Intent to provide counsel and assistance to established and developing institutions.*

Guided Pathways (GP). A description of Rainier College and Olympic College would not be complete without mentioning Guided Pathways, an initiative that both colleges have actively engaged in in the past few years. Guided Pathways is a student-success model that aims to improve completion rates by helping students identify a career path, choose a program of study and efficiently graduate with a degree or certificate. The goal is to provide low-income, first-generation and students of color to earn credentials with fewer obstacles. Rainier College began this work in 2016, when they were selected as one of five two-year colleges in Washington State to participate in the Guided Pathways Cohort, a five-year grant sponsored by the College Spark Foundation and State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Rainier College's adaptation of the four GP design principles are: 1) Clarifying the path for students, 2) Help students choose and enter a path, 3) Help students stay on the path, 4) Ensure that students are learning. Olympic College is still in the exploration stage of GP work, and in January of 2019 had a GP launch event to give faculty/staff an overview of it. Although new to the GP model, Olympic College has had other successful initiatives that aim to improve retention and completion, such as the dual degree & learning communities, career exploration center, TRIO, MESA, I-BEST, etc.

²³ NWCCU Standards are available in the appendix, link to appendix 4C.

Asian American Native American Pacific Serving Institution (AANAPISI).

AANAPISI is the most recent category of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) that emerged in 2008. MSIs are higher education institutions that have emerged within the past thirty years in response to the historically inequities within U.S. education system. Through Presidential Executive Orders and special legislation, MSIs have access to designated funds and resources that they can use to build programs to meet the needs of their minority students and communities. Rainier College received the AANAPISI grant twice, once in 2008 and then again in 2011.

As one of the first AANAPISI grant recipients, Rainier College has been a strong advocate for AAPI voices both at the local and national levels. AANAPISI staff collaborate with instructors and administrators across campus to build culturally relevant services to support AAPI students and communities. Below are a few examples of Rainier College-AANAPISI-led efforts:

- Study groups led by AAPI coordinator and facilitated by culturally sensitive tutors
- Scholarships designated to support AAPI students
- Culturally responsive educational and career advising
- A cultural specialist who work with instructors to ensure that curricular materials are culturally relevant and appropriate
- A cultural specialist who work on campus-wide programs that promote awareness on AAPI issues
- The AANAPISI Center - an informal space for AAPI students to convene, build community and seek support. The AANAPISI Center was especially relevant for the students in this study, especially second generation students, (e.g., ThùyDương and NgocHuong) and/or those who have transitioned out of BTSD. Specifics about its importance and how students have used the services at this center will be explained in chapter five, as one of the subheadings under *Explicit Structural Forces*.

Basic & Transitional Studies Department (BTSD). From my experience as a community college adjunct instructor and a public school teacher's assistant in the Pacific Northwest for the past ten years, A.A.-BTSD students, especially Vietnamese American BTSD students, usually fall into one of the following two categories: 1) Students who immigrated in their late teens and went to high school here in the U.S. for a few or all of their high school

career. Most of the students in this group eventually graduate; a few dropout or age-out. 2) Students who immigrated after twenty-one years of age. Most of the students in this group completed high school and had some college in their home country. Some stopped their education at middle school to enter the workforce. Both groups usually begin their postsecondary education in Basic Studies as EL (English Language) students in order to improve their English skills. This turned out to be consistent with the sample in this study, where three-quarters of the focal participants (which is also 100% of the first-generation group) are either current or former BTSD students.

Given this high volume, it is important to offer a brief overview of this department's structure. Back in 2014, all three institutions within the Pacific NW College District shifted away from being a "community college" because they broadened their services and began offering Bachelor's degrees. Despite this name change, pre-college and basic-study programs are still a very prominent part of their function. For the 18-19 academic year, 17% of Olympic College's and 10% of Rainier College's student population are pre-college/basic-skill students.

BTSD programs are designed for adults with academic skills below high school completion or for those who need to improve their English language skills. BTSD courses teach foundational skills to enable adults to move through college and/or into living-wage jobs that are in high demand. These programs aim to advance students quickly and purposefully toward a degree or a certificate. Their goal is not just to support students to the GED passing line, but to move them beyond to college graduation and into a living-wage career. Towards this goal, they offer the following programs and services:

- ***Reading, Writing, Math Foundations and Employability Skills:*** BEdA help students improve their reading, writing and math skills so that they have a strong foundation for college or a career. These programs are generally for students who have skills that are below high school completion level.
- ***Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST):*** I-BEST programs offer a team-teaching approach that provide students with twice the support. With I-BEST, students work with two teachers in the classroom -- one teacher will provide the job training skills or academic skills while the other will provide basic skills support in reading, writing, math, and/or English.

- ***English as a Second Language (ESL I-DEA)***: Traditionally, ESL programs require students to master English skills first before enrolling them in other employable skills classes. I-DEA (Integrated Digital English Acceleration) is an alternative pedagogical approach that offer these two areas of instruction simultaneously. With I-DEA, students learn English and other college/career skills in the same class.
- ***Adult High School Diploma Programs (High School 21+)***: In this program, students take classes to obtain a high school diploma.
- ***General Education Development Testing (GED)***: GED classes are designed to prepare students for all four of the official GED tests.

Instructions and funding in BTSD are regulated by a few state mandates: the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). All students enrolled in BTSD courses take the CASAS at the beginning and end of each quarter. This is an important state-mandate assessment tool for the department as it is connected to funding. There are three components to the CASAS: Listening, Reading and Math. Instructions in all Adult Basic Education programs are guided by the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). The CCRS are based on Common Core State Standards from an adult-education perspective. In addition, ESL programs also have the option of using the ELP Standards for Adult Education (the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for Adult Education) as supplemental guidelines in alignment with CCRS. ELP Standards are optional and not required. The CCR Standards and ELP Standards are both in the appendices.

SAMPLING & RECRUITING STRATEGIES

There are three groups of participants in this study: focal students (FS), institutional agents (IA) and alters of focal students. I used similar sampling strategies for both FS and IA participants. Sampling strategies for Alters were different because it depended on the focal students. All of these strategies are explained in detail below.

Sampling Strategies

Focal-Student Participants (FS). I used Creswell's *purposeful sampling* strategy; more specifically, I employed a mixture of *maximum variation* and *criterion sampling* techniques. *Maximum variation* helped me gain a diverse perspective of the phenomenon (Patton, 2003). I

aimed to have a diverse focal group in terms of immigrant-generation, (first generation immigrant students versus second-plus generation students), English proficiency (current ELs in Basic Studies, ELs who have exited from Basic Studies, and non-ELs), socio-economic status (Pell grant eligible students versus non-eligible students), enrollment status (part-time versus full-time enrollment), current program (Basic Studies, prof/tech and academic/transfer) and formal educational background (level and location of formal education - middle school, high school, college, in the U.S, in Vietnam). I chose to diversify my focal student sample specifically by these criteria because, as elaborated in the literature review, these are some of the student characteristics that have shown to potentially influence a student's socio-academic integration, one of the elements of social capital for college success. Furthermore, a diverse sample with maximum variation would yield a more reflective sample of the Vietnamese-American population. *Criterion sampling* helped me focus on a particular group with shared characteristics as predefined in my research question – Vietnamese American students at the community college (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2012).

Why current versus former students? In setting up the research problem, I cited Vietnamese students' high dropout and low completion rates (CARE, 2011). These numbers were used as a rationale for the need to examine *the process* that students go through to get to their last milestone. Within the larger process of college completion, this study will focus on the process of SCfCS acquisition. And part of understanding the SCfCS acquisition process is understanding how students perceive their SCfCS. In other words, this paper argues that we need to examine the *process* because the outcome is low, and understanding the process is one way for us to shift the outcome. For example, if we are able to describe the conditions and attributes of a favorable process, then institutions could use that data to build effective retention programs.

Because of this emphasis on the process, I chose to look at current students instead of former students. Looking at recent graduates would give a retrospective view; on the other hand, looking at current students would give a meta-cognitive perspective, as it allows students to reflect on their experiences as they are going through the process. The latter has several added advantages: 1) Participants are likely to have richer, more detailed recollections of their experience because events/interactions are more recent. 2) Looking at current students gives me the opportunity to describe their present environment, whereas I would not be able to do so if I

were to look at former students. 3) Logistically, given my resources, it is more realistic to recruit current students.

Student Profile of Focal Participants. Below is an overview of the seventeen focal-student participants and their demographic information. The chart below captures information regarding their school, immigration generation status, English proficiency, gender, age range, source of tuition, enrollment status, marital status, employment status, and program of study.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF FOCAL STUDENT PARTICIPANTS									
	Gender	Immig Gen	College Gen	English Proficiency	Age Range	Enrollment	Married? Children?	Employment	Academic Program
Hoàng Anh	M	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	45+	Fulltime	Yes & Yes	Yes; PT; offc	Health Ed
Minh Tuyết	F	1 st	1 st	I-BEST	25-34	Fulltime	Yes & Yes	No	Med Assist
Minh Hằng	F	1 st	1 st	I-BEST	25-34	PT	Yes & No	Yes; FT; offc	Early Child. Ed (ECE)
Thanh Giang	F	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	25-34	Fulltime	No & No	Yes; PT; onc	Diagnostic Ultrasound
Huệ Mai	F	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	25-34	Fulltime	Yes & Yes	Yes; PT; onc	Nursing
Quốc Trọng	M	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	25-34	PT	No & No	No	Architecture
Ngọc Cẩm	F	1 st	1 st	I-BEST	35-44	PT	Yes & Yes	Yes; PT; offc	ECE
Tường Vy	F	1 st	1 st	BTSD	18-24	PT	No & No	No	Med Assist.
Bích Châu	F	2 nd	1 st	Non EL	25-34	PT	No & No	No	ECE
Thùy Dương	F	2 nd	1 st	Non EL	18-24	Fulltime	No & No	Yes; PT; offc	Nursing
Tuấn Minh	M	2 nd	1 st	Non EL	18-24	PT	No & No	No	Psychology
Duy Bảo	M	2 nd	1 st	Non EL	18-24	Fulltime	No & No	No	Game design
Ngọc Hương	F	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	18-24	Fulltime	No & No	No	Informatics
Diễm Huệ	F	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	45+	Fulltime	Yes & Yes	No	Med Office Assist.
Thanh Diệp	F	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	25-34	Fulltime	Yes & Yes	No	Nursing
Thúy Quỳnh	F	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	35-44	Fulltime	No & Yes	Yes; PT; onc & offc	Engineering
Diễm My	F	1 st	1 st	Exited BTSD	45+	Fulltime	Yes & Yes	No	Engineering

Institutional Agents Participants (IAs). I used similar strategies to sample IA participants, *purposeful sampling*, with *maximum variation* and *criterion sampling* techniques, but of course with different criteria. All IA participants were either a Rainier College or Olympic College employee, which was the only criteria for participating in this group. I used the

following questions to help me decide how to diversify this sample: How does IAs as a group and/or this particular IA add value to the phenomenon that I’m investigating? In other words, how would the information I learn from my interviews with IAs help me better understand the *SCfCS-cultivation process* of my focal students? In answering these questions, I came away with the following criteria. I wanted to diversify my IA sample by race, institutional role (faculty, advisor/counselor, librarian, and administrator) and student contact at various critical points in their educational journey. There are several critical points throughout a student’s educational journey, where they either make it through or stop out. A few of these critical points include: entry (orientation, placement testing, enrollment and initial funding), transitioning from Basic Studies into college, and reaching the 15 and 45 credit markers. I made sure to have representation of IAs who work with students at these various critical points.

Alter Participants. My sampling strategy for this group was much more straightforward because it mainly depended on the focal student’s referral and the alter’s availability and accessibility. As such, I would classify my sampling technique here as chain sampling. However, I also tried to diversify this group as much as I can in terms of alter type, e.g., peers, kin members, community members, and IAs, (advisors, Basic Studies faculty, and content/academic faculty). The chart below outlines how the four types of alters were defined.

ALTER TYPES	DEFINITIONS
Kin Ties (KIN)	Alters who are part of the focal student’s family. This includes both immediate as well as extended family members. Examples: siblings, cousins, parents-in-law, children, etc.
Institutional Agent Ties (IA)	Alters who are employees of college. Examples: faculty, advisors, counselors, college personnel, etc.
Peer Ties (PEER)	Alters who are friends of the focal student. Examples: classmates, schoolmates, friends at church, etc.
Community Ties (COMM)	Alters who are part of the focal student’s cultural and personal community. This is a diverse group of alters that do not fit in any one of the three categories above. Examples: former high school teacher, mentor, church leader, counselor from ACRS, navigator from SEA, etc.

I wanted to categorize and diversify *alters* because I knew that I will eventually want to analyze the link between alter type and forms of SCfCS. For example, the literature says that IAs are especially important for minority students because IAs can transmit critical institutional resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011; Dowd, Pak, & Bensimon, 2013). Or, the literature also says that KIN ties are important to Vietnamese students’ educational outcome because KIN ties

provide academic support (Bankston, 1998; Bankston & Zhou, 1997). I was curious to know if these findings would also hold true in this study. Furthermore, I also wanted to know if there are any patterns between certain types of alter and specific forms of SCfCS. For example, what kind of resources do COMM ties usually supply? Or, who usually gives support around *sense of belonging*? In anticipation of exploring questions like these, I decided to categorize and diversify alter participants.

Recruiting Strategies

Strategies for Recruiting Institutional Agents (IAs). To recruit IAs, I emailed recruitment letters to about twenty-five staff, faculty and administrators at Rainier College and Olympic College. As a current employee in the district, having worked at both Rainier College and Olympic College for the past three years, I drew on my professional network and knowledge of the college structure to help me discern individuals who fit the sampling strategies as described above. I also relied on information I gathered from the recent document analysis to identify faculty/staff in departments that I was not familiar with. Once I have a list of specific names, I searched for their contact information from the employee directory, publically available on the district website. After that, I sent each person an individualized email, inviting him/her to participate in the study. In the recruitment email, I provided an explanation of the study, the risks involved, the terms of participation as well as link and attachment of a short survey. The survey asked for information such as: their role(s) & responsibilities, demographic information of students they usually work with, whether they would be available for a 45-minute interview and their preferred method of contact. Eighteen potential IAs completed the survey, most used the online version except for two. About seven IAs declined to participate in the interview for various reasons, such as limited time, excessive workload, and/or self-diagnosed as being unfamiliar with Vietnamese American student population. Eleven indicated that they were available and willing to participate in the interview. Next, I used the sampling strategies described above along with survey results to help me decide which IA to invite. In the end, I invited four IAs from Rainier College and six IAs from Olympic College to participate.

Strategies for Recruiting Focal-Student Participants (FS). Recruiting focal students was a little challenging and discouraging at first, especially for second generation Vietnamese American students. Initially, I was a little worried, but thankfully, a few weeks into the process, referrals began to roll in and in the end, I had a good pool of potential students. First, I

employed the following five methods concurrently to recruit focal students: 1) I reached out to administrators, instructors, advisors/counselors and support staff at Rainier College and Olympic College for referrals. I was strategic about whom I reached out to for referrals. For example, I reached out to counselors/advisors/staff who usually work students of color, such as the AANAPISI advisors, transitions advisors, writing center coordinators, etc. I also reached out to faculty who taught gateway courses such as transitional ESL, English 101, and Communication 101. Relying on personal experience and my committee's advice, I also reached out to faculty who taught Asian American Literature and American Ethnic Studies. The rationale was that 1.5 and second generation Vietnamese American students tend to gravitate towards these types of courses. 2) Besides faculty and advisors, I also contacted student club officers and student life staff for referrals. 3) Simultaneously, I also reached out to Vietnamese students with whom I have worked with over the years. 4) Additionally, I posted flyers throughout both campuses to invite students to participate in the study. Interested students were asked to leave their contact information either in the adjacent envelope or via the online link provided on the flyer. 5) I also sent the flyer to family members, friends and acquaintances in the Vietnamese community to share/post on their social media outlets. Next, I emailed each interested/referred student a short, online questionnaire. Among other things, the questionnaire asked about demographics, FAFSA eligibility, family situation, program of study, and whether or not they would be interested in participating in the study. Thirty-three students completed the questionnaire. Lastly, I used results from this questionnaire to form a focal group that aligns with the sampling strategies outlined above.

Strategies for Recruiting Alters. Recruiting alters was straightforward as it depended completely on the focal student's referral and the alter's availability. In all cases, the focal student gave me the alter's contact information after having received approval from that alter. Once I have the contact information, I then reached out to that alter, introduced myself and arranged for an interview.

DATA COLLECTION & DATA ANALYSIS

Data Collection: Collecting Official College Literature & Observing College Events

Part of my data collection was devoted to mapping out structural resources in the landscape (RQ2) - formal college success and retention efforts available at the sites: Rainier

College and Olympic College. This process was exploratory and emergent, meaning that data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously and iteratively; each informs the other. Altheide et al. (2000) describes this Emergent Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) process as “being flexible to nuances, surprises, and confusion” (p. 127). This means that I came in with ideas and examples of the types of formal resources that I was looking for and where to find them, but at the same time, I was also open to those notions being challenged and changed. My pre-scripted notions are the subcategories of SCfCS; I used them as a starting point to know where and what to look for. If existing literature suggests that students with SCfCS are more likely to attain college success, then where and how are these subcategories of SCfCS formally supported/cultivated at the college? How is the system designed to support students as they acquire SCfCS? These questions gave me a springboard to know what to look for and why.

I began by scanning through some of Rainier College and Olympic College’s official literature, i.e., publications from their PIO offices such as school websites, brochures, flyers, etc. During these activities, I looked for and wrote memos about anything that could help me understand how the college is structured in terms of its resources around student retention. Some types of resources were abundant, especially those that relate to *accessing institutional resources* (SCfCS#4). Unfortunately, however, the other forms of SCfCS did not have as much representation, especially SCfCS#1 -- *a sense of belonging*. I also learned about resources that did not fit neatly into any of the prescribed forms of SCfCS, such as support around mental health. This made me wonder if my vision was too narrow and that I might be missing critical forms of support just because it was not on my radar. Hence, I decided to broaden my search. Instead of focusing only on SCfCS, I broadened my search by asking how system defines college success and what are they doing to usher students toward that end.

This time, I took a step back and began by reflecting on my decade-long professional experience in: 1) working with newly-arrived Vietnamese families and youths as an Instructional Assistant at the International School and 2) working with adult ELs from diverse backgrounds as a Basic Studies instructor and Student Specialist at Rainier College and Olympic College. I also drew on my personal experience as a first generation Vietnamese American who attended two-year colleges here in the Pacific NW and was an active volunteer in the Vietnamese community. Next, I went over the PIO literature again and continued on to other documents such as meeting

minutes, job descriptions, student handbooks, admissions/registration forms, scholarship applications, student activity/club flyers, syllabi, and college programs/initiatives, etc.

This time, instead of organizing the information by the subcategories of SCfCS, I organized it by the following four domains: *meaning* (i.e., beliefs and values at the institution), *control* (i.e., policies, and rules), *action* (i.e., functions and services), and *association* (i.e., networks and relationships) (Woodhill, 2008). While organizing the collected data, I continued to attend meetings and events to collect new data. Some of which include: Overview of Guided Pathways Workshop at Convocation 2018, Guided Pathways Kick-off Event, First Year Experience Debrief, Rendezvou Conference 2018: Guided Pathways Design for Equity, two Inclusive Pedagogy Committee Monthly Meetings, and BTSD Professional Development Day. Depending on the type of event, I either took notes during the meeting or wrote down my observations and thoughts immediately after. The data from these events were not included in the analysis for this dissertation, but the experiences did inform my overall understanding of the context in which students acquired their social capital. These experiences combined with formal interviews with IAs allowed me the opportunity to continually ask questions about my data and guided my analysis as I attempted to answer the second subsidiary research question: *What structural forces in the college environment might have facilitated or impeded their SCfCS-cultivation process?*

Data Collection: Semi-structured Interviews and Social Network Interviews

Qualitative case study does not claim any particular method of collecting data (Meriam, 2009) and thus can range from observing subjects in their natural settings to interviewing participants for closer access to their thoughts and feelings (Bromley, 1986). A major aim of this study is to understand how students receive their social capital for college success, i.e., how they interpret the socio-academic integration. This interpretative nature suggests that *interviewing* is the most appropriate method of data collection because “we cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. [...] We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things; [we] interview in search of opinions, perceptions and attitudes toward a topic,” (Merriam, 2009). The purpose of qualitative interviewing is to allow us to enter the other person’s perspective, to capture how they view their world, to capture the complexities of their unique experiences (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009). All interviews in this study were semi-structured interviews,

except for the social network interviews with focal students, data from which were used specifically to answer RQ#3: What are the *dyadic* and *holistic characteristics* of their *egonet structure*? Social network interviewing has its distinct protocol and process that I will describe in the next section.

TYPES of INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED	NUMBER of INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED
➤ Semi-structured interviews with institutional agents (IAs)	10
➤ Semi-structured interviews with focal students (FS)	17
➤ Social network interviews with FS	16
➤ Follow-up interviews with FS	13
➤ Semi-structured interviews with alters (ALTER)	8
TOTAL	64

Semi-structured Interviews with Focal-Student Participants. In this study, I conducted 64 interviews with three groups of participants; one semi-structured interview with each IA (N=10) and alter (N=8) and three interviews with each focal student (N = 17). Of the seventeen focal-student participants, thirteen participated in all three interviews. Chronologically, these interviews were conducted in the following order: 1) semi-structured interviews, 2) social network interviews, and 3) follow-up/member-check interviews. The purpose of the first semi-structured interview was to gather background information about the students and to gain an in-depth understanding of their perception on *community cultural wealth* and background. These interviews lasted on average about an hour, and range between half-an-hour to two hours. For a few students, we had to schedule this over a couple of meetings, but most were able to finish it in one sitting. For these interviews, I came with a list of guiding questions around CCW and SCfCS but also noted that I was not obligated to follow the exact wording and/or sequence of this guide (Merriam, 2009). This flexibility was advantageous because it gave me the freedom to probe as necessary and “to respond accordingly to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). At the same

time, the prepared questions provided me with important security and guidance. The protocols I used for semi-structured interviews with focal students are in the appendix, link to appendix 1A.

The second interview was the social network interview, described below. The third interview was intended as a follow-up, for clarification and member-check purposes. They lasted between twenty to thirty minutes. Three students opted out of this last interview because it was over winter break and they were not in town. Most of the ones that I managed to schedule were in person; three were over the phone. I did not have scripted questions for these follow-up interviews; instead, I treated these as an open-ended opportunity for me to get clarification and for students to share any additional thoughts.

Social Network (SN) Interviews with Focal Students. To answer the third subsidiary research question on egonet structure (*What are the dyadic and holistic characteristics of their social egonet structure?*), I conducted *social network interviews* (SNI) with sixteen focal students (N=16). (One student refused to complete his *egocentric network map* (ENM) and hence did not have data for us to continue. These interviews were different from the semi-structured interviews in that I asked each student the same set of questions about each alter they indicated in their egocentric network map. These social network interviews were designed to capture information found salient in previous immigrant youth social network studies, such as size, range, composition, strength of tie and perception of support. These interviews varied in length depending on the number of alters the focal student had identified. Directions for filling out the ENM were available on the handout, but I also explained it orally to each student at the interview. They were asked to write their name in the center square and then the names and/or roles of everyone who had been helpful in their educational journey in the bubbles around the square. I also explained that they did not have to fill in all the bubbles, and they could also add additional bubbles if needed.

At the SN interview, I began by asking students whether they wanted to edit their ENM. They could add new people, replace one name with another, or completely cross-out a name. Next, I explained that I would ask a series of the same questions about each alter on their map. Sometimes I asked the focal student to lead by deciding which *alter* we would talk about next. A few students mentioned at the beginning of their interview that they had limited time, and so I asked them to begin with the most to least important *alter*. Fortunately however, everyone either finished at that meeting or agreed to a second meeting to finish the SN interview.

The second part of the SN interview was where I learned about the type(s) of support that students get from each *alter* they had mentioned in their Egocentric Network Map (ENM). For this part, I used a tool that I will refer to as the SCfCS Checklist. This checklist contains sixteen items, and each item is connected to a specific form of SCfCS. A visual demonstrating this connection is in the visual below this paragraph. During the interview, I began by writing the alter’s name at the top of the handout, as each alter is designated their own page of the SCfCS Checklist. Next, I would go down the list of support and ask the student whether or not that alter had provided them with that particular form of support. If the student said “no”, I would mark their answer and go on to the next one. If the student said “yes,” I would ask them to elaborate with an example or an anecdote. Both tools, the SCfCS Checklist and the ENM are available in the appendix, link to appendix 1A.

ITEMS ON THE SCfCS CHECKLIST	
SCfCS1: Sense of belonging	
	1a. Support around U.S. college culture.
	1b. Support around visibility or cultural/racial issues.
	1c. Support around goal setting, time management or study skills.
SCfCS2: Sense of competence	
	2a. Support around building learning communities.
	2b. Support around developing skills in language or academic subjects
SCfCS3: Reinforcement of goal commitment	
	3a. Support around career exploration/planning.
	3b. Support around academic planning/degree pathway mapping.
SCfCS4: Access to institutional resources	
	4a. Support around immigration or documentation.
	4b. Referral to people or services at the college or in the community.
	4c. Support around navigating financial aid and other college processes.
SCfCS5: College-feasibility resources	
	5a. Support around childcare
	5b. Support around transportation
	5c. Support around housing
	5d. Support around work
	5e. Emotional support
	5f. Support around financial issues

Interviews with Focal Students in Vietnamese & Issues around Translation. All interviews with focal students (FSs) were done face-to-face, audio recorded and transcribed before the next meeting. Transcribing interviews before the next meeting was a helpful strategy

as it gave me some time to reflect over what had been collected in anticipation of future data. Thirteen students completed their interviews in English while four completed them in partial Vietnamese - Thúy Quỳnh, Diễm Huệ, Tường Vy, and Minh Tuyết. By “partial Vietnamese,” I mean that I asked the questions in English and they answered in English but sometimes elaborated in Vietnamese in order to express their thoughts more fully. These interviews were first transcribed in the original source language - Vietnamese; and then they were later translated into the target language - English. Having worked as a professional, contracted translator and interpreter for Denise Louie Education Center and the Seattle World School for two years, I felt confident that I had the necessary skills to do the translations for this research. I used Brislin’s translation model (1980), which is a well-recommended translation method for cross-cultural research (Jones, Lee, Phillips, Zhang, & Jaceldo, 2011). Brislin suggests that a good practice for translation is to employ at least two translators who are familiar with the research, so that one could do forward-translation (from the original source language to the target language) and the other could do backward-translation (from the target language back to the original source language). Then, the two translators would compare both versions for accuracy and negotiate any discrepancy. Although Brislin’s model is well-respected, some researchers have also warned that this is a time consuming and expensive process, which makes it unrealistic in some circumstances (Broadfoot & Osborn, 1993). Due to the constraints as a student researcher, I only employed an abbreviated version of his model. I did not perform backward-translation; however, I did have the translations assessed by two reviewers to ensure validity: 1) I had my translations reviewed by an emeritus instructor who taught ESL and Vietnamese as a Foreign Language at Rainier College. She compared the Vietnamese transcript and the English-translated transcript to check for cultural and semantic equivalence, i.e. whether or not the words/phrases used in the English version had the same meaning and relevance as in the Vietnamese version. This strategy of recruiting members from the population being studied as reviewers to assess and refine translated materials to increase validity was suggested by Strauss & Corbin (1998). 2) I used the translated transcripts during the follow-up interviews to conduct member check. 3) When it came time to analyze the data, I coded the translated-English version. However, even though coding was done from English-translated transcripts, I made a conscientious effort to periodically cross-check the data with the original Vietnamese transcript.

Lyons and Coyle recommended that checking and rechecking translations against original transcripts during analysis and synthesis in order to add credibility to research findings (2007).

Semi-structured Interviews with Institutional Agents (IAs). Besides focal students, I also formally interviewed institutional agents (IAs), six from Olympic College and four from Rainier College (N=10). This group composed of two librarians, one I-BEST/ESL instructor, two transitional ESL instructors, one academic instructor, one educational advisor, and three administrators (i.e., associate dean of STEM, coordinator of BTSD writing center, and associate vice president of equity, diversity and inclusion). I specifically chose to interview these three administrators because I knew that even though they were in administrative roles, they did have regular interactions with students. Part of the data to answer RQ#2 (regarding *structural forces*) come from this set of interviews. I was able to learn about the multiple types of support available from questions such as: *Of the students with whom you work with, what kind of questions or support do they usually come to you for? Would you tell me about the different college success resources we have at this college? What are some resources we don't have that you wish we did?* On average, these interviews took about 45 minutes; all were recorded and transcribed.

Semi-structured Interviews with Alters. The last group of participants that I interviewed was alters (N=8). Originally, I had planned to interview alters before starting SN interviews so that the information from the alter interviews would be used to inform SN questions. Unfortunately, as it turned out, when I finished the semi-structured interview, I did not feel I had enough rapport with the student to be asking them to connect me with one of their alters. As a result, I ended up conducting alter interviews last. Despite this unexpected challenge, I think the experience was useful nevertheless as it might help inform my analysis of the data.

Participatory Student Shadowing. Although interviewing was my main method of data collection, I also spent some time shadowing five focal students. These shadowing sessions were mainly intended as a rapport-building activity; however, it also enriched the data by contextualizing the stories that students share, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Some shadows were done after the CCW-SCfCS interview; others were done after the SN interview. In either case, by the time we did the observation, I had already had some idea of the student's level of comfort and sources of support. I suggested locations that were symbolic or somehow related to the student's educational strength. For example, I observed HuêMai at the Transitions

Center, where she works as a work-study student, because she said that it was the only place she spends her time outside of class. She even goes just to study when she not scheduled to work. Another example, I observed Minh Hằng at the daycare where she teaches because I sensed her joy when talking about her work and the kids. She was pursuing the same profession in Vietnam, but when she immigrated here, her family advised her to go into nursing as the pay is better. She took their advice and tried nursing for one quarter when she realized that teaching is where her heart lies. Altogether, I observed five students. Naturally, the location and length of these observations vary according to the nature of the activity. They range between one to three hours. I jotted down quick notes during these events and then wrote more detailed memos shortly thereafter.

All tools used for collecting data are available in appendix 8. These tools are organized according to the three groups of participants: 1) focal-student participants, 2) institutional agents, and 3) alters. The last set of tools are for collecting official documents for data analysis. Link to appendix 1A to appendix 1D.

Memoing. Throughout the data collection process, I regularly wrote analytical memos after interviews and observations. In these memos, I noted ideas, hunches, patterns, contradictions, outliers, questions, curiosities, etc. about things and people I saw and heard. I formatted these memos as one long document in a single Microsoft Word file, with dates and titles for each entry. Merriam and suggests that keeping a paper trail to explain your coding and analytical choices can be helpful later, even if I am not I'm not working as part of a team. This iterative memo writing was suggested as a way to keep a paper trail to explain my coding and analytical decisions, which turned out to be very helpful later (Merriam, 200; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In the chart below, I summarized each focal student's participation in this study. A few notes about the chart below: 1) Names in green boxes are students at Olympic College; those in blue boxes are at Rainier College. 2) Names in red font are second generation, and those in black font are first generation students. These generation status refer to immigration generation, not college generation.

FOCAL STUDENT PARTICIPANTS & THEIR PARTICIPATION							
	Questionnaire	Semi-structured interview	Ego-centric social network map	Social network interview	Shadowing	Follow-up interview	Connected with Alter
Hoàng Anh	✓	✓					
Minh Tuyết	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minh Hằng	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thanh Giang	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Huệ Mai	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quốc Trọng	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Ngọc Cẩm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tường Vy	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Bích Châu	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Thùy Dương	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Tuấn Minh	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Duy Bảo	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Ngọc Hương	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Diễm Huệ	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Thanh Điệp	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Thúy Quỳnh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Diễm My	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis in qualitative research is the process of making sense of your data (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). It is a process that generally “consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion,” (Creswell, 2007, p. 148). By this definition, data analysis and data collection inherently happen alongside each other. Instead of distinct processes, they overlap and inform one another. This perspective guided my data collection and data analysis processes.

Organizing Student Demographic Information. After the last interview was conducted, I began by organizing focal students’ demographic data. Some of this information came from the questionnaire and some came from the semi-structured interview. I transferred this their demographic information to an Excel spreadsheet that had the following categories: college

currently attending (Rainier College or Olympic College), immigration generation (1st or 2nd+), college generation (1st or 2nd+), English proficiency (BTSD/I-BEST, Exited BTSD or Non-ELL), gender, age range (younger than 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, or 45+), tuition source (FAFSA, Workforce, scholarships, or out-of-pocket), enrollment status (part-time or full-time), marital status (single, single with children, married w/o children, or married with children), employment status (part-time or full-time), and current program of study.

Size & Composition of Focal Students' Ego-centric Social Networks. Next, I transferred information from focal students' egocentric network maps (ENM) to an Excel sheet. The first column is reserved for the focal student's name and their college, i.e., Rainier College or Olympic College. Each row represents a student's entire network. For every *alter* that the student indicated on their ENM, I would add that *alter's* name and/or role²⁴ in an adjacent cell next to the focal student's name. When all ENMs had been recorded, I went over each cell and color-coded them according to the following parameter: IA ties were blue; KIN ties were orange; PEER ties were purple; and COMM ties were red. A screenshot of what this Excel sheet looks like in the end is in the appendix, link to appendix 6A. The four categories of ties were defined according to the following definitions: IA ties are institutional agent alters, e.g., college staff, faculty, advisors, administrators, etc. KIN ties are family members, both immediate and extended family members, e.g., uncles, cousins, parents-in-law, sisters, sons, etc. PEER ties are friends, classmates, and schoolmates. COMM ties are community members, e.g., Neighborhood House employees, Seattle Education Access (SEA) navigators, Workforce advisors, etc.

Next, I counted up the number of alters for each student and for each category of alter. I then used those numbers to create stackable bar graphs and pie charts to give me some perspective of the data. These graphs and charts regarding network *size* and *composition* are available in the appendix, link to appendix 7. The main goal at this stage was just to see if there were any patterns concerning the *size* and *composition* of these students' egonets. In a way, these charts are not only the findings in-and-of themselves, but I also used them as "signage" to give me hints as to where and how to examine the qualitative data.

Range of Focal Students' Ego-centric Social Networks. After having an idea of their egonet *size* and *composition*, I then moved on to *range*. I used the following formula to calculate

²⁴ Some students referred to their alter by his/her role instead of his/her name. For example, MinhHàng talked about her father-in-law using his role instead of his name.

each focal student's ego-centric network range or heterogeneity: $K(100^2 - \Sigma\% ^2)/100^2(K-1)$. A table that summarizes each student's Index of Qualitative Variation is available in the appendix, [link to appendix 7B](#).

Third Subsidiary Research Question – Holistic Network Structure. At this point, I had answered the second half of the third subsidiary question regarding their holistic network structure - *network size, composition and range*. I now turned my attention to the analyzing the qualitative data.

Approach to Qualitative Data Analysis

Sketching Ideas/Open Coding. In keeping with qualitative analysis guidelines, I performed data analysis throughout the duration of this study and in multiple, iterative cycles, as represented by the visual of the spiraling spring in Creswell's book (Creswell, 2007). First, I began a task that some scholars describe it as *open coding* while others call it as *sketching ideas* (Creswell, 2007). During this stage, the researcher reads through their data line-by-line "to identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes, or issues they suggest, no matter how varied and disparate," (Emerson, 2001, p. 143). I purposefully began with open coding even though I had a well-defined conceptual framework; I did this to ensure that I would not miss patterns outside of my framework. I went through each transcript and created descriptive words and phrases that sum up that section of the data. I used the comment feature in Microsoft Word for this process. The goal during this task was to general codes based purely on what I see and not influenced by my existing framework. After that, I combined these descriptions into themes and combined these themes with the constructs in my conceptual framework and drafted my initial codebook, which is available in the appendix, [link to appendix 2A](#).

First Round of Focused Coding. Next, I conducted a second round of coding that Emerson referred to as *focused coding*; where the researcher analyzes the data "on the basis of topics that have been identified," (Emerson, 2001 p. 143). This round of *focused coding* was done in Nvivo. After all the data had gone through the first round of *focused coding*, I then selected data for each parent code in Nvivo and read through the data associated with each parent code. My goal here was three-folds: 1) to ensure that I had been consistent in coding, 2) to see if there were any child codes that could be combined or separated, and 3) to see if there were any codes that needed to be omitted or created.

Clarification of CCW-Social Capital. During this phase, I realized that there were some confusion in some of the codes as well as some of the concepts in my framework. Hence, I needed to develop clear definitions for these before continuing on with my analysis. This step turned out to be extremely helpful later on as it forced me to re-examine my original framework closely. These are the two overlapping concepts that I needed to set parameters to clarify: *social capital* (as the fourth form of CCW) and *institutional resources* (as the second form of SCfCS). To address this problem, I added the following specifications: Going forth, the fourth form of CCW will refer to *institutional capital from cultural ties*, where *cultural ties* mean non-kin relationships within the student's cultural community, i.e., church and Vietnamese Language school. 2) On the other hand, the second form of SCfCS refers to *institutional resources from any social tie*. The reasoning behind this differentiation is stemmed from Yosso's emphasis on resources within the student's cultural community. The underlying premise of Yosso's CCW framework is that minority students have valuable resources, including institutional resources, in their cultural communities that the system has not found a way to cultivate and leverage.

Wallowing in the Data. After conducting *focused coding*, I underwent an analysis strategy that I learned in a qualitative research class called "*wallowing in the data*." This involved in-depth reading and repeatedly listening to interview recordings in order to get a comprehensive view of students' stories and experiences. For this step, I uploaded all the interviews with focal students to my phone and listened to them continuously, even when I was doing other tasks such as driving, taking the training, doing the dishes, etc. Listening to these interviews repeatedly helped me gain a holistic sense of the data.

Re-organizing SCfCS. One of the major realizations that sprouted from this step of simultaneous in-depth-reading and repeated-listening was that *sense of competence* was much more evident than *sense of belonging*. Consequently, I made the decision to separate sense of belonging and sense of competence and reorganize the subcategories in Social Capital for College Success (SCfCS). As a result, in the revised conceptualization of SCfCS, it is composed of five parts: 1) *a sense of belonging*, 2) *a sense of competence*, 3) *access to institutional capital*, 4) *reinforcement of goal commitment* and 5) *college-feasibility resources*. A visual of this re-organized conceptualization of SCfCS is available in the appendix, link to appendix 3B.

Forms of Social Capital for College Success (SCfCS) from Social Network Interviews. Once I had a revised SCfCS and better clarity on each of the subcategories within that construct,

I then turned my attention to SCfCS data, which came from the second half of the social network interviews. Before I describe how I organized and analyzed this group of data, let me begin with a brief description of how it was collected. This data was collected during the second part of the *social network interview* (SN interview). This is where I tried to find out what type(s) of support the student is getting from each *alter* that they had mentioned in their egocentric network map (ENM). For this part of the interview, I used an additional tool to ensure smooth logistics. This tool is available in the appendix, link to appendix 1A. Each page was designated for one *alter*. At the interview, I began by writing the *alter's* name/role at the top of the handout. Then, I would go down the list of support and ask the student whether that *alter* had provided them with that form of support. I would mark their answers on the handout and would also ask them to elaborate by giving an example or sharing a related anecdote every time they answered “yes.”

In the paragraph above, I explained how SCfCS data was collected; in this paragraph, I will explain how I organized and analyzed this data. I began by transferring information from these handouts to an Excel sheet. I began with one focal student per Excel tab, then later combined all sixteen tabs into one continuous sheet. Types of support are in rows while *alters* are in columns. Inside each intersecting cell is a checkbox. If the *alter* is a provider of that certain type of support, then I would check the checkbox in their intersecting cell. *Alters* are identified by their proper name as well as their tie-type. Each *alter type* has a designated color as mentioned above²⁵; each column is colored accordingly. A screenshot of how this spreadsheet actually looked like is available in the appendix, link to appendix 6B.

When all the SCfCS handouts have been recorded, I counted up the tickers for each support type and used those numbers to create graphs and charts about patterns regarding the forms of SCfCS that they have acquired. Next, I combined data on *alter types* with data on SCfCS to see if there were any patterns and connections between these two types of data. I wanted to see where certain types of support come from and if there were any connections between particular *alter type(s)* and certain type(s) of support. For example, do *college-feasibility resources* usually come from KIN ties? In other words, where (i.e., from which *alter type*) do students typically get this support? Are some *alter types* typical suppliers of certain types of support more than others? What are the connections between *alter types* and types of support? It is also worth noting here that the goal for creating these charts was to visualize the

²⁵ IA ties are blue. KIN ties are orange. PEER ties are purple. COMM ties are red.

students' SCfCS portfolios, to see if there were any patterns of similarities or differences between individual students as well as between subgroups, i.e., Rainier College students versus Olympic College students, first-gen students versus second-gen students. Similar to the data on holistic network structure (i.e., size, composition and range), I wanted to use these charts not as findings in-and-of themselves. Rather, I wanted to use them as "signage" to give me directions on where in the qualitative data to examine more deeply. Some of these graphs/charts are inserted throughout my findings chapters as appropriate; all of them are also available in the appendix, link to appendix 8A.

Second Round of Focused Coding. At this point, I had finished the following tasks: 1) organized data related to *structural forces* according to *control, action, association, and meaning*, 2) graphed the *size, composition, and range* of students' egonets, 3) revised my conceptualization of SCfCS with added clarity to each subcategory within this construct, 4) graphed SCfCS portfolios, and 5) graphed connections between SCfCS and *alter type*. With these pieces of analyzed data, I revisited my interview transcripts and observation notes for a second round of *focused coding*. By this time, I was very familiar with the data as I had been listening to the focal-student interview recordings repeatedly and had also been re-reading my analytical memos multiple times. For this second round of *focused coding*, I used the revised conceptual framework²⁶ to create a revised codebook; this revised codebook is available in the appendix, link to appendix 2B.

Axial Coding. My last step in data analysis is *axial coding*. This is where I re-organized codes and themes in order to make claims that address each of the four subsidiary research questions, (with the exception of RQ#3B on holistic network structure). Simultaneously throughout this coding process, I continued to write memos. This religious memoing later turned out to be extremely helpful when I began writing my first draft, as it kept track of my analytic decisions and hunches and hypotheses throughout the process. While writing the first draft of my findings chapters, often times I would begin outlining an idea only to realize that I had already discussed it at length in one of the entries in my memo.

²⁶ Note that the two revisions are: 1) clarification of *CCW-social capital* and 2) re-organization of the construct of *SCfCS*.

VERIFYING FINDINGS

Engaging with the data at the level of detail as described above will help me ensure internal validity, which is one of the standards to help us achieve rigor in qualitative research. Merriam defines *internal validity* as the congruency between one's findings and reality – “How congruent are one's findings with reality?” (Merriam, 1995, page 53). She goes on to write that, “Qualitative research assumes that reality is constructed, multidimensional, and ever-changing; there is no such thing as a single, immutable reality waiting to be observed or measured,” (Merriam, 1995, page 54). Furthermore, with the researcher being the main research instrument (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009), our findings are only *relatively true* because it is “warped, first, by the collective pressure and stream of our time and race, second by the thrust of our individual personalities,” (from Steinbeck, 1941 as cited in Merriam, 1995). This complexity means that what we present is not pure reality, but only interpretations of reality – in other words, the findings are the researcher's interpretations of the participants' interpretation of reality.

Clearly, ensuring internal validity is a challenging task. Therefore, besides engaging in the data as described above, I also used the following strategies: conducting member check, establishing a research audit trail, writing analytical memos, seeking colleague examination, and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). *Member check* means taking the collected data back to participants and asking if it is accurate. *Research audit trail* refers to the activities taken throughout the project to ensure that the process through which I arrived at my findings is transparent. Examples of these activities include keeping a log of research actions, documenting data collection and data analysis procedures, annotating referenced articles/works, maintaining a system for storing data, writing memos, etc. (Creswell, 2012). *Analytical memos* are mini write-ups written during and/or immediately after an interview and can include anything from initial thoughts/questions to emerging themes (Chapman, 2008; Gibbs, 2002). I was diligent in memoing throughout this process and wrote about things such as: initial reactions between data and theories in my framework, thoughts on my assumptions, notes on an emerging pattern, questions/curiosities on a surprising/interesting piece of data. *Colleague examination* means asking a colleague to examine the data and provide feedback on the credibility of my emergent findings. Lastly, *triangulation* refers to the use of multiple data sources and methods of collecting data. For this study, I collected data by way of document analysis, observation, and interviewing three groups of participants: focal students, institutional agents, and alters.

LIMITATIONS in RESEARCH DESIGN

Sample-to-Population Generalizability. This study is not without limitations. Although I used *purposeful sampling* with the goal of *maximum variation*, this is still a regional study. All participants are Seattlites and all contextual data is locally-based. For this reason, *generalizability* from this sample to the national population of Vietnamese-American students at other two-year institutions is limited. To minimize this limitation, I used specific inclusion and exclusion criteria when recruiting focal student participants (as specified in chapter three) in order to have a diverse sample that can be most representative of the general Vietnamese-American population. While sample-to-population generalizability is limited, *transferability* of the phenomenon can be applied to other contexts. As Lincoln & Guba stated, it is not the researcher's task to convince the reader that findings in this study are transferable; however, "it is his or her responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of the potential appliers," (1985, p. 316). In an attempt to accomplish this task, I have provided detailed descriptions of the phenomenon, the context and my process throughout this dissertation.

Positionality & Assumptions. The second limitation is my *positionality* as an outside-researcher with some insider perspectives. As a result of this positionality, I might have made unconscious assumptions or be oblivious to details that were not on my radar. Issues of positionality are at the core of the common criticism that case studies are impartial because researchers seek out data to affirm their preconceived notions. *Positionality* is a challenge to address as there is no way for any of us to completely remove our biases, and it is doubly challenging when the task is interpretive in nature as it is with qualitative research. I addressed this limitation by documenting my thought process in an on-going detailed memo during data collection and analysis. This task helped bring my biases to the surface so that they are visible, hence assumptions can be minimized.

Issues around Translation. The translation process in itself is an interpretive task and therefore susceptible to soak-up some of the translator's positionality. I recognize that this can add an additional layer of assumptions to the research. Therefore, to ensure validity, I have made strategic and intentional decisions regarding translation during data collection and analysis, as described earlier in this chapter. As some scholars have noted, describing in detail our

thought process so that readers can understand how translation procedures were implemented is one way to maintain rigor in qualitative research (Willgerodt, Kataoka-Yahiro, and Ceria, 2005).

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH (CCW)

Introduction

This study finds that cultural wealth do in fact play a positive role in mediating Vietnamese-American students' cultivation of SCfCS. More specifically, the results show that cultural and familial communities provide alters who transmit tangible forms of support such as navigational capital, institutional capital, and college-feasibility resources. Having access to these tangible forms of support makes it possible for nontraditional students to pursue college and to persist on their postsecondary journeys. In addition, focal students also demonstrate possession of intangible forms of capital, such as aspirational capital, resistant capital. These intangible forms of capital highlight the psychological strength of the students. With regards to the last two forms of capital - resistant capital, I argue that while they are indicators of the students' psychological strength, they are also signals of a broken system. I argue that if examined critically, they raise the following question: for what purpose do students need to have resistant capital in order to obtain a college degree that would allow them to earn a living-wage job to provide for their families? In other words, while it is important to honor and celebrate students' psychological strength, it is also problematic to only stop there because in doing so, we are exonerating the system of its responsibility to serve each and every student.

The main purpose of this chapter is to address the first subsidiary question: What forms of *community cultural wealth (CCW)* do Vietnamese-American students possess? However, before delving into that discussion, it is necessary to get a picture of who the recent Vietnamese-American immigrant students are within the larger span of Vietnamese immigration history. Towards that goal, the first part of this chapter will be devoted to describing this current group in perspective to the overall diaspora, i.e., how they are similar or different from previous waves. Understanding how this group within the larger Vietnamese-American diaspora history is important because some of these defining factors are connected to their resources, social networks and transnational capital. As such, this chapter will be divided into two parts: 1) characteristics of the most recent group of Vietnamese-American immigrants, and 2) findings around *community cultural wealth*.

PART 1: CHARACTERISTICS of the CURRENT WAVE

As presented in the Literature Review Chapter, existing literature on Vietnamese diaspora often describe this group in three waves. These waves are predominantly differentiated by: 1) time of immigration, 2) the manner or way in which they immigrated and 3) the transnational capital of which they brought with them from Vietnam. Based on these indicators, recent Vietnamese immigrants are distinct from previous waves in many ways. ***Time of immigration.*** Unlike previous waves, especially the first two waves, this current wave did not occur in spurts; instead, it has been a steady stream that began around the mid/late 2000's. ***Manner of immigration.*** Members of this wave immigrate to the United States through two main methods of immigration: family reunification and marriage. This is important to note because it carries with it advantages that are relevant to the scope of this study; advantages that previous waves have not had. This is the only wave who has kin ties - either by blood or marriage - in the host country upon their arrival. Moreover, many of these kin ties are individuals who have established lives and resources available to support the newly arrived members. Of the twelve first generation focal-student participants in this study, six came by way marriage and six by way of family reunification. ***Transnational capital.*** As discussed in the Literature Review Chapter, *transnational capital* for previous waves refer to a mix of human and financial capital that they bring abroad from Vietnam. In more concrete terms, this refers to their occupational skill sets, English linguistic abilities, familiarization with Western social norms, formal education, financial assets, etc. Based on data from this study, members from this recent group have rich *transnational capital*. Of the twelve first-generation students, were professionals in Vietnam who had had some amount of college; only three students reported that they stopped their education after high school. Almost everyone, except for Quốc Trọng, said that they had learned English before moving here. For the younger students, such as Huệ Mai, Tường Vy, Thanh Giang, Ngọc Hương, the English lessons were part of their public school curriculum. For the older students, such as Ngọc Cầm, Minh Tuyết, Diễm My, Thanh Diệp, they took English classes at language centers when they received the news that they would be moving to the United States.

In sum, this study finds that recent Vietnamese immigrants to the United States are distinct from previous waves by three indicators: 1) time of immigration, 2) the manner or way

in which they immigrated and 3) the transnational capital of which they brought with them from Vietnam.

PART 2: MANIFESTATIONS of COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH

Yosso's *community cultural wealth (CCW)* is built on the premise that minority students have valuable resources from their cultural backgrounds and can access rich social networks within their families and communities that they can draw on as fuel to reach their educational goals. She conceptualizes six forms to *community cultural wealth*: 1) *aspirational capital*, 2) *resistant capital*, 3) *navigational capital*, 4) *social capital*, 5) *familial capital*, and 6) *linguistic capital*. *Aspirational capital* refers to the educational hopes and dreams that students bring with them on their schooling journey, their drive to have a better future through education. *Resistant capital* refers to the skills that they have developed as a result of enacting in oppositional behaviors to challenge systemic inequity. *Navigational capital* refers to the skills and abilities that students have learned from their lived experience of maneuvering through institutional landscapes that were not designed for people like them. *Social capital* refers to institutional resources that students have garnered from social ties. As explained in the methodology and literature review chapters, for transparency purposes, this form of CCW was amended to a more descriptive name *institutional resources from cultural ties*. *Familial capital* refers to resources from the student's kin ties, i.e., immediate and extended family members. *Linguistic capital* refers to the communication skills that come from being bilingual and connected to their linguistic heritage.

At the beginning of this study, when I approached data collection, I used Yosso's definitions of the six forms of CCW; however, upon data analysis, it quickly became clear that some of these definitions needed refining and/or re-defining to fit this group. For the rest of this chapter, I will discuss how each form of CCW manifests itself for the focal students in this study and note how it has been modified from Yosso's original definition. The six forms of CCW will be discussed in the following order: *aspirational capital & resistant capital, navigational capital, social capital, familial capital, and linguistic capital*.

Aspirational & Resistant Capital: Two Sides of the Same Coin

As stated in the paragraph above, Yosso defines *resistant capital* as the skills they have developed as a result of enacting on oppositional behaviors to challenge the system. There was

not much evidence of *resistant capital* under this definition; instead, I saw a different manifestation of it. I saw *resistant capital* as in possessing the practical skills and mental strength that have developed as a result of pushing through against the current, refusing to be part of the status quo. Under this definition of *resistance*, not only was it evident, it was also related to another form of capital - *aspirational capital*, which Yosso defines as the student's educational hopes and dreams for a better future. There is an interloop between these two forms of capital; they seem to be two sides of the same coin. In other words, *aspirational capital* is the drive that feeds *resistant capital*. In the following paragraphs, I will explain this idea in more detail, backed-up with excerpts from student interviews.

For the focal students in this study, their *aspirational capital* is firmly embedded in their social networks, more specifically, it is connected to the *people* in their egonets. For TườngVy and ThúyQuỳnh, the source of their aspirational capital is rooted in their kin ties. In the following excerpt, TườngVy talks about how she wants to keep going because she's an only child in her family and the only person her parents could rely on to take care of them in their old age.

TD: *Can you tell me a little bit about your family?*

TUỜNGVY: *My family has three people.*

TD: *You're an only child?*

TUỜNGVY: *Yeah. My dad works in construction. My mom works as a dishwasher for a restaurant. Currently I live with two aunts and two uncles and two cousins.*

[...]

TD: *Ok, how does your family view your education? What do they think about your education?*

TUỜNGVY: *My parents tell me to continue to study. Because my family is not well-off. In Vietnam, we lived with my grandmother in her home, that's why my uncle sponsored us to bring us over here. He thinks that life here might be better if I try hard and study. And also my dad says that he will work hard, and as for me he wants me to continue to study. If I want to work, I can work part time to earn some extra money, but don't stop school. If you stop school and just go to work then you won't have a better life. My mom's health is not good, so she can only work as a dishwasher three days a week and only 5 hours per day. My dad takes care of everything. That's why he says, if in the future, when he gets old and can't work as much anymore and I can only make two thousand a month, then how am I going to support the family? Plus I'm still young, I still have a future, so I have to go to school, only an education will help me have a better life.*

For ThúyQuỳnh, her aspiration is rooted in her two-year old daughter. In the following excerpt, she talks about her motivation for going to school. She teared-up in the last section as she was telling me about the time when she brought her daughter to the hospital and couldn't communicate with the doctors and nurses about her daughter's condition. For ThúyQuỳnh, her daughter is the sole reason of why she's in school - to have the language skills to support her daughter in the present moment and also to have an occupational skill to provide for her daughter in the future. For ThúyQuỳnh, going to school to learn English was a tool to liberation and safety. In the excerpt below, she shares how she felt when she her husband's lawyer came to look for her after their divorce.

THÚYQUỲNH: *This is not about education, just personal. Like when I had problems with my daughter's father. At that time, my English was very weak, so when the lawyer from the other side came to look for me, I was very scared.*

[...]

TD: *So most of your family is now in Vietnam, is that right? How do they view your education? Do they support you going to school?*

THÚYQUỲNH: *Umm, people in Vietnam don't bother with problems in America. People in Vietnam just say, ok, do whatever you need do because they're in Vietnam they can't help. Here, I have family, not parents or siblings, but uncle and aunt. I have an aunt in California. She says that your educational road is too long, too exhausting, why don't you just go to work, to take care of your daughter. But my uncle in Washington says that whatever you do, you have to go to school so that you can read and write.*

[...]

TD: *And tell me why you're in college, I know that this is very broad, but what are your motivations for going to college?*

THÚYQUỲNH: *I go to college because I want to learn English. That's the number one goal. Also, when I ran into problems (she's referring to her divorce) and I had to deal with a lot of documents and things concerning the law and everything, I didn't know anything. And when my daughter was sick, the hospital that we went to at that time didn't have an interpreter, and so when I took my daughter to the hospital, I didn't know how to tell the doctor what was wrong with my daughter, and so I said no matter what, the most important thing is that I have to learn English. The primary goal is that I have to learn English, have to be able to read documents, understand things, so that I can take care of personal problems. I can't depend on others. That's my number one goal.*

For other students, their aspirational capital is connected their motivation, to their desire to give back to the community for what it has given to them. In the excerpts below, TuấnMinh and MinhTuyết talk about their motivation to pursue postsecondary education. The first example is from TuấnMinh. TuấnMinh is a second generation Vietnamese American who graduated from

high school a year ago. He is currently a part-time student at Rainier College. During the quarter that I interviewed him, his plan was to major in Psychology and to use that knowledge to enrich his career in law enforcement. As he explains below, for him, the goal is not a particular field or career, the goal is being able to help people, and he sees law enforcement as a means towards that end.

TD: *What motivates you to go into that field?*

TUÁNMINH: *Mm. I think what motivates me to go into that field is just helping, just doing good and helping people out. You know. I guess I was really, before I switched my majors, I was really hung up with everybody else and seeing like, okay, everybody's doing computer science so I guess I can try computer science too. But I didn't really like that course.*

He continues on to explain how he sees his education and future occupation as a way for him to give back to the community:

Well, in high school the main, the main focus wasn't policing itself, but helping people and finding a job that fits that description. My first priority isn't becoming a police officer. It's helping people. But being a police officer would give me multiple opportunities to assist better than, you know. Because I was thinking about the medical field and you know, just simple things like, you know, other jobs to help. But I didn't think that it would fit. So it's been a long time. I would say it's been about six years just thinking of it.

The next excerpt is from my interview with MinhTuyết. MinhTuyết lives with her two young sons and husband. Her husband works to support the family while she's pursuing her degree in Medical Assistant. She's currently in her second quarter in the program and has been able to afford her tuition with the help of Workforce funding. In the excerpt below, she talks about how she feels supported in her educational journey, to her, the support is not just from her family members but also from the system and mainstream community at large.

TD: *And why are you in college?*

MINHTUYẾT: *When I came to this country, I see that education gets so much support, and the education system is good too, it would be a waste to not study. I think education is the best, so that's why whenever I have time, I try to study. Only education would give you a future. Also, in this country, education, how do I say, has a lot of support, has a lot of assistance and a lot of support, and the education system is good too. I go to class and feel wow the teaching techniques are really good.*

TD: *Can you explain more about that? You said that you feel education here gets a lot of support, what do you mean?*

MINHTUYẾT: *I mean that for example in Vietnam, to study, you have to have a lot of money to be able to go to school. And actually, things you learn in school are not applicable in real life. You put effort in your education, but when you go to work, it doesn't compensate for the effort that you put in. But here, you learn what's necessary to get you to work, so you feel you're using the skills that you were taught, so you feel that the effort that you put in your education is worth it. And in class, the teaching style makes it easy to understand. And there are many ways to get support, so it's a waste of you don't go to school.*

At the end of our interview, after I have already turned off the recorder, we had some small talk before saying goodbye. During that part of our conversation, she made a statement that has stuck with me, she said, "*Mình phải học làm sao cho xứng đáng với sự giúp đỡ của người ta chứ.*" She said, "*We have to study in a manner that lives up to the support that they're giving us.*" For MinhTuyết, her motivation is fueled by her deep appreciation of the support that she's receiving from her community.

Institutional Agents usually perceive Vietnamese students as passive. In fact, in one of my interviews with an ESL instructor, Olivia, when I asked her "*What are some resources that we currently don't have but wish we did?*" To which, she replied that she wish there was more Vietnamese voice on campus. "*So I think, uh, like in terms of, of uh, student leadership on the campus. And I think, I observed and when we talk about student clubs and more for a lots of Asians and more just stayed on the food at a food level. It's not. I think I would like to say more like leadership.*" Initially, as I was reading through the interview transcripts and thinking about *resistant capital*, this statement was in the back of my mind. From this mindset and working from Yosso's definition, *resistant capital* seems to require some kind of "oppositional behavior." She defines *resistant capital* as the skills that students have developed as a result of engaging in oppositional behaviors to challenge systemic inequity. From this stance, it seems that in order to have *resistant capital*, a student would have to be participating in demonstrations, writing petitions, or other acts of civil disobedience. From this perspective of *resistant capital*, the focal students in this study did not seem to show any sign of *resistant capital*. However, after repeatedly listening to the interviews and broadening my mindset on what it means to resist, I slowly came to the realization that they do in fact show *resistant capital*, just in a different form. For this group, *resistance* means an act of resilience, the refusal to give in to a system that was not built to support their skill-set. Once I shifted my mindset to see *resistant capital* in these terms, it suddenly became very evident in the lives of these focal students. With this broadened

perspective, I modified Yosso's definition of *resistant capital* as: the practical capabilities and mental strengths that students have developed as a result of their resilience, as a result of their refusal to be part of the status quo. From this definition, one student stood out as the embodiment of this form of cultural wealth.

Quốc Trọng is emblematic of *resistant capital* because he has many reasons to drop out and yet he persisted. Quốc Trọng came from a small town in Olympic College Vietnam and did not have the means to learn much English aside from a few general courses in high school. As a result, when I moved to the US in 2013, he began in ESL Level 2 at Olympic College. At that time, he was already in he was 23 years old. He said that listening and speaking were very difficult for him; they still are. English got really difficult for him when he got to level 4. It was hard for him to pass on to the next level. So after three quarters in 4B, he stopped out for some time. During this time, he took a manicurist course, tried working in a salon, worked in construction, and just cocooned at home. Then after a year or so, he went back to school in the fall of 2016. His first quarter back, he took a vocational ESL course, ESL for construction workers at Northwest Vocational Institute. There, he met Rachel, a college navigator who later advised him through the financial aid process and initial registration for college level classes. He eventually took the placement test and was placed out of Basic Studies. Because math was his strongest subject, he took math courses first. But despite math being his strongest subject, he was still in for much of a shock during his first quarter of college math. Even though he had the computation skills, math vocabulary and word problems were difficult for him. He also had a hard time keeping up with lectures. As a result, he dropped that class and registered for a lower math class than what the placement exam suggested. Even though education is hard for him, he has strategies to help him make progress. For example, he asks instructors for permission to visit their classes. Sometimes, he also audits classes if he anticipate that they will be difficult for him. He works on extra exercises not just ones that are assigned. Hannah, his math instructor whom I interviewed also complimented him on this aspect:

He is really a wonderful student. He is an outstanding student. He works really hard. I mean, I mean, I'm using him as an example now, even in my other classes. I said, look, I have a student. He's a 4.0 student, but you know what he does everyday? I see him over there working on the extra problems, not even the homework problem, who's just doing extra problems and whenever he's stuck, he comes to me and say, Hannah, I'm working on this extra problem, but I'm stuck, can we go over this?

Another strategy that he uses is that he limits his class-load. He says that he usually takes one core class and one elective. Once in a while, he would take two core classes, but most quarters, it's just one. Of course, we can't deny the fact that he has the financial and emotional support from family to allow him to do that, but at the same time, we also have to recognize the fact that he knows to pace himself instead of wearing himself out and dropping out of school is an act of resistance. All these steps that he has taken in order to continue his education are signs that he has *resistant capital*.

An Abundance of Navigational Capital from Kin, Peer, and Cultural Ties

Yosso describes *navigational capital* as the skills necessary to maneuver through a system that was not designed for them. Under this definition, *navigational capital* was a regular observance for the Vietnamese-American focal students in this study. Moreover, result patterns show that they have an abundance of *navigational capital* because they were able to leverage the following relationships in their lives: kin ties, peer ties, ties within their cultural communities. In the following section, I will discuss each of these areas and how they enable *navigational capital* to come about for these students.

Navigational Capital Through Kin Ties. Kin ties are definitely one of the strongest ties in Vietnamese students' egonets. They are strong not only in numbers but also because they offer a multitude of support that they provide to their students; one of which is navigational support. Many of the Vietnamese students I spoke to express that oral communication is one of their biggest barriers. As this is the case, many Vietnamese students dread visiting school offices. One way they have learned to get around this hurdle is by bringing along a family member for communication support. TườngVy talks about how she brings her cousin Tina along whenever she anticipates difficulty in communication with school personnel; she says:

When I filled out the data sheet for financial aid and had to turn it in. I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to understand the people at the financial aid office, so I asked this cousin to go turn it in with me. Any problems at school, I usually take her. For example, when I transferred to Olympic College from Rainier College, the teacher at Rainier College said that I wouldn't have to test again, they can just take my test scores from Rainier College, but I didn't understand what she was saying, so I took my cousin along.

MinhTuyết also used a similar strategy, except that for her case, her supporter was her husband. In the following excerpt, she shares her experience in navigating through the initial registration process:

TD: Can you tell me about your experience in navigating college?

MINHTUYẾT: Yeah at first, there was so much English, I didn't understand anything. So I asked for help, people at school to help me, apply for financial aid for me. Registration too. I had to wait for my husband to help me. My husband doesn't know English that much, but better than me. So I bring him with me. A lot of forms. I didn't know which was which. Too many words.

When it comes to information for navigational purposes, from the information provider's vantage point, knowing what information is relevant for which student is a challenge. To be able to do so, they would have to know the student's situation well. On the other hand, from the information seeker's perspective, being unaware of what you don't know prevent students from asking for information that might be critical for their situation. They may not even realize that a particular pathway or option exists to even ask about it. Given this delima, this is where having a guide who is also a kin is especially helpful. They have both advantages - knowledge of the terrain and familiarity with the student's particular situation. Three ties in this study demonstrate this beneficial balance: DuyBảo & his brother, NgọcHương & her brother-in-law, and ThùyDương & her aunt. DuyBảo's brother Mycheal is in his second year at Rainier College, the same college that DuyBảo currently attends. Mycheal told him about Jack, an advisor who works in the AANAPISI center, who DuyBảo perceive as being very helpful and approachable, "a cool guy [who] helped me with my class." Mychael also advises DuyBảo on which class format to take. DuyBảo had wanted to take a math class online, but his brother suggested that he take it as a face-to-face class instead. Online classes have its advantages in that it offers students the flexibility to engage with the materials at their own pace and to "be in class" at their own schedule; however, it can be challenging due to its autonomous nature and mounting workload, as NgọcHương shares her experience here:

I used to really struggle with my online class because that's my first time taking an online class. Um, I remember that I took a psychology that time and when I got in the middle it was really like struggle because he gave me a assignment 8 week. Oh yeah. And I say, oh, I can continue because I have another class to do too. So I have to like drop

For this reason, online classes can be very tempting yet challenging for young-adult students, much like DuyBào himself. Below is an excerpt from our interview, in which he shares how his brother advises him against taking a math class online.

TD: Um, what kind of support or advice do you usually ask him for?

DUYBÀO: I was very skeptical about taking a class and he told me not to take that class. So I took another class which he recommended.

TD: Did he explain why you should take one class versus another?

DUYBÀO: He just said from his personal experience, taking that class, particularly online classes, math online classes, he recommended to not take it, and to take it on campus.

Sometimes, *navigational capital* doesn't come directly from kin ties, but *through* kin ties. We see this in two sets of relationships: ThùyDương, her mom & her mom's clients and NgọcHương, her father & his co-workers. ThùyDương is a second generation Vietnamese American currently in her first year at Rainier College. Her educational goal is to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing. ThùyDương shares that she's the first in her family to go to college; her father took some college classes when he was living in California but didn't graduate and her mom never went to college. NgọcHương is a first generation Vietnamese American, in her early twenties, who recently immigrated to the U.S. with her family. Her father is in his sixties. Both her parents went to work shortly after arriving and hence do not have much knowledge about the higher education system in the United States. Both ThùyDương and NgọcHương's parents do not have first hand experience with the college system here, however, both sets of parents have managed to find a work-around; they seek out information from people in their network and pass on that information to their children. For ThùyDương's parents, her mom has a salon and so she would ask her clients for information about nursing and would relay that information to her daughter. As for NgọcHương, her father talks to his co-workers about college entrance and college financing and then tells his daughter the information.

TD: Do you think he's an important person in your educational success?

NGỌCHƯƠNG: Yes.

TD: Can you give an example?

NGỌCHƯƠNG: Like. As I told, although he didn't know about the culture here but like works in a company and he usually asks his friends about how they get into college here or how they usually pay for college or how the students usually get work or something like that and then he shares with me.

As demonstrated in the two examples above, *navigational capital*, for these students, sometimes do not come directly from people in their families. Both NgọcHương and ThùyDương's parents do not know much about American college system; however, that did not stop them from providing relevant information to their students. They seeked out the necessary information from people in their networks and relay that information to their daughters.

Navigational Capital Through Peer Ties. Aside from kin ties, the students in this study also leverage their relationships with peers in order to gain *navigational capital*. This was seen clearly in four students: NgọcCầm, ThúyQuỳnh, ThanhGiang and HuệMai. NgọcCầm learned about volunteering opportunities with Hai Ba Trung Preschool through MinhHằng, a classmate in one of her ESL classes. Both students have interests in childhood education. MinhHằng has already gotten the first two certificates in the series (the Initial and Specialization Certificates) and is already working in the field. At the time of the interview, NgọcCầm was in her first quarter in the program. Through MinhHằng, NgọcCầm came to learn about volunteering opportunities at Hai Ba Trung Preschool, a bilingual Vietnamese-English preschool. The second example is from ThúyQuỳnh and Thao. From Thao, ThúyQuỳnh learned about financial aid and other resources on campus, a tutoring center designed especially for BTSD students. She says:

Actually, when it comes to education and schooling, I only go to people at school. I go to the WALL or the Writing Center. Umm, it's hard to find, well, there's one Vietnamese friend - Thao. We've known each other since 2015. She's in the process of transferring to university. When I have questions about school then I ask Thao. Because she's been there. Even though we both came to America at about the same time, but because she's single and she studied continuously, so now she's ready to transfer. But actually, Thao doesn't have time to tutor me, mostly I just study on my own. She would show me things like, like for example, if I tell her I need to improve my speaking skills, she'd give me a website to practice. Or she might tell me about a book or a place. Or like if I tell her I don't have ideas to write for my paper, should I go to the WALL or the Writing Center, and Thao would explain that the Writing Center would only help you generate ideas, but if you want help with grammar then go to the WALL.

Many other students also talk about their peers/friends and the resources they have learned from these ties. For example, HuệMai and ThanhGiang say that when deciding which classes to take, they often talk to their friends for input on which section, teacher, mode of delivery (online, face-to-face, or hybrid), etc.

Navigational Capital Through Ties Within Cultural Communities. Besides kin and peer relationships, Vietnamese American students also leverage ties in their cultural community for access to navigational capital. I will discuss how this process unfolds in three examples: NgọcCầm & her co-volunteer at a Vietnamese Language School, MinhTuyết and a Vietnamese employee who works in the BTSD office, and ThúyQuỳnh and a Vietnamese nursing instructor. In all three examples, one connecting thread between them is that the alters in every example seem to be the middle-man with knowledge of both worlds - they are from the student's cultural community and they professionally, they are part of the mainstream system. NgọcCầm volunteers at a Vietnamese Language school every week. One of her co-volunteers there is Van. Van is a social worker and supports NgọcCầm with information about occupational pathways, job search, job training, etc. She says, *"Because we volunteer in the same place, and we have some activities in the community, so sometimes, when I have questions. [...] So I often ask him about career training courses and about job fields here. [...] And when he has open job links, he shares with me."* The second example is with MinhTuyết and Quyen. Quyen works is the fiscal specialist for the Basic Studies Department. Even though her main responsibilities are around fiscal matters, she also has some hours at the front desk because she is multilingual, fluent in Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese and English. In the excerpt below, MinhTuyết shares that specifically seeks out Quyen to ask when she has questions:

Yeah, there are a lot of good offices at school. [...] Umm, I don't know a lot of English and I want to apply for financial aid, so they help me apply for it when I get to that stage. And if I have any questions about which major to go into, then I can ask people in the BTS office. There's a person who speaks Vietnamese in that office. So I wait until when she's there and ask her. She advises me on which classes to take. But some students don't know where to ask.

Another example is between ThúyQuỳnh and a Vietnamese nursing instructor at Rainier College. Here, she explains who he is and how he advised her:

When I was going through my divorce, I talked to this man. He's a doctor. He taught a few quarters at Rainier College in the nursing program. I talked to him and asked what do I need to do now in order to provide for my daughter? He said that why don't I take a few courses of nursing and then go to work. And then if I want to continue to study, I can see if my workplace would pay for my schooling. There's always a shortage in that field, so I'll be able to find work and provide for my daughter. And I think that's the one person who is Vietnamese, has experience with living in the US and has given me advice on how to survive. But I didn't follow his advice because I think that my English is not proficient.

Last example is between ThanhGiang and her mother. MinhHằng's mother introduces her to people at church in order to provide her with college-related information. ThanhGiang explains:

Like if she knows anyone who's going to college, like she knows a lot of adults in the church and they have children and they're going to college and then she can introduce me to their parents and then they can let me talk to their daughter and she can give me some advice.

Social Capital: Institutional Capital from Cultural-Community Ties

Yosso defines *social capital* as institutional resources from social ties. While I appreciate the broadity, it was too broad for this study and made data analysis muddy and confusing. To ensure internal trustworthiness, ensuring that I was actually examining and analyzing what I intended to examine and analyze, I bounded Yosso's definition to include only institutional resources from social/non-kin ties within the student's cultural community. This definition was modified with the general premise of CCW in mind, which focuses on the idea that students come to school with different and valuable forms of capital from their cultural backgrounds that our system has not recognized. To reiterate, in this study, when referring to *social capital* as a subset of capital within the broader category of CCW, *social capital* is defined as institutional resources from non-kin ties within the student's cultural community, henceforth referred to as cultural-community ties.

At this point, it is worth taking a moment to note some differences between cultural-community ties and *COMM ties*. In general, *COMM ties* are used for holistic level analysis of the student's egonet characteristics, i.e., the size, range and composition their egocentric social networks. *COMM ties* are defined in negative terms, meaning they are defined by what they are not. If a tie is not a *KIN tie*, a *PEER tie*, or an *IA tie*, then it is a *COMM tie*. As such, *COMM tie* is a very diverse group of alters that include ties from the student's co-ethnic community, pre-college community, and present community at large outside of the college. Some examples of *COMM ties* include: co-volunteers from Vietnamese schools, former high school teachers, Housing Authority advisors, ACRS social workers, SEA tutors, etc. Cultural-community tie, on the other hand, is a subset of *COMM ties* and focus predominantly on ties within the student's cultural community, i.e., cultural organizations, religious institutions, and co-ethnic enclaves. Because cultural-community tie is used to capture a specific type of capital within Yosso's CCW

framework, it is influenced by its underlying premise, which is that there are valuable resources from minority students' cultural background. **In sum**, COMM ties and cultural-community ties are not synonymous; cultural-community ties are a subset of COMM ties.

Much of the existing literature on Vietnamese students emphasizes the importance of cultural ties. Findings from this study re-affirm those studies and extend it by offering the specifics on why and how those cultural ties are important. Data from this study shows that ties from students' cultural community are important because they offer various types of institutional capital, most notably, they act as 1) a source of reference or referral and 2) a source of information. Two cultural institutions that seem to be common breeding grounds for valuable cultural-community ties are Vietnamese churches and Vietnamese language school. For the remainder of this section, I will discuss relationships (cultural-community ties) that have sprouted from these two organizations and the institutional capital connected to those relationships.

Cultural-Community Ties from Vietnamese Church. At the time of our interview, both NgọcHương and ThanhGiang were in the process of applying for university admission. They both attend a Vietnamese Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest and are both active members at church. In both of their interviews, they both mentioned that youth leaders and friends at church who can offer college information and potentially serve as references for when they apply for scholarships, university admissions, etc. I asked NgọcHương, *“So how are the people at church involved in your education?”* She replied, *“So they are another people I can come up to, with my question about education. They are also my, like if I apply for foundation scholarship or I uh, applied for transfer to university. So they are the reference I can mention.”* She also talked about Grace, a friend from church who's her go-to for information about UW as her goal is to get a BS there in Informatics. In talking about Grace, NgọcHương says:

So I also have my friends in church is in UW now and actually I was really confused about AA and AS before. I thought it's different or like a different, like if you take AA, you go to different major and AS you go to different major or something like. I confused about if you get AA, you just finished like two years and can't study more and AS you can transfer but the AA can't. So I asked my friends in church so she explain for me about that.

ThanhGiang has similar ideas as NgọcHương about her interactions with people at church. In the following excerpt, she talks about Khanh, a youth leader at her church.

TD: *Let's go to Khanh, right? Can you talk a little bit about your relationship with him? Like what kind of conversation do you talk about?*

THANHGIANG: *He's my, he's my, my youth leader in the church. So like this is his wife. [She points to another name on the network chart.] Yeah, they both good, good people, um, that I can uh, ask for help, like academic advice or. Yeah, everything. Pretty much.*

TD: *How often do you talk to him?*

THANHGIANG: *We talked, I talked to him like every Saturday, when we go to church together.*

TD: *And what are your conversations like?*

THANHGIANG: *Usually we talk about church because we serve in the church and we teach children and we interact with parents, their parents, but whenever, yeah, whenever I have um, anything that need help. Like, like recently I asked him for a letter of recommendation for my applications to PNW University.*

Cultural-Community Ties from Vietnamese Language School. Besides church, another cultural institution that has come up a lot in interviews is the Vietnamese Language School. Two students in particular seemed to have cultivated strong ties within this community - NgọcCầm and DiễmHuệ. NgọcCầm volunteers to teach Vietnamese at a Vietnamese Language school in her neighborhood. There, she met Van, a co-volunteer at that school, who is also a social worker. Van supplies NgọcCầm with information about career pathways and job options. NgọcCầm said that she would ask him questions about the job market here to help her think about what career choice would be most suitable for her skills and situation. The second student who have developed strong ties with this community is DiễmHuệ. DiễmHuệ is also a volunteer teacher at a Vietnamese Language School; her school is located in the Rainier College Valley area. For DiễmHuệ, the institutional capital that she receives from her co-volunteers come in the form of homework assistance. She said that she would sometimes send writing drafts to one of her co-volunteers to get help on editing.

Unexpected Finding. One unexpected finding in this area is that not many students know about Vietnamese community CBOs like Helping Link and Vietnamese Friendship Association. I went into this study thinking that these would be popular sources of capital. However, it turned out that not one student mentioned them.

Familial Capital

In this study, *familial capital* refers to resources that come from kin ties, both immediate and extended family members. This is a slightly modified definition from Yosso's conception of this term. Yosso defines *familial capital* as resources that come from the student's pre-college

environment; however, that was too broad and could potentially overlap with *CCW-social capital* (above). Therefore, for transparency purposes, *familial capital* refers only to resources from kin ties. Under this definition, *familial capital* in this study manifests itself in the following ways, as: 1) encouragement & emotional support, 2) financial assistance, 3) sharing of life responsibilities and 4) information flow.

Encouragement & Emotional Support. This was the most common type of support that students mentioned they got from their kin ties. Almost unanimously everyone, with the exception of BíchChâu, said their family were very supportive of their education. Students report that they have regular communication with their family and share their educational experiences. Regardless of whether those family members are here in the U.S. or abroad, they communicate often. The family members who provide emotional support vary from husbands to parents to siblings to extended family members such as uncles and parents-in-law. There are many quotes to demonstrate this point, but two that stood out for me are from DiễmMy and TườngVy. At the end of our social network interview, when we got to her mother, she said, “*none of these*” [referring to the types of support listed in the social network interview]. And then right after that, she added that her mother only gives her love and that’s enough. Below is an excerpt from our conversation about her mother.

TD: Can you tell me about your mother?

DIỄMMY: Actually my mother is quite old now. She’s very serious about education. Normally she encouraged all her children to try to improve education to have better life, you know. So she said you should try to, not now, when I was in Vietnam, she would always, even when I got a job already, she said if you have free time, go to school, learn more, get a higher degree. Don’t just satisfy with what you have. Something like that. But now when I move here, she says be careful with your health.

TD: And how often do you talk to her?

DIỄMMY: Actually not often because my mom’s deaf, she cannot hear me, but I just video chat video so she can see me.

TD: So you guys write?

DIỄMMY: Yeah. I write a letter to her, like some message and I send to her. She’s like 86. She doesn’t use the technical like this, so I just send the letter to my sister and she gives to her. To make sure, you know, mother’s always mother, so she’s always worry oh I’m here by myself. Even I have a husband but you know it’s new for me. Don’t have relatives, something like that.

TD: Is she still able to see and read and all that?

DIỄMMY: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

TD: What other things do you usually talk to your mom?

DIỄMMY: *I talk to her to ask her to to take care for herself. I just want her to, she not to be concern about me too much. She's worried, ohhh, like she talks to another person, they say I have to go overseas by myself, it's not good, something like that. She doesn't want me to go over here. All my family in Vietnam don't want me to move to here.*

TD: *I see. You just want her to feel safe that you're safe?*

DIỄMMY: *Yeah, yeah.*

TD: *So about this give you any support around college culture?*

DIỄMMY: *No. None of these. [Referring to the types of support.]*

TD: *Any other type of support that she gives you that I didn't mention?*

DIỄMMY: *You know, you know, she just gives me love. And that's big enough.*

TườngVy is another student who stood out as having tremendous support from family members, especially from one of her uncles, Uncle Trung. She said that because of her family's financial situation and her personal struggles with oral communication skills - listening and speaking - there had been numerous times in her educational journey when she wanted to quit. In the excerpt below, she recounts a time when she seriously thought about dropping out to help her family. She discussed her decision with Uncle Trung and her dad and they talked her out of it.

TD: *I get the sense that you're very motivated, but in instances when you feel stressed out or unmotivated, who do you talk to?*

TUỜNGVY: *I talk to my uncle.*

TD: *When you talk to your uncle, what do you talk about?*

TUỜNGVY: *Like last year, there was a time when my family ran out of money. We didn't have a penny, so we had to use our credit cards. So I talked to my uncle and said I don't want to go to school anymore. I just want to go to work. And my uncle said that it's up to me, but if your parents are still able to handle it and take care of you then continue your studies, don't go to work. Because once you go to work then you won't be able to go to school anymore. So he said just hang in there. But if things are too hard then you can go to work for a short time and then when things are more stable then you can go back to school.*

TD: *So after talking to him, how did you regain your motivation?*

TUỜNGVY: *After I talked to my uncle, I also talked to my dad. My dad says it's ok, he will continue to look for a job.*

Financial Assistance. The second form of support that was prevalent among kin ties is financial assistance and come from two main ties: spouse and parents. They help the student cover part of the tuition and/or cover some of the living expenses. One of the strategies that was common among couples who were equally new to this country was alternating turns working and providing for the family. This strategy was particularly evident in three students: ThanhDiệp &

her husband, MinhTuyết & her husband, and DiễmHuê & her husband. ThanhDiệp puts it best, referring to her husband, she said, “*He studied here before me, so after he graduated from Rainier College, so it’s my turn to go to Rainier College to study.*” These three couples immigrated to the United States at the same time. Both husband and wife needed to learn English and learn an employable skill. Because they were sponsored here by extended family members, they were not eligible for any benefits from the government. Both couldn’t go back to school at the same time; one person needed to provide for the family financially. As a result, their strategy was to take turns going back to school. For all three couples, the husbands went back to school first while the wives worked to support families. At the time of this study, it was the wives’ turn to receive their education while the husbands worked to support their families. On a related note, other married female students, such as DiễmMy, NgọcCầm, MinhHằng, and HuêMai, were also financially supported by their husbands. However, their situations were a little different in that they were sponsored here by their husband, meaning that their husbands had been here much longer and had already had stable jobs and incomes. Aside from spouses, parents and parents-in-law have also shown to be strong financial supporters. For second generation students, all four are single without children and three out of four live at home, TuấnMinh, ThùyDương, DuyBảo. TuấnMinh and ThùyDương work part-time at their family business, but overall, are financially dependent on their parents. BíchChâu is an outlier here as she lives on her own and is financially independent. As for first generation students, those who are single and without children, they also have part-time jobs, live at home and financially dependent on their parents, i.e., QuốcTrọng, ThanhGiang, TườngVy, and NgọcHương. Other first gens who are married live independently from their parents and in-laws but still receive support with expenses here and there. For example, MinhHằng’s parents-in-law occasionally help with rent and ThanhDiệp’s parents-in-law help with grocery expenses when these couples were going through hard times.

Sharing of Life Responsibilities. In two-year college literature, non-academic factors are often cited as one of the leading factors that contribute to student attrition (Price, 1993; Karp, 2011; Samuel & Scott, 2014). Non-academic factors refer to an umbrella of challenges from college-navigational knowledge to financial barriers to multiple or contradictory commitments (Price, 1993; Samuel & Scott, 2014). “Life responsibilities” or “family-and-work challenges” is one sub-category under that umbrella. In this section, I will discuss this sub-category in three

areas: 1) childcare, 2) household chores, and 3) transportation. In this study, I use the term *college-feasibility resources* (Karp, 2011) to refer to the resources that help students balance these life responsibilities.

For students with small children, childcare is the biggest and most common reason for dropping out (Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2001). For the students in this study who have small children, most are able to receive childcare support from family members, i.e., spouse and parents or parents-in-law. In the following excerpt, ThanhDiệp talks about how they help her with family responsibilities, “*They help me so much. My husband help me to pick up my children when he can go early.*” Similarly, NgọcHương shares her experience:

TD: *Anyone else? Anyone else in your family who helps you?*

MINHTUYẾT: *Yeah, sometimes when I ask then they help. Once in a while. Once in a while, I’ll ask my parents in law to help pick up the kids or watch the kids.*

A related area of support within the category of “life responsibilities” is household chores. The students in this study seem to have overwhelming support in this area as well. Parents and spouses who help with cooking and cleaning around the house when they have final exams or important due dates coming up - mentions of things like this were very common, for both first and second generation students. One example in particular stood out for me - DiễmHuệ and her husband. Her youngest daughter is in high school so she doesn’t have childcare issues. As for housework and financial responsibilities, her husband takes care of it all for her, not only so that she’d have time for school, but also so that she’d have time to be involved in community work. She said, “*Yeah. He supports me making connections and being involved in the community. Yeah. Going to meetings or joining in at events in the community, he supports it. He does the housework so that I have time to participate in these activities.*”

Transportation doesn’t seem to be much of an issue for the students in this study. Most of the students at Olympic College take the Light Rail to school and most of the students at Rainier College live in the neighborhood and drive to school. Some of the younger students say they sometimes get rides from parents and siblings.

Information Flow. For the students in this study, kin ties as a group is a very critical source for information about postsecondary education - how the system works, where certain resources are, who to go to for which questions, what the process is like, etc. These kin ties vary

from siblings to cousins to aunts. For example, DuyBảo's brother suggested that he talk to Jack from the AANAPISI center, who turned out to be a helpful advisor that DuyBảo enjoyed working with. ThanhDiệp's husband nudged her to seek help from TRIO; he told her what TRIO was about and the type of help she could get there. ThùyDương and TuấnMinh's aunts offered advice about financial aid. HuệMai was introduced to Olympic College because her brother-in-law used to be a student there. Both TườngVy and MinhHằng have regular contact with their cousins, who advise them on various things from career pathways, major requirements, English learning techniques, etc.

With all these forms of support from kin ties, it goes to show that *familial capital* is a very real and prominent type of capital for Vietnamese-American students. This finding upholds existing literature on Vietnamese-American students and their educational success. At the same time, these findings contradict another set of literature, the literature on social networks of minority students. This second body of literature asserts that weak ties with institutional agents are critical for minority students because that is where they receive much of their institutional resources. However, findings here show that that is not the case, for the Vietnamese-American students in this study, kin and cultural-community ties are equally valuable sources of institutional capital.

CHAPTER 5

STRUCTURAL FORCES

Introduction

One of the main arguments throughout this study is that cultural wealth alone cannot be the sole predictor of a student's educational outcomes, and that it needs to be considered together with other *structural forces* in the environment. For this reason, the second subsidiary research question was posed: What *structural forces* in the college environment have the potential to facilitate and/or impede the *SCfCS-cultivation process* of Vietnamese-American students at two-year colleges? This chapter presents findings that address this question, findings that illuminate our understanding of how students perceive the *structural forces* that exist at their schools, Rainier College and Olympic College.

These findings around *structural forces* have led me to argue that there is reciprocal/bi-directional relationship between schooling and student identity. Furthermore, I argue that while explicit structural forces determine a student's technical skills and competencies, implicit structure forces shape their worldviews - how they see the world, themselves and their place in that world. In particular, two socialized worldviews that emerged from the data are what I called the *Colonialistic Lens* and *Meritocratic Lens*. The *Meritocratic Lens* is formed when a student participates repeatedly in the *promise cycle*. I build this argument based on two sets of data, which are that: (1) Interviews with focal students show that they display a high degree of system justification, meaning that they trust in the fairness of the system and in the benevolence of the IAs. 2) Interviews with IAs show that Vietnamese-American students tend to benefit from *stereotype promise*. The cyclic relationship between these two factors - high degree of *system justification* and benefit from *stereotype promise* - produces what I called *the promise cycle*. The second socialized lens is *the colonialistic lens*, which I argue is a worldview that sprouted from *internalized colonialism* and is perpetuated by Eurocentric positionality within the institution. This argument is likewise supported by two sets of data, which are that: 1) Interviews with focal students show that they have a hyper-favorable view of the English language and Americanism. 2) Through document analysis of the colleges' formal literature, observation of campus events and interviews with IAs, I find that Eurocentric messages permeates in ESL classrooms and BTSD spaces in subtle ways. Together, these socialized lenses

underscore the importance of *implicit structural forces*; they call out for attention in community-college research but more importantly in professional development workshops and retreats.

As explained in Chapter 2, the theoretical conception of *structural forces* in this study was inspired by Eisner's definition and division of *the curriculum* (Eisner, 2005). As such, *structural forces* is theorized as anything on campus that influences a student's educational experience; this includes elements such as academic programs, student support services, school policies, classroom culture, school climate, etc. The idea here is that these *structural forces* have the potential to facilitate or impede students' *SCfCS-cultivation process*. Furthermore, they can exert their influence explicitly or implicitly, mirroring Eisner's division of the curriculum (Eisner, 2005). Accordingly, the rest of this chapter is organized in two parts: *explicit structural forces* and *implicit structural forces*.

PART 1: EXPLICIT STRUCTURAL FORCES

Explicit structural forces are programs, services and messages that the institution has publicly announced, usually available through their official literature, such as school website, class syllabi, course catalog, etc. For example, they can be academic courses or student services that the college advertises as being equipped to provide; or, they can also be official statements that the college puts forth as declarations of their values and beliefs. In analyzing this set of data, I organized *explicit structural forces* into four categories, borrowed from Woodhill's framework: *control*, *action*, *association*, and *meaning*. Like all findings in this study, these findings are anchored in student voices. As such, for the rest of this section on *explicit structural forces*, I will discuss each of these categories as how they have been interpreted by the focal-student participants. In other words, how do they interpret these official messages and programs/resources from the college? How do they understand them? What do they think about them?

Explicit Structural Forces – Control (Policies & Regulations)

Woodhill uses the term *control* to refer to the policies and regulations that dictate how an institution is operated. Specifically for this study, *control* refers to elements such as accreditation requirements from NWCCU and College & Career Readiness Standards from the Washington SBCTC. As this type of information added to my understanding of the research

context, I decided to include it in the Methodology Chapter under the subheading *Institutional Profile*, rather than here.

Explicit Structural Forces – Action (Function & Services)

Woodhill's framework refers to *action* as the official programs and services that the college offers. Data from student interviews reveals two trains of thought regarding how students perceive the programs and services available at their schools: 1) They feel satisfied with the academic programs and non-academic services available at their campus. 2) There are three services/centers that are especially popular with the students in this study, particularly first-generation students.

Non-academic Support & I-BEST Pathways. Students favor non-academic student support services at Rainier College and I-BEST Pathways at Olympic College. In general, students spoke favorably about the programs and services available at their school to support their education. From the excerpts below, they show that students were satisfied with both campus-wide as well as BTSD-specific programs and services. Here, DiêmMy shares how impressed she was with the non-academic resources that Rainier College offers to their students. She learned about these resources when she took Pivot Point during her second quarter at Rainier College. In that class, the teacher gave a tour of the campus and introduced students to all the resources available.

DIÊM MY: Yes, actually when I studied in the Pivot Point Program, the teacher took us around the campus. Every department, she told us, what you can get from school.

TD: I see. Like a tour of the campus?

DIÊM MY: Yeah, like a campus tour, but that campus tour, she did a very good job. Like she said in school, there are not only resources for education, there are also resources for people who are hungry, students. They have food pantry. And they have a place for student to take a nap. What else, I forget, but they have, like people have difficulty in their lives, so I think it's very good to help people.

MinhTuyét also had similar thoughts. At the end of our semi-structured interview, as she was filling out her ego-network map, she shared that Zoey, the medical assistant student specialist, often sends out announcements about campus activities in the days leading up to finals week. She thought these meditation and yoga sessions were interesting, and she tries to go to them if they fit with her schedule of when she is on campus

Not only were students impressed with non-academic student services, they were also happy with the variety of courses and programs available in BTSD for English Learners, particularly the I-BEST pathways. Traditionally, students who are still in Basic Studies cannot take college-level courses until after they have exited from the program. They can exit from Basic Studies either by taking the college placement test (i.e., the Wonderlic) or by progressing through and graduating from the ESL/ABE program. In recent years, BTSD at Olympic College has been offering an alternative pathway called I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training), which allows students in ESL Level 4+ to simultaneously take college-level courses and hence enter their chosen field earlier than they would had they followed the traditional pathway. I-BEST employs a team-teaching approach with a hundred percent overlap, meaning that there is a content instructor and an ABE/ESL instructor in every class. At the time of this study, Olympic College offers I-BEST in four different programs: Early Childhood Education (ECE), Sterile Processing (SP), Allied Health (AH), and Medical Assistant (MA).

NgọcCầm and MinhTuyết are two students who were particularly fond of these I-BEST programs. At the time of our interviews, they were just finishing up their first quarter in their respective I-BEST programs; NgọcCầm was in ECE I-BEST and MinhTuyết was in MA I-BEST. In the following excerpt, NgọcCầm expresses her thoughts on how helpful I-BEST programs are for EL students. She says:

Yeah, I really like the I-BEST program in the Olympic College because it's very useful and helpful for the new immigrants like me. You know, because it looks like pre-college. It's easy because English, sometimes we don't have enough English to go straight to college, and I-BEST program is very useful but I hope they open more options like that.

Even though students spoke positively about many of the services and programs on campus, there were three services/centers that were particularly popular, especially to first-generation EL students. Almost every student participant at Rainier College mentioned the AANAPISI Center and the Writing and Language Lab (the WALL), and students at Olympic College commended the BTSD Transitions Center.

First-generation Students & Student Support Services. First-generation EL students were especially fond of services at The WALL, The AANAPISI Center, and The BTSD Transitions Center. Three students in particular, DiễmMy, ThúyQuỳnh, and DiễmHuê, spoke highly of the service they get at the WALL. Both DiễmMy and ThúyQuỳnh learned about the

WALL from friends. DiễmMy said, “Yeah, [she] tell me about the WALL before I didn't know. She said they are very helpful. Even like some you have a presentations, you don't know how to speak. She went there and they helped her how to speak in front of the class.” When ThùYQuỳnh told her friend Thao that she was having trouble with a writing assignment, Thao advised her to go to the WALL. ThùYQuỳnh recalls, “Or like if I tell her I don't have ideas to write for my paper, should I go to the WALL or the Writing Center, and Thao would explain that the Writing Center would only help you generate ideas, but if you want help with grammar then go to the WALL.” In the following excerpt, DiễmHuê tells me about one particular quarter when course materials were especially challenging for her.

TD: *So during that quarter, when there was so much homework, what did you do?*

DIỄMHUỆ: *So I went to school, went home, made dinner for the family and started studying. Studied late into the night, until one or two o'clock.*

DIỄMHUỆ: *Did you get any help?*

Speaker 2: *Yeah. If anything I didn't understand then I went to the WALL. [...] Usually I do it by myself, but if there's anything too difficult then I go to the WALL to get help.*

TD: *Do you feel comfortable in these places?*

DIỄMHUỆ: *Yes. Yes.*

TD: *Why? Why do you feel comfortable?*

DIỄMHUỆ: *Well, because the resources here are good. And when I go to the WALL, when I don't understand anything, teachers there help genuinely. Basically, everywhere I go, I see that people are good. Very welcoming.*

For second generation students, the AANAPISI Center seems to be the place where they frequent more often. They also have different reasons for visiting the AANAPISI; for ThùYDương, she visits the center mostly for socio-emotional reasons. For her, this center is like her second home on campus. She reports that outside of class, this is the only place on campus she ThanhDiệp out. She uses it almost like a combination of study hall and cafeteria. Below is our conversation on the topic:

TD: *What are some places that you spend most of your time on campus here?*

THÙYDUƠNG: *The AANAPISI room.*

TD: *And, anywhere else?*

THÙYDUƠNG: *No that's it. Just here.*

TD: *So usually you just go to class and here.*

THÙYDUƠNG: *Yeah.*

TD: *Um, and it sounds like you're very comfortable here. Um, can you tell me a little bit about why? Why do you feel comfortable here?*

THÙYDUƠNG: *The people here makes me comfortable.*

TD: *And why? Why do you think they make you feel comfortable then?*

THÙYDUỜNG: *They're friendly.*

TD: *Anything else?*

THÙYDUỜNG: *They helped me. Advice like my education.*

TD: *What else do you feel, like how, how is this space welcoming to you?*

THÙYDUỜNG: *Normally there's like other students that's in here and then we all just like watch movies or like do our homework together and help each other out.*

For other students at Rainier College, such as TuấnMinh, DuyBảo, NgọcHương and DiễmMy, they all also mention AANAPISI and the services they receive from this place. However, one difference is that for them, they commend the center for providing them with support around navigating college processes. All of these students meet with AANAPISI advisors at least once a quarter to get help on educational planning. In the following excerpt, TuấnMinh was telling me about how one of the AANAPISI advisors has helped him, “*Um, and then uh, I go to Mrs. Kim actually right over here. Yeah, very helpful. Told me about scholarships and like, uh, the ones that I can sign up for if I do like personal statements or something like that. And um, those are the two main people that I go to in terms of resources.*” It’s a similar situation for DuyBảo, a second-generation student at Rainier College who is in his first year of college. When I asked him who he goes to for academic advice during his first quarter, he responded that he went to Jack, an AANAPISI advisor, who was recommended to him by his older brother.

TD: *And how often do you check in with your counselor?*

DUYBẢO: *Not too often. I've only checked in with him three times. I've only needed to. Yeah.*

TD: *Can you tell me about those check ins?*

DUYBẢO: *The first check in was to help me get my classes signed up.*

TD: *Was it required?*

DUYBẢO: *It wasn't required, but it was a recommendation from my older brother and then it seemed really helpful. So I decided to take another appointment with the counselor again.*

It turned out that the counselor he talks about here is Jack, an advisor from AANAPISI. Later in the interview, DuyBảo went on to say that, “*And if I have any issues other than 13 year program, like I contact, Jack an advisor, who is really helpful.*” In the following excerpt, he elaborated on the type of advice he has received from Jack.

DUYBÁO: *Yeah, I actually had Jack help me out. He told me like what classes to take, what teachers not to get, take it. Well he was really helpful and I from when signing up for classes, I requested him again so he can help in my classes and he got, we got through it fast and it was really easy with him.*

TD: *Um, and have you had any problems since starting college here? Like any issues or any stress?*

DUYBÁO: *I think the only stress I've been worrying about is the math compass test because I'm not really too good at math. Yeah.*

TD: *How do you deal with that? Who do you turn to?*

DUYBÁO: *Kind of just put it off. So I haven't taken it yet, but Jack's telling me to take it soon. Before the price raises.*

For students at Olympic College, the BTSD Transitions Center is one of the offices where students repeatedly say they go to get help on navigating college processes. Students sIn the following two excerpts, TrờngVy and NgỏcCầm talked about how they have gone there for help.

TUỜNGVY: *And whenever I have any questions about classes, then I go to the Transitions Center to ask Lilian.*

NGỎCCẦM: *So at first, when I study ESL, it's only \$25 so I don't need to find financial aid. But when I set the goal to continue my studies at the college, so I need financial aid because I'm not working. So I'm trying to find financial aid to support me. I ask Transitions Center, and they help me a lot. [...] They help about financial aid and scholarships and everything about register in a new program, so yeah, they're very nice and they help me a lot.*

Explicit Structural Forces – Association (Roles & Relationships)

According to Woodhill, *association* refers to the networks of relationships within an institution. Adopting this idea into the context of this study, I examined formal guidelines and best practices that shape interactions between actors within two types of relationships: student-IA (institutional agents) and student-student. Two factors bubbled up as a result of this examination: 1) contractual guidelines around faculty office hours and 2) communal spaces around campus.

Faculty Office Hours. Office-hour carries numerous benefits around relationship building, yet the college district doesn't have a systematic way of giving all instructors the capacity and incentive to offer office hours. For the students in this study, office hours have two main functions. 1) They can be a safe space for students to connect with their instructors and harness trust so that they can ask clarifying questions about class materials or seek educational

advice on career pathways. 2) They can also facilitate group-study sessions that help build community between students taking the same class.

One of the surprising moments for me while conducting interviews for this study is when Quốc Trọng was telling me about his experience with office hours. Before this conversation, trapped in my own reality and assumptions, it had never occurred to me that the concept of office hour might be a foreign concept to some students. As demonstrated in the following excerpt, Quốc Trọng did not know what “office hour” is when he started in ESL at Olympic College, “*At that time, I don't understand too much English. I don't know about office hour. Because I'm from Vietnam, we don't, we didn't have office hour right? In Vietnam. And I come here. Even if she said come to her office, I don't understand, so I just study. From level 1 to level 5, I don't know what is office hour.*” He went on to explain that he eventually understood what it was and began making the most of it.

QUỐC TRỌNG: *Every teacher I study, I go to ask. Because, you know, I don't [didn't, he was referring to when he first started schooling in the U.S.] understand anything in United States, anything. So I ask everything.*

TD: *When you go talk to them, do you talk after class? When do you talk to them?*

QUỐC TRỌNG: *After class.*

TD: *Right after class? Or office hour?*

QUỐC TRỌNG: *Office hour. Sometimes after class I go to ask, but don't have time. Another class come in. Have to wait for office hour. Now I usually ask Tiu. Tiu she teach in math. Do you know her?*

For other students who understand the concept of office hour like Diễm My and Thanh Giang, they make the most of this service not only for academic purposes, but also for advice on career planning and other personal issues. Below, Diễm My shares her office-hour experience with Grace, an ESL Level 6 and Service Learning instructor at Rainier College:

TD: *And when you communicate with Grace, what is your communication like? Do you do it over email? In class, after class, office hours?*

DIỄM MY: *All of them. All of them. And I met in the class, I met outside of class, go to the office and I talked to her more about my situation, my personal situation.*

TD: *What is the content of your communication usually? Like what do you guys usually discuss?*

DIỄM MY: *Normally, career, pathway for me. Okay. Yeah. Because you know, it's difficult to pick the career because you need to know what you really want to do, like a suitable fit with the personality. And then you need to know if that job you can get after you finished, you know, we are not like, we are not that level, we need to do something we like, we love it. And then we can get a job.*

For both DiễmMy and QuốcTrọng, office-hour is an important factor in their educational experience. It provides QuốcTrọng an opportunity to ask clarifying questions about class materials and encourages DiễmMy to share her personal information and to seek advice on non-academic matters.

Similar to QuốcTrọng and DiễmMy, ThanhGiang also makes the most of office hours, though in a slightly different manner. She uses office-hour in conjunction with study-group sessions, especially for difficult classes. Here, she explains how she uses office-hour to get academic support in her Organic Chemistry course: *“Sometimes we're all stuck, like, like in organic chemistry class, we're all stuck. And all of the whole group go together to the office hour, like before the exam, I remember before the exam, like multiple days in a row and all of the group standing in front of the professor, um, office and wait for him and we studied with him for like 30 minutes before the exam for several days. Yeah.”*

Given the various functions of office-hour and its impact on a student’s educational experience, it is important to understand some of the official regulations behind this practice. Here is a brief overview of how The Faculty Collective Agreement spells out directives around faculty office hours. Full-time faculty who teach college level courses (i.e., 100 level and above) are required to hold five office hours per week at a time that is convenient for both the faculty and students. It states, *“Faculty with contact load assignments of more than fifteen (15) but less than twenty (20) hours per week shall maintain an average number of office hours which is the difference between their teaching workload assignments and twenty (20). Faculty with twenty (20) and more contact hour assignments may consider their office hours as included in their teaching load.”* For the past two academic years (2017-2019), full-time ABE/ESL faculty may choose to hold up to three weekly office hours. These hours, if they exceed a full-timer’s 20 hour workload, will be compensated at the faculty stipend rate. However, even with these incentives, not all full-timers have the capacity to hold office hours. Due to the recent budget crisis at Rainier College, some departments have asked full-timers to take on non-instructional commitments within the department and/or across campus. As a result, they are stretched thin with multiple responsibilities and do not have the capacity to hold office hours. In the end, students are the ones who get shorted. This unfortunate result is what NgọcHương experienced at Rainier College:

TD: Do they reach out to you? Like ask you if you need help with anything or do you have any questions?

NGỌCHUÔNG: So because I just had class with Tish, she usually post on notification that if somebody wants to have advice by her or want her to look at their personal statement or resume or something, you can come to her office hour or something like that. Because usually she's really busy. Yeah. And I've never seen her office open. It's a great time to meet her. I met her once.

All the office-hour guidelines described above only apply to full-timers. For part-timers, the contract stipulates that they are not required nor are they compensated for office hours, and as a result, many do not hold office hours. This is an unfortunate loss for the countless number of students who take classes with part-time instructors. At both Rainier College and Olympic College, part-timers make up more than twice the number of full-timers. This means that most students taking classes from part-time instructors will likely not have the advantage of visiting their office for additional support outside of class.

Space. Both Rainier College and Olympic College offer plenty of spaces for students to convene, socialize and work on group assignments. There are communal spaces in the library and computer labs at both colleges. Additionally, there are also tables, chairs and study cubicles scattered throughout the hall on both campuses. Most focal students in this study report that they often use these spaces; some use these spaces as quiet places for independent studying while others use them as gathering places for socialization or group work.

BTSD students at Olympic College especially like working in the library and in BE3122, which is an hall-like open-space area in front of the BTSD office. Several characteristics make this a great space for students to study and socialize: 1) BTSD tutoring sessions happen in the same space. 2) It's within close proximity to all BTSD-related personnel, i.e., the director's office, the tutoring coordinator's office, the dean's office, the departmental front desk, and the BTSD faculty lounge. 3) It's within steps from many of the BTSD classrooms. Below, TườngVy and ThanhGiang talk about the library and tutoring center as places where they often go to study on campus and why they like these places.

TD: And how and where do you spend most of your time when you're on campus?

TUỜNGVY: I usually study in the library or in the tutoring center.

TD: Do you feel comfortable in those spaces?

TUỜNGVY: I feel comfortable.

TD: And why? Why do you feel comfortable?

TU'ONGVY: *I can talk about anything with the tutor. And I study by myself in the library, it feels peaceful.*

TD: *When you're at the library, are you by yourself or do you study with friends?*

TU'ONGVY: *By myself.*

TD: *Where, and how do you spend most of your time when you're on campus?*

THANHGIANG: *Where and how? Probably I spend most of the time in classes and study in a group and um, could be in a library, usually in the library or in the SAM building. We also, we usually meet up in there. I can also spend time in the tutoring center to get help with my organic chem class.*

TD: *And when you are at these spaces, do you, um, are you by yourself or are you with other students?*

THANHGIANG: *Um, mostly with the hard class, I was like, I usually I'm studying in a group. Okay. It's really beneficial and productive to study in a group.*

TD: *And when you are at these spaces, do you, um, are you by yourself or are you with other students?*

THANHGIANG: *Um, mostly with the hard class, I was like, I usually I'm studying in a group. Okay. It's really beneficial and productive to study in a group.*

Similar to students at Olympic College, BTSD students at Rainier College also have certain spaces that they tend to gravitate toward. Most of them seem to like working in the library and the general computer lab. At Rainier College, both of these are located in the same building - the library is on the first floor and the computer lab is on the second floor. Below, ThanhDiệp shares that she likes studying in the library and computer lab because these places are quiet and she feels comfortable in these spaces.

TD: *And where do you spend most of your time?*

THANHDIỆP: *Library.*

TD: *Anywhere else?*

THANHDIỆP: *No, mostly library. Second floor, library here. In the computer lab.*

TD: *Why do you like spending time here?*

THANHDIỆP: *It's a quiet place and have computers so I can study better.*

TD: *Do you feel comfortable here?*

THANHDIỆP: *Yeah. I like it.*

TD: *When you are here, are you by yourself or with other friends?*

THANHDIỆP: *Sometimes, normally by myself. But sometimes I have friends here.*

TD: *Do you guys talk about homework and school?*

THANHDIỆP: *Yeah.*

TD: *What do you guys usually talk about?*

THANHDIỆP: *So, we just discuss about lesson. We study biology now, so if it's a hard class, so we always, if we don't understand something we ask and we share what we understand.*

Another popular spot to study at Rainier College is the hallway of Cascade Hall, which is the “home building” of the BTSD. Cascade Hall is a good size building that is three stories tall. BTSD shares the building with International Programs and the Nursing Department. The BTSD office and faculty lounge are on the third floor while most classes are on the first floor. For proximity and convenience, students often gather in groups in the hallway of Cascade Hall to socialize and do school work. In the excerpt below, ThúyQuỳnh shares her opinion on why she likes studying and gathering in Cascade Hall.

TD: And where do you spend most of your time when you're on campus?

THÚYQUỲNH: When I was in ESL, I usually stay in the hallway of the ESL building. I study there. And since Rainier College has wifi everywhere, I usually don't go to the library. Because in the library you have to, like I want to have snacks or drinks while I study, and I can't do that when I'm in the library. I try to do most of my homework at school, while my daughter is in childcare. And when I have any assignments that I don't understand then I would go to the WALL. And when I finish my homework then I work study other stuff. My daughter is in childcare for six hours and most of that time, I spend in the classroom, so whatever is left, I do at home.

TD: So most of the time, you spend in the hallway and at work, in the BTS office? Why do you feel comfortable in those places?

THÚYQUỲNH: Like in the library, I might draw attention if I do anything different. Like if I make noise or if I drop something, people might look at me. But if I'm in the hallway then no one would look.

TD: Are you usually by yourself or do you have friends with you when you study?

THÚYQUỲNH: When the assignment requires that we work in a group, then I'd be with other people. But mostly, for ESL assignments, I'm just by myself. But now that I'm in college, for math, sometimes we work on assignments together. It's not a requirement from the teacher, but we just like to work together so that it's more fun. So that there's someone to talk to and someone to work with. Just to have someone to discuss with.

Explicit Structural Forces – Meaning (Institutional Norms & Values)

According to Woodhill, *meaning* refers to the beliefs and values of an institution. In this section under explicit structural forces, I will focus specifically on the institution's official messages, the publicly-announced moral compass that they use to guide their administrative and instructional decisions. I examined the Pacific NW College District's mission statement, vision and values as well as each college's core themes and student learning outcomes. In doing so, I noticed a consistent emphasis around *open access* and *community engagement*. In this section, I will discuss students' perception around *open access* and *community engagement*.

Open-Access. As community colleges in essence (even if not in name), both Rainier College and Olympic College define themselves as “open-access learning institutions;” (please refer to the methods section for an explanation on the name change that occurred in 2014). From the institution’s perspective, *open-access* means that students can enroll without having to meet a long list of admissions prerequisites, as they would if they were enrolled in four-year colleges. However, from the students’ perspective, they understand *open-access* as having the support that enables them to pursue their education. There’s a common saying in Vietnamese that “America is the land of opportunities,” and to some degree, this is how many of the focal students perceive their educational access in this country as a whole, educational access in general, not specifically at Rainier College or Olympic College. Repeatedly, students share their gratitude for having the opportunity to access higher education.

From the students’ perspective, *open-access* means having the support to allow them to pursue higher education. Many focal students in this study are happy with the support that they are receiving to allow them to pursue their education. Take ThúyQuỳnh’s quote below as an example. Here, she was trying to explain her perception of the different ways of advising between people in America and recent immigrants like herself. Within this explanation, we subtly get a glimpse of her positive opinion of the level of support available in this country. To ThúyQuỳnh, people in America are always ready to lend resources to help her succeed in her education. ThúyQuỳnh says:

Like when I told my social worker that I wanted to go to school because if I go to work then I won't know English for the rest of my life. I wouldn't be able to understand any English document. So I have to go to school so that I can take care of myself. But I have a small child, what can I do? So she said, ok, I can help you. If you want to study, I can help you look for childcare so that you can continue to study. If you really want to go to school. I communicate with Americans, I don't know if I understand correctly or I am misunderstanding, but I get the feeling that when I talk to Americans, if I tell them that I want to do something and that something is legal and appropriate, then they would find a way to help me get to what I want. They don't stop me.

Similar to ThúyQuỳnh, MinhTuyết also spoke favorably about the level of educational support available in this country. Towards the end of our first interview, when I asked her why she’s in college, she said that education is so well supported here that it would be a waste to not go to school. Below is a complete excerpt of our conversation:

TD: And why are you in college?

MINHTUYẾT: When I came to this country, I see that education gets so much support, and the education system is good too, it would be a waste to not study. I think education is the best, so that's why whenever I have time, I try to study. Only education would give you a future. Also, in this country, education, how do I say, has a lot of support, has a lot of assistance and a lot of support, and the education system is good too. I go to class and feel wow the teaching techniques are really good.

TD: Can you explain more about that? You said that you feel education here gets a lot of support, what do you mean?

MINHTUYẾT: I mean that for example in Vietnam, to study, you have to have a lot of money to be able to go to school. And actually, things you learn in school are not applicable in real life. You put effort in your education, but when you go to work, it doesn't compensate for the effort that you put in. But here, you learn what's necessary to get you to work, so you feel you're using the skills that you were taught, so you feel that the effort that you put in your education is worth it. And in class, the teaching style makes it easy to understand. And there are many ways to get support, so it's a waste if you don't go to school.

Community Engagement. At the district level, the Pacific NW College District declares that they aim to prepare each student for successful engagement in a diverse and dynamic community. Adopting this mission statement, both Rainier College and Olympic College have *community engagement* as one of their core themes. In my semi-structured interviews with focal students, when I asked them about their involvement in the community, two patterns emerged: 1) The first generation Vietnamese-American students are more involved in the community in comparison to their second generation counterparts. 2) Students see community involvement as a means towards self-improvement.

First generation Vietnamese-American students are more involved in the community than their second generation counterparts. There are four second-generation and twelve first-generation focal students in this study. Of the twelve first-generation students, six reported that they participate regularly in one or more organizations outside of school. These involvements include activities such as tutoring at their local Vietnamese Language School, participating in youth group activities at church, volunteering to plan events in their neighborhood or participating in their children's PTA activities. Of the four second-generation students, no one participated in any organization outside of school. One possible explanation for this difference is that perhaps second-generation students are people who grew up in the Pacific Northwest and therefore already have a social network of friends and family. On the other hand, first-

generation students are new to the city, culture and language and therefore have more motivation to be involved in the community. They might see community involvement as a way to create connections and to build a new social network in the society that they have just immigrated to. From this perspective, *community engagement/involvement* is not only a way for students to give back to the community but also an effective method for individuals to be immersed in their new environment.

First-generation focal students not only have a positive attitude towards community engagement, they also view community involvement as a means to gain social knowledge and/or improve their English skills. Two skills in particular were mentioned repeatedly by several students: 1) Community involvement helps them become familiar with life in America. 2) Community involvement helps them improve their oral English skills. In the excerpt below, Diễm My shares how and why she is involved in her community.

TD: *Can you tell me a little bit about your community? How involved are you in the community? And it can be the Vietnamese community or your neighborhood or however or whoever you consider to be your community.*

DIỄM MY: *Actually I just joined to the neighborhood, Neighborhood House, where they help the community around the neighborhood where I live. So I do volunteer there to help them when they need it and I'm now I'm going to help them to organize the ceremony for the New Year 2019. So I'm designing a flyer for them to give to the people, to let them know to come to attend that event.*

TD: *Tell me a little bit more about your volunteering work there?*

DIỄM MY: *Yeah, I do quite a bit volunteer from when I arrived here because that way I can involve to the life here. So I went to, uh, to help, umm, I forgot, like I went to the park around West Puget Sound. I live in West Puget Sound, so I help them to clean the park, to remove the invasive species, the trees they don't need and then plant a new tree. And then I help in the food bank, just once a week to help them serve for clients. And then I volunteer for the neighborhood, like prepare for the preschool. I prepare some materials for the class.*

TD: *That's really nice. Do you think these community activities, do they, they help you as far as your education?*

DIỄM MY: *You know, just, umm, through the activities I'm educated for myself so I, just look how they give participation instructions to do things, and through that way, I understand how they work. Yeah.*

TD: *Do you still, did you make any new friends or made any connections with people through those activities?*

DIỄM MY: *Yeah. No close ones, but I have some connection with some people and have a good experience and bad experience also. (Laughs)*

For MinhTuyét, her community engagement takes the form of volunteering in her son's class. For her, this activity has multiple layers of motivation and benefit, from improving her oral English skills to strengthening the bond with her son; (this is not mentioned in the excerpt below, but she talks about that later in the interview). Like other students in this study, throughout my conversations with her, she repeatedly talked about how she would like to improve her English speaking and listening skills. Below, she was sharing with me her experience in ESL classes. She believes that ESL classes are good for refining reading, writing and grammar skills, but not for improving oral skills, which, she says, would be better gained from participating in society.

TD: Can you tell me about your experience in studying ESL? From 4a to 5b?

MINHTUYÉT: Yeah, so I took 5b listening and speaking twice because I was not good in these skills.

TD: What about your relationships with the teachers, your friends?

MINHTUYÉT: Good. It was normal. I also took other supplemental classes, like ESL computer and the pronunciation class to improve my skills.

TD: How do you feel about the assignments, the activities in class?

MINHTUYÉT: For me, I think just taking classes didn't improve my English as much as interacting with people in real life - in society and at work. Like me, I often volunteer in his [referring to her son] classroom. Whenever I have time, I volunteer in his classroom. That's how I feel. At school then you improve your reading, writing, grammar. But not listening and speaking. I didn't feel that these skills improved much when I was studying there. Actually, even now, I feel that I'm still weak in those areas, but I don't know what to do to improve.

Service Learning. Community engagement can lead to many advantageous outcomes as discussed above. Fortunately, at both Rainier College and Olympic College, there are systematic efforts to connect students to organizations, activities and events in the community. At Rainier College, students who have gone through the ESL program would have likely taken a Service Learning class during their final quarter in the program. Students are usually co-enrolled in this class and ESL Level 6. One of the requirements for this class is that students pick an area of interest and find ways to get involved. At Olympic College, there is a Service Learning Coordinator who works with instructors in all departments across campus to design class assignments that include a service-learning component. The coordinator also acts as a resource to help connect students to events, organizations and activities in the community.

PART 2: IMPLICIT STRUCTURAL FORCES

Consequences of Implicit Structural Forces (ISFs)

Implicit structural forces color students' socialized lenses, shaping how they see themselves, the world and their place in that world. As explained above, *explicit structural forces* are the official, publicly-announced regulations, services, relationships and values of an institution. *Implicit structural forces*, on the other hand, are the hidden messages, norms and practices that permeates throughout the environment and contribute to the college climate. Theoretically, it mirrors Eisner's idea of the null and implicit curriculum, which are things such as: discussion topics that we avoid, courses that we don't teach or under teach, norms and practices that are not explicitly explained, and messages that are unconsciously transmitted. While *explicit structural forces* dictate the technical skill-sets and content knowledge that students walk away with, *implicit structural forces* modulate the belief systems and attitudes that students form about themselves, the world and their place in that world. *Implicit structural forces* shape what Bourdieu calls *habitus*, our socialized subjectivity. They build students a lens for how they see themselves and the world. Metaphorically, we can think about *implicit structural forces* as the natural elements in the environment such as the wind and water and students are the fish or birds that reside in those spaces. As part of the environment, they exist subtly and implicitly. And therefore, students are socialized without realizing it. Just as it is difficult to describe the air and the wind without any point of reference, it is also not easy to describe *implicit structural forces* in and of itself. We can know the direction and magnitude of the wind by observing the manner of which a flag flies. Similarly, one way to identify *implicit structural forces* is by capturing how they have been manifested in the students. In other words, instead of describing *implicit structural forces* directly, I will describe the lenses that these forces have created for students - the socialized lens through which students see the world, themselves and their place within that world.

Certainly, one could argue that these socialized lenses might have been colored by other factors in their lives, not necessarily the *implicit structural forces* at school. I recognize this gap in the argument and will attempt to triangulate it by providing data from multiple sources. In the rest of this chapter, I will discuss two socialized lenses that have emerged from the data: 1) the *Colonialistic Lens* in how the English language and Americanism are perceived and 2) the *Meritocratic Lens* of educational success as a result of stereotype promise.

Colonialistic Lens

Vietnamese-American focal-student participants display colonialistic views of the English language and Americanism as a reflection of Eurocentric interactions. During the semi-structured interview, when I asked the students how they felt about knowing multiple languages, the immediate and involuntary response from almost every first generation student was about the benefits of English, except for NgọcHương, HuệMai, MinhHàng. Below are some examples of this:

DIỄMHUỆ: *“Well, learning English can help me because I live in America. It can help me understand the news and other information. Basically it helps a lot. If my English is good then I can find a job easily.”*

THANHĐIỆP: *Yeah, it's a good thing. English is. Because if you live in USA English is very important. So I must to know English. Yeah, I think it's good. You know, English, we study here and everything communicate by English. Very good if I can manage my English skill.*

TUÔNGVY: *I think it's good. Because later in life, when I go anywhere with my parents, I can help translate. So it has helped me do my homework, talk to friends from other countries, and talk to the teacher. Like in life, living here, I think we have to improve English much more so that when we're out and about, at the library, at the mall or anywhere, we can speak for ourselves and understand ourselves.*

MINHTUYẾT: *Well, I think the language that benefits me the most now is just English because people don't use other languages.*

Like the students above, DiễmMy also has very clear ideas and examples of how English is helpful in her life and education:

DIỄMMY: *I think it's good because it's a way I know more about not English because English, through learning English, you can learn about history. I love history. So through English, I know history, I know how the system works here. I know how the law in here and many customs, culture, you know, enrich my knowledge.*

TD: *Can you give specific examples of how knowing multiple languages has helped you in your education or career path?*

DIỄMMY: *Um, if I want to know something, I go to Google. Normally I use Vietnamese language, I Google, but very limited information in Vietnamese language. If I Google in English, open the door, a lot of information I can look at. So that's why I think there are many benefits when you have another language.*

TD: *What about in the classroom? How is knowing a different language, has it helped you connect with different people or different services, resources?*

DIỄMMY: *Actually, with classmates, they come from many other countries. It's difficult for me because like when I listen to the natives speak, the native American, I can easily understand because their pronunciation is good, but when I hear other people, like me, I know my pronunciation is not good. It's very challenging for me to understand my classmates. But on the other hand, I know more about other countries. Like food, how they celebrate, like weddings, New Year, new baby. Some things very interesting.*

It was as it never occurred to them that there could be advantages to knowing Vietnamese. When I probed for them to think about the positive side of knowing Vietnamese, some students still deny it. In the following example, both ThanhDiệp and ThúyQuỳnh believe that Vietnamese is not helpful in their education.

TD: *What about knowing Vietnamese? Is that helpful to you in your education?*
THANHĐIỆP: *When I study by English, sometimes I translate, so it's easier to understand, but when I know more English, I can ask my friend and they explain all in English. Knowing English is better.*

ThúyQuỳnh has similar thoughts about Vietnamese:

TD: *What about Vietnamese? Is it helpful in your education?*
THÚYQUỲNH: *No, because when I study in English but I think in Vietnamese all the time, it makes it very hard to study. Because Vietnamese and English are so different.*

In ESL classrooms, the English-only culture has always been very strong. In every level, L1 is discouraged in every way. On some syllabi, it is even explicitly written as one of the classroom rules, that students must use English only during class. This mindset seems to be true in every aspect within BTSD. For example, at the WALL, a writing lab/tutoring center designed especially for ELL students, tutors are strongly encouraged to conduct the tutoring session in English, even when they are fluent in the student's L1. I once asked the coordinator about this and to which he explained that the encouragement to use English only was part of an effort to achieve equity for all students. To the coordinator, if Somali students are able to receive help in their L1 then what about Vietnamese and Spanish-speaking students? To him, fairness means being able to offer the same service to all students. If some students are able to get help in their L1 while others have to do it in English, then this is not equitable. To him, equity and equality are synonymous.

For some ESL instructors, they have subtle way of how they glorify Western way of life. For example, in my interview with Grace, an ESL Level 5 instructor at Rainier College, she made a comment that I kept going back to and wondering if there is more to it. She casually said, “*And of course I’m Americanized, so I don’t understand.*” To put this sentence in context, this statement was made amidst stories about the Vietnamese women in her class and all the domestic responsibilities they have at home. She was commending them on how hard-working they were. They have to take care of household chores and serve everyone in the family and yet they still come to school on time and do their homework as requested. She was especially impressed by one middle-aged student, who lives in an extended family environment with her mother-in-law. She said this student had to prepare three meals for every meal because her teenage son, mother-in-law and husband all have different tastes. Mid-way into the story, she shook her head and said, “*And of course I’m Americanized and so I don’t understand.*” Even though on the surface, the message that Grace wanted to get across was that she commends the female Vietnamese students in her class for having the energy and drive to do well in class while holding down the fort at home, the underlying (and perhaps unintended) message was that these female students have submissive ways of being because they haven’t been “Americanized” like her and that an “Americanized” woman would not put up with everyone’s demands and cook three different meals for three people at every meal.

Regardless of whether we agree with Ken and Grace’s views and words or not, we cannot deny that the intention behind their words and actions are well-intended. The question is if *intention* is enough or if we also need to look at *impact*. Education in general and particularly educators in ABE/ESL, it’s hard to say that any of us went into this profession for the money or with ill intentions. Most if not all of us went into this profession because we wanted to do good. This profession (in this particular department) seems to be naturally/inherently the underdog for equity and social justice. ABE/ESL is the most interesting department when it comes to issues around equity because a majority of the students we work with are vulnerable individuals from under-resourced backgrounds. Because of this the power dynamic in ABE/ESL classrooms, between teachers and students, is even more interesting and more critical and necessary for us to look at. Sometimes it feels as if we forget to examine our positionality and assumption because we have been so socialized to believe and trust that we can’t do harm because we are in an area of work that is inherently good.

Meritocratic Lens

Vietnamese-American focal student participants display meritocratic views of educational success as a result of stereotype promise. The second manifestation of the implicit curriculum revolves around what Jennifer Lee calls “stereotype promise,” the promise of being viewed through the lens of a positive stereotype, which can enhance the performance of even the most mediocre students, which leads them to work harder to excel in order to confirm that positive stereotype. This idea has been discussed widely in the literature on Asian American’s academic success and is reaffirmed here in the data collected for this study. Repeatedly throughout my interviews with IAs at both Rainier College and Olympic College, the following words kept popping up as adjectives for how Vietnamese American students are perceived: hard-working, respectful, observant, studious, quiet, motivated, etc. In the following excerpt is from my interview with Emma, currently a full-time faculty librarian at Olympic College. Here, she talks about her impression in working with two Vietnamese students, in her current role as librarian and in her former role as a BTSD tutor.

EMMA: *Yeah, that particular student. Like he, like I said, he was, he's very motivated. He's very persistent. Um, yeah. I mean, there are plenty of other students who like, feel discouraged and then get stuck, but he's one example where I see like even if it gets a little bit stuck, he's, he's ready to ask questions to move beyond that point.*

TD: *Um, what about the student that you worked with when you were a tutor?*

EMMA: *I mean same with her also very motivated. Um, yeah, persistence. Like she showed up every day, like even if she was feeling a little down, like she showed up to class and she did the work and yeah.*

In the following excerpts from Olivia, and ESL instructor at Olympic College and Abigail, an academic advisor at Olympic College, they share similar views of Vietnamese students - hard-working, quiet, and respectful.

OLIVIA: *I think they're very smart and I think, for most of them, they're pretty observing, but I think one challenge for them is to express it. Okay. To express it and to talk about the issues. Um, So I think it's still, I don't know, it's because of culture or personality. I think it's more more reserved. So it takes, uh, takes the people who work with them to actually, I think, has to be more experienced to really learn what they really wanted to say. So that's the kind of uh, uh, one thing they have to adjust to this country is to be more explicit to sometimes and then sometimes they have to push the issue and not do it too quiet, too quietly. [...] So for Vietnamese students, very often I have more female, female student. They're very dedicated. I would say 90 percent of students are very dedicated students*

who work hard and very respectful and they're very collaborative. They're just like excellent students.

ABIGAIL: *I tend to find with Vietnamese students is that they're relatively recent immigrants, either they're first generation, sometimes second generation. Um, so they're relatively new. The United States, I would say compared to like some of our other immigrant groups. Um, let's see. Uh, I tend to find them very eager to be in school. Um, they're really interested in their studies and they usually have very focused, um, educational goals. Um, the perception I get is that they definitely talk about it with our families. Either families have specific areas that they want them to go into or their families have vested interest into, um, their, their daughters and sons going to college. Um, I tend to find that a lot of the Vietnamese students I meet also tend to be a little bit younger. So they're closer to high school age, um, compared to some of my other students, they kind of, they seem to start their college education a little bit earlier perhaps. [...] Um, and I have not had a repeat Vietnamese American students come back to me. I think I've had like maybe one or two or so, um, but every time I meet with them, you know, they tend to be extremely respectful of my time. Um, they very prepared questions when they come and they're also very clear with their educational goals. So I tend to find inviting them as pretty straightforward so they don't tend to have very complicated cases.*

MATT: *Some of them tend to be very outgoing, some of them tend to be more shy, I think, um, I think, I guess compared to the, I guess in general, if I want to stereotype, I don't want to stereotype folks, but you know, umm... like kind of the, the, the stereotype of Asian students in general are tend to be quieter and not as like.... they don't answer ask as many questions in class, but then it's also a stereotype because you do get a couple of the Asians students who ask a bunch of questions. But in general I think kind of culturally we're kind of taught not to, not to speak out as much. So I would say that that's something that I observed, which is why I put more of an emphasis on getting to the students to speak kind of more individually. I do see kind of ... Vietnamese students working together in groups and then when they're in a group they tend to ask questions more and they feel more comfortable asking me questions after class.*

These positive perceptions that IAs have for Vietnamese students manifest into different forms of institutional capital. They all report that they feel safe, comfortable and supported at school. Students share these manifestations in my interview with them. Below are excerpts of those conversations:

ThúyQuỳnh talks about the support that she's getting from one of her ESL instructors:
"She helps me by writing letters of recommendation for me to apply for scholarships. In general, I have the feeling that if I have any problem in life or in school, I can tell her and she will help

me with all that she can. I believe that if I need advice she would be able to give me very good advice.”

The initial steps of re-enrolling is usually a big hurdle for returning students, with all the forms, applications for funding, and placement testings. However, for MinhHàng, the stress here was largely alleviated because of with Lilian’s help. She said that when she decided to come back to school, she asked her friend when registration for the next quarter would open and then she contacted Lilian and the rest was history. MinhHàng says:

And I just go to Lilian and I asked her. She told me to go take the test, but I was scared I wouldn't pass. So I told Lilian I would try to test, but if I got lucky and they place me in high level, I won't take it because I want the low level. So Lilian gave me a form to go take the test. (She's referring to the voucher.) So I went to take the test. Just the writing part, I didn't pass that one, but listening and everything else, I passed. And I told Lilian that it's lucky that I didn't pass because then I can go back to ESL. It's good for me. So Lilian said OK, I'll register ESL class for you.

CHAPTER 6

EGO-CENTRIC NETWORK STRUCTURE

Introduction

Findings in this chapter address the third subsidiary research question: *What are the dyadic and holistic characteristics of Vietnamese-American students' ego-centric social network structure?* For the focal students in this study, a strong tie means that it is characterized by at least one of the following indicators: *multiplexity*, *comradery* and *trust*; furthermore, these characteristics are shown to be reliable predictors of favorable conditions for cultivating SCfCS. Although *trust* has been discussed extensively within the immigrant-student literature (Sutherland, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Stanton-Salazar, 2011; Gonzales, 2010), *multiplexity* and *comradery* have not. Therefore, the significance of these indicators is that they add to our understanding of what constitutes a strong tie, particularly for immigrant students; they give us additional tools to measure and capture *tie strength*. Of the three indicators, one of particular interest to this study is the indicator of *multiplexity*, which is the idea that one *alter* carries multiple roles in the relationship and is the transmitter of multiple forms of resources to the student. This tie-strength indicator of *multiplexity* is especially important here because it provides a plausible explanation for why students with small homogenous egonets still manage to have access to diverse forms of SCfCS. This finding contradicts existing studies that examine minority students' social networks, which assert that there is a positive correlation between a student's access to social capital and their egonet size and range. However, results from this study challenge that assertion; and furthermore, this lack of correlation is explained with *multiplexity*, a qualitative measure of tie strength. Therefore, I argue that the interworking between quantitative and qualitative data points in this study serve as evidence to support the call for more qualitative-SNA research, which has been a consistent call within the SNA-research landscape (Mische 2003; Knox et al. 2006; MacLean 2007; Prell 2006). More specifically, as seen in this study, qualitative-SNA research adds value by capturing the non-quantifiable characteristics of an egonet structure, and in doing so, provides us with an alternative explanation to better understand the consequences of that egonet.

This chapter will be presented in two parts: 1) dyadic level analysis and 2) holistic level analysis. Dyadically, the main discovery here is a higher degree of clarity on the definition of *tie strength*. For the focal-student participants in this study, a strong tie means that the tie inhabits

at least one of the following indicators: multiplexity, comradery, and/or trust. Holistically, I examined three structural elements of their egonets: size, range/heterogeneity, and composition. Key findings here include: 1) *Size*. The average egonet size is five. With that said however, egonet size doesn't matter much for the focal students in this study because most students have multiplex ties in their networks. 2) *Range*. With the exception of one student, everyone else in this study has an IQV (Index of Qualitative Variation) larger than 0.5, indicating that, on average, these students have high variability/heterogeneity in their networks. 3) *Composition*. IA and PEER ties are most common, and COMM ties are the least. Even though IA and PEER ties are the most typical ties, KIN ties are the most prevalent across all sixteen participants.

PART 1: DYADIC LEVEL ANALYSIS

Indicators of Tie Strength

A strong tie exhibits one or more of the following indicators: *multiplexity*, *comradery* and/or *trust*. Prior to collecting and analyzing data for this study, my definition of “tie strength” came from existing literature on minority student populations, which builds on the premise that tie strength is a one dimensional notion that range from strong to weak and indicated by a combination of time spent, emotional intensity, shared intimacy, and reciprocal services (Granovetter, 1973). From this body of literature, I proposed that *tie strength* is predominantly characterized by trust, interpersonal openness, confidence in the system and other communicative descriptors such as mode of communication, length and frequency of interaction, etc. However, after sifting through the collected data of this study, I have arrived at more clarity on what tie strength means for Vietnamese American students. As a result of this realization, one ENA discovery is a modified definition of *tie strength*. For the students in this study, a strong tie means that within that tie, there exists one of the following indicators: 1) *multiplexity*, 2) *comradery*, and 3) *trust*. In the following paragraphs, I will describe each of these characteristics in more detail.

Tie Strength Indicator 1: *Multiplexity*

Multiplexity refers to the multiple roles and/or forms of support within a single alter/tie. In social network literature, *multiplexity* is used to denote “the coexistence of different normative elements in a social relationship,” (Gluckman, 1962). What this means is that there is co-existence of roles, exchanges or affiliations within one dyadic relationship. For example, an ESL

instructor is also a mentor; hence, the relationship is both instructor-student and mentor-mentee. Support within instructor-student relationships may be limited to academic topics, whereas in mentor-mentee relationships, support may expand to areas beyond academic concerns. When there is only one pair of role in a relationship, it is described as a uniplex tie, whereas a multiplex tie refers to relationships with more than one role-pair. In much of the network literature, when discussing multiplexity, scholars focus on the multiplexity of role, specifically the multiple roles that an alter carries in relation to their ego. Some studies also define multiplexity as holding common memberships within an organization or a social group, (Wheeldon, 1969). Yet others refer to multiplexity as the overlap in activities exchanges that occur between an ego and their alter, (Kapferer, 1969). For this study, I will be describing multiplexity that is most consistent with the last definition. More specifically, multiplexity here refers to the multiple roles and/or forms of capital that a single tie/alter provides; this definition focuses not on the role of an alter but their function. For the rest of this section, I will tell the story of seven ties to illustrate how each tie is an example of multiplexity.

ThúyQuỳnh & ESL Instructor (Grace). ThúyQuỳnh is a student at Rainier College. Grace is her former ESL instructor. Grace teaches ESL Level 6, the last non-credit, pre-college class before most students take college level classes. For many students, there are major differences between ESL Level 6 and their subsequent quarter, regardless of which course they decide to take. The gap is not only in content and academic skills but also in the necessary navigational capital. One tangible examples that students repeatedly mention in their interviews is tuition. In ESL Level 6, students' tuition is subsidized by state and so they only have to pay \$25 for a quarter. Once they exit Basic Studies, most students will need to pay in-state tuition for any college class that they take, which is currently about \$107 per credit. In my interview with ThúyQuỳnh, she repeatedly credits Grace for supporting her through this transition by bringing information and people from the college at large into the classroom. Grace regularly invites counselors and financial aid staff to give talks to her students. She also requires that every student make an appointment to talk to her during office hour at least once per quarter. ThúyQuỳnh explained that during this meeting is when Grace would follow-up on transitional tasks such as: have you applied for financial aid, do you need help writing your personal statement for the foundation scholarship, when is your appointment with the counselor, etc. ThúyQuỳnh shared that she met with Grace more than once because she found this teacher to be

warm and inviting. Because they had this relationship, ThúyQuỳnh felt comfortable enough to confide in Grace her personal problems at home, which is that she's currently in a divorce battle with her husband and is currently living at a shelter with her two-year old daughter. ThúyQuỳnh recounts that when Grace learned about her situation, she connected her to resources in the community to help her find a lawyer to win custody of her daughter. Not only that, Grace also helped ThúyQuỳnh look for organizations in the community that can help her with childcare so that she could continue her education. Specifically, she provided ThúyQuỳnh with navigational agency and resources to overcome her life challenges; hence, Grace-ThúyQuỳnh is a multiplex tie. Below is how ThúyQuỳnh interpret the support that she gets from Grace.

TD: How do you usually communicate with Grace?

THÚYQUỲNH: I really like talking to her because talking to her makes me feel very comfortable. When I was still in her class, I meet her face to face a lot, not so much email. After that then we have emailed each other. We don't talk over the phone. Most often is face to face. [...]

When I asked ThúyQuỳnh whether Grace supported her while she was going through her divorce. She said:

Yes, she did. I didn't show her my documents, but when I told her that I needed a lawyer because my husband's side had a lawyer and they were putting pressure on me. So she told me about lawyers in America who do pro bono work and things like that. Besides being a teacher, she's also someone who helps me with life issues. When she found out that I had problems, I was her student but had problems, she reached out to help. And when I told her that I didn't know where to find childcare for my daughter, she gave me a list of agencies that can help. She also gave me a list of schools around the White Center area. She said just go see them and explain your situation. That's the reason why my daughter is able to go to school even though she's only two and a half.

Even though Grace's official role is ESL instructor, she supported ThúyQuỳnh beyond language and academic matters.

ThúyQuỳnh & Cousin (Kevin). ThúyQuỳnh's cousin Kevin is a second generation Vietnamese-American, born and raised in the Pacific Northwest. At the time of the interview, he was a sophomore in college. ThúyQuỳnh shares that even though Kevin was born here, he speaks and understands Vietnamese quite well because he is the only child and his parents don't speak much English. He uses Vietnamese regularly in his daily life in order to communicate with his parents. ThúyQuỳnh talks about Kevin as someone who has the navigational skills to

maneuver through mainstream systems and the linguistic capability to support her whenever she has questions or need support. She goes to him for support in three main areas: academic and language development, advice career pathways and academic majors, and life necessities. Throughout our interactions, ThúyQuỳnh constantly talks about her limited oral skills. She recounts one time when she was struggling with a listening comprehension homework exercise and went to Kevin for help. Kevin showed her a listening/study skill where he notes timestamps of where the answer can be found for each question as he listens to the recording. ThúyQuỳnh says that Kevin is a very good tutor in that he doesn't just give her the answer whenever she asks him for help with homework; instead, he shows her how to find the answer herself. Another example, when he proofreads her writing, he doesn't edit her work when she uses an incorrect word or when she uses the wrong word form. Instead, he would say things like, "*You need a noun here or you need an adjective here*" and leave it up to her to use that feedback and edit her own writing. Besides academic support, ThúyQuỳnh also turns to Kevin when she wanted to discuss possible ideas about which major or career pathway would be most appropriate for her. An interesting point to note about ThúyQuỳnh's perception of this support is that while she thought Kevin was very encouraging and supportive in whatever path she chooses, she thought his advice was not very helpful. She said that he seems to support her in whatever choice she makes but did not offer different perspectives on each possible option. She shared that because she is new to this economy and society, she wanted someone to explain to her things she hadn't considered about each option so that she could make more informed decisions. Another area of support that Kevin provides for ThúyQuỳnh was a culmination of help around life necessities. After her divorce, ThúyQuỳnh lived in a shelter for some time before moving into an apartment near Rainier College. She said, "*Like when I first moved in to this apartment, I didn't know how to sign up for the internet. He asked if I knew how to set it up, if not then he came over to set it up. Also when I first move in, the lights were not working, so he came over to fix it. He's really sweet. I just text him and ask if he had time and he'd say ok, let me arrange time and come over.*" Kevin helped her with part of the security deposit so that she could move in as soon as possible. Shortly after they moved in, he helped add light fixtures in the bathroom and connect wifi for her apartment. For all the different types of support that Kevin provides for ThúyQuỳnh, this makes their tie a multiplex tie.

MinhHằng & Student Specialist/Advisor (Lilian). Lilian is a student specialist who provides transitional support to BTSD students. MinhHằng met Lilian a little over four years ago when she was in the Early Childhood Education Program (ECE). MinhHằng recalls that she was under family pressure to go into nursing as it is a better paying career. However, she loves working with children and was actually in the middle of pursuing a teaching degree in Vietnam before immigrating to the United States. MinhHằng recalls that at the time, she was still quite new to the country and was not sure what to do. She was torn between wanting to make her in-laws happy and following her own passion. MinhHằng said she shared this dilemma with Lilian, who helped her brainstorm some options for testing out the nursing field - without too much risk, in terms of time and effort. Lilian helped her sign up for the Allied Health class that BTSD offers to students who aim to go into healthcare. This is a contextualized ESL class where students work on their English modalities in the context of healthcare; for example, they learn about medical related vocabulary, prefixes, suffixes and roots, give presentations on health related topics, take field trips to healthcare facilities, read and write about health related issues. MinhHằng recalls taking two quarters of Allied Health, both the first and second level, and then at the end, she told Lilian that I can't take it anymore, I'm going to go back to teaching. She credits the experience as a low-pressure way for her to confirm to herself that teaching was and had always been the right career path for her. After she had made her decision, MinhHằng went to talk to Lilian, who then helped her apply for financial aid and go through the registration process for ECE. Lilian's support did not stop there. A few quarters into the program, students had to find a practicum site. MinhHằng recalls how Lilian supported her through this process as well. She was in Lilian's office and they looked at potential sites together on the internet, discussing the pros and cons of each one - location, hours, requirements, etc. Once they narrowed the list down to a few options, Lilian helped her plan out what to say when she calls to inquire whether or not they were taking practicum students at the moment. Then, after the practicum, when it came time to look for a job, Lilian supported MinhHằng by being her reference and writing a letter of recommendation for her. MinhHằng beams as she told me that this job that she currently has is thanks to Lilian. Of all these types of support, Lilian is definitely a multiplex tie for MinhHằng.

NgọcHương & Her brother-in-law (Triết). NgọcHương lives in a multi-generational, extended family household with her parents and her older sister's family. Throughout the

interview, she constantly talks about her brother-in-law. She seems to go to him for advice on everything from the most trivial questions to the most important decisions. She said that when she first came here from Vietnam, she got mixed advice from people on how and where she should pick up her education. Because she was twenty at the time, most people suggested that she should sign up for high school. Some people also suggested that she enroll in GED class classes, earn her GED and then continue on to college. However, her brother-in-law Triết had been through the system and knew that at her age, she would eventually age out before earning a high school diploma. The maximum age limit to be in high school in Washington is 21 and since she was already 20, she wouldn't have enough time. As for GED classes, Triết knew that a GED is not required for enrolling at two-year colleges and once you have an Associates Degree then it is no longer necessary to have a high school diploma. She said that because her brother-in-law understood these nuances, he advised her to begin by taking ESL classes at a community college to improve her English before venturing on to college level classes. She seemed very happy about following his advice and thought it was a suitable path for her. Triết brought her to sign-up for ESL classes at Rainier College because they live in the neighborhood and also because he was a student there himself many years ago. She was in ESL for a year. When she was getting ready to take college level classes, he helped her fill out the online FAFSA application and collected all the necessary follow-up documents to turn in to Rainier College's financial aid office. Once she was taking college level classes, there were things related to college culture that she didn't quite understand, so she asked him a lot of questions to learn about American college culture. Two examples that stood out for her are: grades and the role of political views in the classroom, as she explains below.

TD: And what kind of problems or questions do you ask?

NGỌCHUÔNG: Um, so I usually ask about, um, uh, the grading.

TD: The grading? Like grading system or what do you mean?

NGỌCHUÔNG: Yeah, grading system. Because each. I thought that every teacher has one grading system, but they are different.

TD: What do you mean?

NGỌCHUÔNG: Like for example, my math class, uh, you want to get 4.0, you need a 95 percent. But my um, English, uh, technical writing, if I want 4.0, I need to have 98 percent. Something like that it kind of confused me. And another that I usually ask about is some problem about politics, politics, politics. Yeah. Like once I, I was taking English 97. I wasn't sure about politics, politics here because that is the time that have the voting between the new president and the other one. So, but my sister, uh, they, um, she seemed like really against Trump. So she, she

always show that in class. And I asked my brother about that things and yeah. And they say that a inappropriate because that is something you can't share in public.

TườngVy & Uncle (Trung). TườngVy and her uncle's relationship is one of the most interesting and unexpected ego-alter pairs in this study for me. Her uncle is in his seventies and retired. The two types of support that really stands out and consistent for TườngVy seem to be encouragement and information about life in America. Unlike other pairs, Uncle's Trung's contribution to TườngVy's may seem less tangible but from TườngVy's perspective, they are not any less substantial. In fact, she said that, *"If I ever become success one day, the first person I'd thank is my uncle."* TườngVy shares that her immediate family is a small family of just three - mom, dad and herself. Her family was quite poor in Vietnam. *"We didn't even have a home in Vietnam. We live with my grandmother. And my uncle saw how difficult our lives were and so he filed the paperwork to sponsor us over to the US."* (The uncle who sponsored her family over is not Uncle Trung.) She took ESL classes at New Holly, an off campus site affiliated with Rainier College. The highest level of ESL offered at New Holly is level 3. When she reached level 3 and wanted to continue, the uncle who sponsored her family mocked her for wanting to continue - *"At your age, what else can you study? You're all grown now. You have to go to work to help support your family."* TườngVy said she recounts this to Uncle Trung later, to which he asks, *"So how does that make you feel? If it makes you feel bad then use that as fuel for working twice as hard to be successful so that people don't look down on you."* A few days later, Uncle Trung took the bus with her to Olympic College to sign up for ESL classes. She laughs and said we *"trốn mọi người đi,"* meaning we *"went quietly without letting anyone know."* Not only was Uncle Trung her number one cheerleader, he also offered a lot of practical advice for her regarding life in America. When I asked her how often she talks to Uncle Trung, she said every week for a few hours at least. I was very surprised at her answer because I didn't understand what they could be talking about for that often and that long. She explains that every week, if she cannot take the bus to visit him at his home, then she would call him and talk to him. She shares with him her activities for the week - how she's doing in school, what she's learning, how her parents are doing, how is her mom's health, how is her dad's work, etc. He's also the person she goes to for information on life in America. *"I ask him about all kinds of things - from how to take the train, how to take the bus. About health insurance. When I needed dental work, I asked for his opinion if I should pick a Vietnamese dentist or an American dentist."* During the

summer, she wanted to look for a part-time job to help her parents financially, so she brainstormed with him about employment options. TườngVy talks a lot about her struggle with pronunciation and shares that she often feels discouraged because of it. She talks to her uncle when she feels discouraged and he tells her to hang in there. He reminds her since she is the only child, her parents only have her to count on, so if she doesn't have a stable job with a living-wage income then who is going to take care of her parents when they are old and can no longer take care of themselves. He reminds her that learning is hard but that it is a part of life; she quotes him *"Cuộc đời như chèo thuyền trên dòng nước ngược, không tiến sẽ phải lùi."*

TuấnMinh & Mentor/Former High School Teacher (Stella). Stella is TuấnMinh's former high school teacher. TuấnMinh describes her class as something of a mix between advising and homeroom. Stella herself calls what she teaches as *"counseling curriculum."* In my interview with her, when I asked her how she knew TuấnMinh, she said, *"I was his advisor teacher. So that basically mean I'm more to them than a teacher, being that I wasn't teaching an actual subject, umm, we would teach what we called our counseling curriculum. And so it has to do with the way you feel about the world, the way you feel about yourself, and making sure that you're thinking about your future plans and organization."* It was hard for me to pinpoint the type of support that Stella provides for TuấnMinh, but holistically, she seems to be an important person in his life. He identified her as his mentor. Even though he graduated two years ago and she no longer teaches at that high school, they still have scheduled meetings every few months to catch up and share updates. When I asked him what they usually talk about, he said, *"Politics, career, life, student issues."* For example, he shared, he talks to her about protests that he sees going on around him. They also talked about higher education, but it seems not the usual topics such as where to go or how to apply. Instead, she made them think critically about college. TuấnMinh explains, *"She introduced me to why colleges are expensive and what's the reason for colleges being existing. She also told me that community college isn't bad like everyone says, you shouldn't be afraid to do."* Moreover, she encourages him to explore and push his boundaries, *"She told me like once you get out into that, take a look into this, take a look to soup kitchens, take a look into downtown homelessness, take a look into like music groups and jazz and all other things."* TuấnMinh's occupational goal was to go into law enforcement. At the time of my interview with him, he was preparing to go in for *"three months of basic training and then after that hope to get a valuable military experience."* Being twenty years old, these were big

decisions for him and said that he talked through these decisions with Stella. For TuấnMinh, Stella did not provide the typical support such as information or navigational capital. Instead, it seems that she was someone with whom he could share ideas and work out his thoughts, i.e., a soundboard to help him make sense of the world.

Tie Strength Indicator 2: *Comradery*

Unlike mentoring relationships, in a *comradery relationship*, the *alter* is not a mentor but a navigational partner who provides companionship and organic tangible support. Another indicator of tie strength for the students in this study is the element of comradery, usually between the student and his/her peer(s). In the following paragraphs, I will describe three pairs of ego-alter relationships that exemplify this comradery element in their relationships: ThúyQuỳnh & Thao, MinhHằng & Viet/Trang, and HuêMai & Miên. These relationships have a few features in common: 1) *Navigational partner*: They met early on in their educational journey in America, when everything was new to them - the culture, people, society, education system, etc. They learned to navigate and adapt to life in America together. It was not a mentorship relationship. 2) *Organic Delivery of Tangible Forms of Support*: They share navigational information and provide tangible support for one another well into the present, years after their initial meeting. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss each relationship and give examples of how navigational partnership and tangible support show-up in their relationships. I will organize this section by the points above instead of by relationship as I have done above.

ThúyQuỳnh & Thao. ThúyQuỳnh and Thao met in 2015 when they were both in ESL 4B. They were both new to the country at the time. ThúyQuỳnh immigrated to the US with her husband and Thao came with her parents and siblings. They are about ten years apart. Throughout the interview, ThúyQuỳnh refers to Thao as “Be Thao,” a term of endearment, roughly translated as “little sister Thao.” A few quarters after starting in ESL 4B, ThúyQuỳnh became pregnant and had to stop out for a year. ThúyQuỳnh came back to school a year later after giving birth. During this time, Thao continued to make progress in her studies and the two continued to keep in contact. ThúyQuỳnh said she learned about resources like financial aid and the WALL from Thao. What was different from a mentoring type of relationship was that as ThúyQuỳnh described, the information came up very organically in their conversations. In other words, ThúyQuỳnh did not ask Thao directly about these resources, instead she would just learn

about them organically as they hung out doing what friends do. For example, when I asked her whether she learned about FAFSA from Thao, she said:

Just in our normal conversations, I learned about it from her. Like she'd say let's go out to eat, I'll treat you today because I just got a refund from financial aid. So from there I got the idea that there are sources of financial support out there. Or sometimes, when I call her to hangout or to talk, she'd say "I'll call you back, I'm at the WALL right now.

And then later, she'd explain that she was there to get help with a paper or an assignment, and so from that, I knew that the WALL was a place to get help on grammar, writing or homework." Besides transmitting information about resources in the system, Thao and ThúyQuỳnh also provided each other with stable emotional support. When I asked ThúyQuỳnh what else they support each other with, she shared that they sometimes vent to each other about problems at home. When they first moved here, Thao was living in an extended family atmosphere and had her share of family problems. Thao turned to ThúyQuỳnh to vent her problems at home. Later, when ThúyQuỳnh started to have problems with her husband, Thao was the friend ThúyQuỳnh turned to for emotional support about her domestic problems. Not only that, Thao was there for ThúyQuỳnh in very tangible ways as she went through her divorce. ThúyQuỳnh said that for several weekends, Thao walked with her throughout White Center, hunting for an apartment. ThúyQuỳnh and Thao's relationship, like other duo that will be described later in this section, have elements of navigational partnership and tangible support that was organically delivered; these elements make their relationship a strong tie.

MinhHằng & Viet/Trang. MinhHằng, Viet and Trang also met in ESL, during their initial stage in America. Trang is now a student at the University of Washington. Viet is working in construction. MinhHằng teaches preschoolers at Hai Ba Trung Preschool and is working on her AA Degree in Early Childhood Education. MinhHằng, Viet and Trang attended Olympic College, an inner-city two-year college located in the middle of downtown city life. MinhHằng explained that during their first few months in the Pacific Northwest, they were all dazzled by urban life in America and decided to explore the city together. None of them had a job at the time, so almost every day after class, the three of them would take the bus to Downtown and walk around the area. Sometimes Viet would drive them. She said even ordering drinks at Starbucks was new to the three of them. They also share life experiences with each other. MinhHằng recalls one time when she was almost tricked into participating in this Ponzi scheme. She shared with Viet and Trang what the predator told her to get their opinion on

the situation. MinhHàng credits Viet for having street smarts and so he was able to sniff out the ill intent behind it right away. With MinhHàng and Trang/Viet, the support was not academic; instead, it was emotional support from a navigational partner. Their world was changing and was new to all three of them. Not one of the three knew more than the other, but together, they mentored each other through it by offering a listening ear, by being a soundboard as they make sense of how the new society works, and by offering a hand to hold on as they explore the new world so that it's less scary. I see their trips through Downtown as being very metaphoric of their relationship.

HuệMai & Miên. With HuệMai and Miên, it's a little different in that they were not in the same ESL class. They met in BTSD orientation. HuệMai had studied English back in Vietnam and so tested into level 5. Miên was placed in level 3. Nevertheless, their situations were very similar; *"I have one friend, she study with me in ESL and she has the same situation with me. And she has a baby at the same with me."* They both stopped out and came back to school at about the same time. Because they were both new moms in a new country with no one here except for their husband and in-laws, HuệMai and Miên seem to be each other's emotional support on many levels. HuệMai shared that one time, she had a doctor's appointment and couldn't find anyone to watch her newborn, so Miên agreed to take her own baby and go with HuệMai to the doctor's appointment. When it was HuệMai's turn to go in to see the doctor, Miên would stay in the waiting room and kept an eye on both babies. Miên was the *alter* that I interviewed to get a more in-depth picture of their relationship. When I asked Miên how they usually support each other, she said,

We usually learn about things at the same time. But there are things I might know more, like for example, I know of more entertainment places, places to hang out. So I often tell her those things. And if she knows of anything new or anything interesting on the net, then she'd share with me. Often we usually share and learn together. Because back in Vietnam, Le studied English more than I did, so there are a lot of things that I ask Le. For example, like ESL assignments. Sometimes I'll ask, like, that essay assignment, how should I write/approach it. And she might suggest that I can write according to my feelings and thoughts. And sometimes, there are somethings that I can express in English, so I also ask Le. Or what does that mean? Or sometimes I'll ask if that instructor is hard. Because she's taken that instructor. Or do you have any suggestions for me when I'm taking classes with that instructor

Like other ego-alter pairs described above in this section, HuêMai and Miên were navigational partners, they learned about American society and how to be new moms together. They supported each other emotionally through that process. Tangible resources relating to schooling and education that they learned from each other came organically as a result of that strong bond.

Tie Strength Indicator 3: *Trust*

The third indicator of *tie strength* is *trust*, which is composed of *system justification* (*institutional trust & trust in the IA*) and *interpersonal openness*. Since the beginning, trust is an tie-strength indicator that I tried to be explicit and conscientious about capturing during my data collection stage. From the literature on minority youth, trust is usually measured in terms of trust towards an IA, trust in the system, and interpersonal openness. After examining the data deeply, I was able to gain more clarity on what “trust” means for these students. Of all the tie-strength indicators, trust was by far the most complicated and therefore most difficult to capture. In the following paragraphs, I will explain the nuances of *trust* in two dimensions: 1) *system justification* and 2) *interpersonal openness*. *System justification* is composed of two elements: institutional trust (i.e., trust in the system) and trust in the institutional agent (i.e., trust in the integrity and competence of the IA). *Interpersonal openness* is the willingness to share personal time, personal space and personal information. One point worth noting here is that in the literature on minority students, *trust* is often examined within student-IA relationships (Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 2011). In this study, I examined *trust* within FS-IA ties only (excluding kin ties, peer ties, etc.). I made this decision based on two reasons: 1) Its volume in existing literature suggests its significance. 2) It is more nuanced than other relationships due to the power dynamic and the institutional resources connected to the role of an IA.

System Justification. *System justification refers to a display of institutional trust, the belief in the benevolence of the institution and agents who work within that institution.* Much of the literature that examine minority students and their relationship with authority figures says that *institutional trust* is an important element in their academic success, (Rhoden, 2017). Furthermore, there is a strong consensus in this literature that minority youth don’t trust the system and institutional agents. However, from my interviews with the Vietnamese American students in this study, this doesn’t seem to be the case. They seem to be very trusting of the system. Below are excerpts from our conversations that demonstrate their trust that the system is

fair and just. In listening about their experience in ESL classes, in navigating the school system, and in their interactions with IAs, I noticed that their speech was sprinkled with beliefs of meritocracy. They embrace the idea that one's own success and status have been earned and that one's failure is solely the result of one's bad decisions - for example, a student's (or their own) choice of not putting in the effort in class. They believe that society in general and U.S. education specifically is structured in such a way that is consistent with the famous lines in our constitution - that we are all created equal, guaranteed with the same opportunities for success.

Evidence of their belief in meritocracy and what Erin Godfrey calls "system justification" is seen in how they talk about the services available and their perception of those services. They see that the system is providing so much support, as ThúyQuỳnh said at one point in her first interview, "...when I talk to an American, then it's like: *If you like it, then do it. If you run into problems, then tell me. I'll help you overcome it or show you how to get help.*" At first, I thought she was talking about the genuineness of people when they extend help, but when I asked to confirm, she said no. As she continues on with her explanation, I realized that her perception is not so much about genuineness. Instead, it's a difference between unbiased help versus opinionated help. Here is how ThúyQuỳnh explained to me her perception of how people here are very ready to support you to reach your goal as long as your goal is a just goal and not something morally or lawfully wrong. She says:

No, no, not that they're not genuine. But like I get the feeling that people here, people who grew up here, think that if you like something then you just do it, it's not necessarily and not necessarily bad. Yeah, yeah, they're very genuine, like if I say 'so I'll take that class but I'm afraid it will be hard, do you think you'll be able to help?' 'Ok, I'll help.' [...] They won't stop you or try to talk you out of it if you say you like it.

This strong trust in the system can be problematic, especially for minority students because it makes them put the blame on themselves when they run into set-backs. In other words, it is like a subtle voice in their head that says, "If the system is giving you this much support and you still fail then it must be your personal fault."

I also see a common theme among students in that they praise the program and teachers a lot. They seem to be very happy with the services available. For example, when I asked DiễmMy about services at her campus, she said that in one of her first classes at the college, the teacher gave a very good campus tour where she learned about many resources on campus. She

then went on to talk about the non-academic resources that she learned about, “...*there are also resources for people who are hungry, students. They have food pantry. And they have a place for student to take a nap. What else, I forget, but they have, like people have difficulty in their lives, so I think it's very good.*” She also spoke highly of the teachers that she’s had:

Not my experience but my friends', she's my classmate. She has some problems with her husband, something like they want to divorce or something. And she didn't know where to ask and we don't money to pay for lawyer, attorney here, you know. And then I encouraged her to ask the teacher. Maybe the teacher knows. And the teacher was helpful, in that program, in the ABE program. And she told her where to go and searched for her some organizations to help her.

In praising another teacher, she said, “...*she teach how to write an essay for the scholarship and she teach us how to apply online. She teach quite detail on how to apply for scholarships. And she's willing to write the recommend letter for, for any student who want to apply.*”

In the excerpt below, another student, Quốc Trọng, also shares his positive perception of the interaction and support he has received from the English and Math instructors he’s had.

TD: *Can you tell me a little bit about your relationships with people here at school?*

QUỐC TRỌNG: *Staff in Olympic College, they're friendly. They're good. If I ask something, they help.*

TD: *Do you have one or two teachers that you think about when you have questions? That you go ask?*

QUỐC TRỌNG: *Every teacher I study, I go to ask. Because, you know, I don't understand anything in United States, anything. So I ask everything.*

[...]

TD: *McLean? Is your 101 English teacher? Can you tell me you relationship with McLean?*

QUỐC TRỌNG: *Every quarter, I have one or two teachers, I think good. At that time, the first time I go to study college. First quarter in college. Jump from ESL, I jump to that class. That's why I remember her name. In that class that time, no Vietnamese. First time I go to college and no Vietnamese. Sometimes I go to her office and ask her about writing essay or something.*

TD: *So you go to her office and ask her about writing? What else?*

QUỐC TRỌNG: *Just ask about that, but she's helpful. She makes it clear, clear homework and schedule. And I can follow that schedule. At that time, I finish 101 I feel happy. I don't understand too much but I follow her schedule.*

As these excerpts have shown, across the board, students believe that their school is great because it offers numerous resources to help students succeed. Furthermore, it is also consistent across this group that students think highly of the instructors and advisors that they work with.

In the following paragraph, I will continue on with the second dimension of *trust*, which is *interpersonal openness*.

Interpersonal Openness. Another common indicator of *trust* is *interpersonal openness*, often measured by one's willingness to share personal time, personal space and personal information. As I will demonstrate through the following excerpts from students and IAs, it seems that the focal participants in this study have a low degree of interpersonal openness with the faculty and advisors in their networks because of several reasons: 1) They perceive their relationship with the IA as a "professional relationship," bounded by the IA's job description or professional duty. This influences their perception of what is considered an appropriate conversation topic. 2) The low confidence in their oral English skills. 3) They are overly respectful of the IA's time and considerate of sharing access to the IA with other classmates.

From the IA's perspective, they see Viet students as very respectful with the IA's time. When I asked Hannah, Quốc Trọng's math instructor, about how often he interacts with her, she says:

Well, I won't say very often, you know, I had had students who would come here almost every day and he wasn't like that at all. In fact I had students who would come almost every day and I had to say I even, even before I come would come, like before I come and I would say, look, I need my lunch hour. But he wasn't like that. He was very respectful and, and really I would say, um, he really doesn't need a lot of help.

In discussing about her interactions with Vietnamese students in general, Abigail says, "They tend to be extremely respectful of my time. Um, they are very prepared with questions when they come and they're also very clear with their educational goals, so I tend to find advising them pretty straightforward. They don't tend to have very complicated cases." She continues, "I think, umm, I mean as an advisor, like I really enjoy working with them because they are very respectful. Um, and also they understand the advisor-student relationship very well. I feel like I'm sometimes I want to be able to help them more but of course I don't want to press that upon them, like, you know, anything that they don't want, um, I think sometimes it can be a challenge for students, umm, in terms of like integrated into life outside of Olympic College." IAs seem to share a consistent image that Vietnamese students tend to keep to themselves. When I ask Sophia, an ESL instructor what her perception is of Vietnamese students and their educational goals, she expressed that as I'm asking, it just dawns on her that

she doesn't know much about the Vietnamese students in her class, mainly due to the fact that they don't usually come to her to ask for advice and they don't usually open up to her about their challenges/problems. In fact, her conversations with them usually center around academic issues. When I asked Sophia what occupational fields Vietnamese students usually go into, she says, *"You know, it's funny because a lot of different countries they say nursing, but the Vietnamese, I don't, I can't right now. I don't have a strong impression about it. I think IT stuff I hear, I guess I haven't heard a lot and now I realize I am not sure. I've had such a mix of students that the Vietnamese haven't really stood out that much. I think that's, again, they're kind of, they stick with their own group a little bit."* Sophia continues, *"Um, but it is interesting that you mention it. Now that I think about it, I have to say I don't always have a strong idea about what the Vietnamese students are going into. I think other ones, yeah, I can think of nursing at East Africans will always tell you nursing maybe some of the Chinese, they'll be like business or accounting. Yeah. So for the Vietnamese, I think maybe in the end I don't have that many."* From interviews with students, the same story is confirmed, but from the other side of the coin, per se. When talking about the sharing of personal information, time and space with institutional agents, i.e., faculty, staff, and advisors, many of the students in this study seem to have the mindset of what Derald Sue refers to as the *academic & politeness protocol*, (Sue, 2013). The culture in school settings has traditionally been touted as a place characterized by objectivity, detachment, and rational discourse, where empirical reality is valued over experiential reality, (Bell Hooks, 1994). This mindset operates under the assumption that personal topics do not belong in educational interactions because these interactions are seen as "professional." Quốc Trọng and Ngọc Cầm expressed similar ideas when I asked them whether they share personal information with the instructors and advisors in their lives. Quốc Trọng says, *"No, I don't, no. Ohhh, I just share in my essay. When I talk, I don't want to talk, but when I write, at that time, I write about everything, about my life come to here, how I struggle in the United States. I was not shy because I write English, I want to practice English."* This hesitance that stems from unfamiliarity with English language and Western culture was also expressed by Thúy Quỳnh. For her, the barrier extends not just to IAs specifically but, in her perception of Whites in general, or "Americans" as she referred. She says:

Honestly, I really want to interact with Americans, but I don't have, I, I have a barrier in that I'm really hesitant when it comes to interacting with Americans, maybe it's because I feel bad about my pronunciation. Also, another thing is that,

I'm heavily influenced by Vietnamese culture, so I always wonder, am I offending them? Are my words appropriate? Are my actions appropriate? On the other hand, with other Vietnamese, I'm very confident because I'm familiar with the culture. We Vietnamese understand each other.

And later in the interview, in talking about his tutors, he said, *"No, I don't share my personal. [...] Maybe they have struggle too, but they don't share to me, why I share to them?"* For NgọcCâm, she also say that she doesn't share personal information with advisors that she work with, but her reasons for why she doesn't share are a little different. For her, the reason is more about time and her perception of the IA's "official/scripted duty." She says, *"We don't have time. Maybe 30 or 40 minutes. [...] But I know she is one of the people to go to if you have questions about financial aid or something like that because she's advisor in school and you need to go to meet her."* DiễmMy at Rainier College also expressed similar reasons. For her, the reason she doesn't reach out to her instructors as much is because the teachers seem very busy. She says, *"Don't talk to teacher too much because I see the teacher very busy, you know, very busy and like one class have a 25, 28 persons and then they teach like four classes one quarter. How difficult for them! So normally, they're very busy. Yeah of course, if I really need to ask them, I come up and ask them. But normally a lot of other classmates want to ask too, so I just let them, maybe they have more important things to ask."* I ask a follow-up question, *"When you do ask them, do you ask them after class, before class or during class or at office hour?"* To which she replied, *"In class then just ask about the lesson in the class. I don't want to distract other students, they don't need to know about my own questions. And then after class, when I see the teacher has free time, then I ask them."*

Interview data from focal students and IAs shows that FSs specifically and Vietnamese-American students in general, have a low degree of interpersonal openness with the faculty and advisors in their networks because of several reasons: 1) They perceive their relationship with the IA as a "professional relationship," in a way, restricted by the IA's job description and their professional duties. This influences their perception of what is considered an appropriate conversation topic. 2) They have low confidence in their oral English skills. 3) They are overly respectful of the IA's time and considerate of sharing access to the IA with other classmates.

The main argument of the first half of this chapter is that analyzing these ties at the dyadic level, I was able to have more clarity on how to conceptualize *tie strength*, meaning that

the dyadic-level data suggests that a strong tie has the following characteristics: 1) *multiplexity*, 2) *comradery* and 3) *trust*. With *trust*, this indicator is examined specifically within the student-IA ties. I examined *trust* closely within student-IA ties only because: 1) It is more nuanced than other types of relationships, (i.e., peer ties, kin ties, community ties). 2) There is also an overwhelming amount of literature on student-IA ties, suggesting its significance. In examining *trust* within student-IA ties, I noticed two themes in how *trust* shows up in these relationships: 1) *system justification*, which encompasses ideas of *institutional trust and IA trust*, and 2) *interpersonal openness*. In regards to the first theme of *system justification*, Viet students believe that the system is just and fair and that meritocracy exists; this is evident in the fact that students from across-the-board repeatedly mention all the wonderful resources and instructors they have at school, both at Rainier College and Olympic College. The excerpts above demonstrate that students believe in the fact that there are plenty of resources in the system to support them and to help them be successful academically. From these excerpts, it is also clear that students believe in the integrity of the *institutional agents* they work with. They trust that these instructors and staff personnel have their interest at heart and genuinely work to help students like themselves be successful.

PART 2: HOLISTIC LEVEL ANALYSIS – SIZE, RANGE, & COMPOSITION

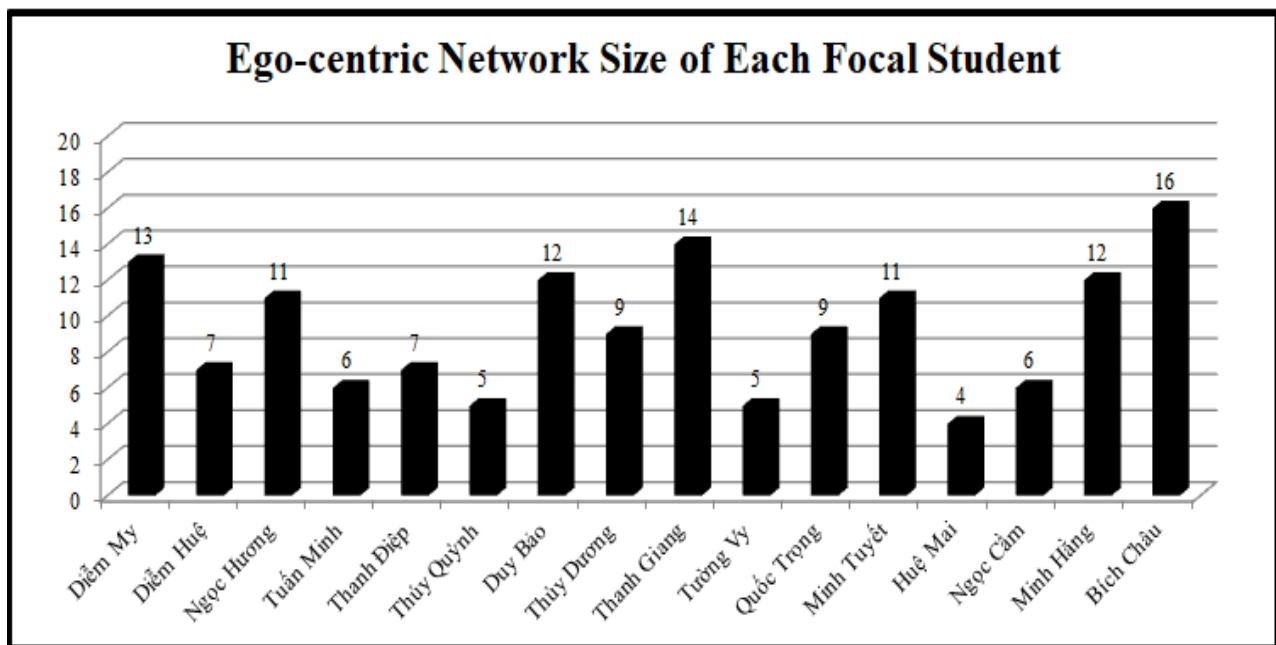
At the holistic level analysis, I was particularly interested in three elements of their egonets: 1) size, 2) composition and 3) range, also known as *heterogeneity*. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss findings related to each of these elements.

Size of Egonets

The average egonet size was nine, and the mode is five. With that said, however, egonet size doesn't seem to matter much for the focal students in this study due to the multiplexity of some ties. At the beginning, there were seventeen focal students in this study; however, one student (HoàngAnh) refused to complete the ego-centric network map and therefore had to drop-out of the study. Even when I encouraged him complete it to the best of his ability and assured him that I was not looking for a right or wrong answer, he still refused and replied that he could not think of anyone. He refused to list anyone on his network map and was adamant about leaving it blank. This was peculiar because only minutes prior, in the semi-structured interview, he talked about advisors and some family members who had been supportive in his educational

journey. In the end, I did not include HoàngAnh’s responses in my analysis because of these contradictions and also because he only partially participated in the study.

For everyone else, their egonet size vary between four to sixteen *alters*. Altogether between sixteen students, they had 146 alters. The mode was five, meaning that the most people had five alters in their egonets. The average number of *alters* was about nine - I arrived at this number by dividing the total number of alters over the total number of students, i.e., 146/16. For in-group analysis, I didn’t see any difference between the egonet size of Rainier College versus Olympic College students. The same goes for egonet size of first generation versus second generation students.



Range & Composition of Egonets

Range and composition have some overlapping elements; and therefore, it makes sense for me to discuss both of these concepts together simultaneously. *Composition* simply means looking at who is there in the students’ egonets, whereas range refers to the diversity or variability within that composition.

Range. With the exception of TườngVy at Olympic College, every student in this study has an IQV above 0.5, most close to 1.0, meaning that, on average, almost all focal participants have high variability in their networks. *Range* is one way to think about diversity within network composition; some scholars refer to it as *heterogeneity*. It ranges between 0 to 1; the higher the range score, the more dense or diverse the network. Meaning that if a student has a

range score of zero, it means that the student only has one type of alter in his/her network, where as a range score of 1 means that the student has maximum variability, i.e., an equal number of alters across all four alter categories. In this study, I used Index of Qualitative Variation (IQV), which is a measure of variability for nominal variables. It is calculated using the following formula: $K(100^2 - \Sigma\%^2)/100^2(K-1)$. K represents the number of categories of variables. $\Sigma\%^2$ means the sum of all the percentages squared. For this study, K is four because there are four categories for the variable *alter*: institutional agents (IA ties), immediate and extended family members (KIN ties), community members (COMM ties), and friends and/or classmates (PEER ties). One point to note about COMM ties is that this category of alters was more diverse than other groups; it included members from heritage organizations (Vietnamese church, Vietnamese language schools, Vietnamese temples, etc.) as well as members from nonprofits (SEA, ACRS, Neighborhood House, former high school teachers/advisors who have turned into mentors, internship providers, etc.). One way I distinguished COMM ties from other ties is by process of elimination, a COMM tie is one that is any tie that is *not* any one of the other ties. With the exception of Trương Vy at Olympic College, every student in this study has an IQV above 0.5, most close to 1.0, meaning that, on average, the focal participants have high variability in their networks. The table below shows each student's IQV index.

What is the heterogeneity of each focal student's ego-centric social network?							
<i>The higher the IQV, the more heterogeneous the network. IQV = Index of Qualitative Variation</i>							
	Olympic C. Rainier C.	1 st -Gen 2 nd -Gen	IQV	IA Ties (blue)	KIN Ties (orange)	COMM Ties (red)	PEER Ties (purple)
Hoàng Anh	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minh Tuyết	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	72.70%	2	7	1	1
Minh Hằng	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	79.60%	1	7	2	2
Thanh Giang	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	92.50%	5	3	1	5
Huệ Mai	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	50.00%	0	3	0	1
Quốc Trọng	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	0.00%	0	5	0	0
Ngọc Cẩm	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	59.30%	2	0	0	4
Trương Vy	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	0.00%	0	5	0	0
Bích Châu	Olympic C.	2 nd -Gen	84.40%	6	0	7	3
Thùy Dương	Rainier C.	2 nd -Gen	95.50%	1	3	2	3
Tuấn Minh	Rainier C.	2 nd -Gen	96.00%	2	1	2	1
Duy Bảo	Rainier C.	2 nd -Gen	88.90%	2	6	2	2
Ngọc Hương	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	90.40%	5	3	1	2
Diễm Huệ	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	81.60%	1	3	3	0
Thanh Diệp	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	59.90%	1	5	0	1
Thúy Quỳnh	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	85.30%	2	1	0	2
Diễm My	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	80.50%	7	3	0	3

Composition. In terms of *composition*, here are two patterns of how these students' egonets are composed: 1) IA and PEER ties are most common, and COMM ties are the least. 2) Even though IA and PEER ties are the most typical ties, KIN ties are the most prevalent across all sixteen participants. **COMM Ties.** COMM ties are the least common type of tie - six students in the group did not mention COMM ties at all. For in-group analysis, COMM ties are more common among first generation egonets than they are in second generation egonets. This might be because first generation students in this study on average are older and have more life needs, i.e., transportation, childcare, etc. One student - BíchChâu - stood out because she had an exceptionally large number of COMM ties compared to others participants. BíchChâu's relationship with all her other alters was interesting in that she seems to have one specific person to go to for every question/support. For example, she goes to her SEA tutor for academic support, to her ACRS counselor for mental health support, to her Workforce advisor for transportation support, etc. **IA Ties.** With the exception of two students, TườngVy and HuệMai, everyone else has IA ties in their life. TườngVy has an interesting egonet in that it is completely made up of KIN ties. Her IQV is zero because every alter she mentioned falls in one category. She gets all her resources from her uncle, cousins and parents. Some studies say that it is important for students to have access to different types of alters because each alter type brings with them different resources and information. However, this doesn't seem to be the case for TườngVy; she seems to have a very diverse SCfCS portfolio. I will discuss her SCfCS portfolio in more details in chapter 7. **PEER Ties.** Similar to IA ties, everyone has at least one PEER tie except for two students, DiễmHuệ and TườngVy. **KIN Ties.** As shown in the chart below, everyone has at least one KIN tie in their egonet except for BíchChâu, NgọcCầm, and QuốcTrọng. What is most interesting is that for BíchChâu, when asked what are her challenges, she immediately responded in an involuntary blurt - "*my family.*" Even though IA and PEER ties are most common, KIN ties are more predominant. As shown in the pie chart below, of the 164 total number of ties, 50 are KIN ties, which is 34% of the pie. There weren't any notable differences between the composition of Rainier College and Olympic College students' egonets. Graphs and charts concerning these students' holistic egonet characteristics are available in the appendix, link to appendix 7.

To sum up the second half of this chapter, here are a few key features of these students' holistic egonet characteristics: **1) Size.** Most students had five people in their egonets.

The average egonet size was nine, with a minimum of four and a maximum of sixteen. 2) **Composition.** IA and PEER ties were the most commonly mentioned and KIN ties were the most prevalent. 3) **Range.** Most students had high heterogeneity in their egonets. Fifteen out of sixteen students had an IQV above 0.5, with most being close to 1.0. The significance of these holistic findings will be elaborated in the next chapter as it is related to *SCfCS (social capital for college success)*. However, in brief, I argue that due to *multiplexity*, *egonet size* and *range* do not correlate with the amount and form of *SCfCS* that students receive; even students with small and low-range egonets have access to diverse forms of *SCfCS* because they have *multiplex ties* in their networks.

In sum, to respond to the third subsidiary research question, this chapter presents findings concerning students' ego-centric social network structure in two main parts: dyadic characteristics and holistic characteristics. The main finding in part one is that *tie strength* is characterized by three indicators: 1) *multiplexity*, 2) *comradery* and 3) *trust*. In part two, one unexpected finding is that some students enjoy a diverse *SCfCS*-portfolio despite having a small and homogeneous network. Merging together qualitative and quantitative data, I concluded that *egonet size* and *egonet range* do not correlate with *SCfCS* outcome because of the *multiplex ties* in those networks.

CHAPTER 7

SOCIAL CAPITAL for COLLEGE SUCCESS

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to findings that address the last subsidiary research question of this study: *What forms of Social Capital for College Success (SCfCS) have these students harnessed or harvested? “There’s a lot that happens before education can happen,”* Anna, BíchChâu’s alter. This quote encapsulates much of the ideas in this chapter, which is that there IS a lot that has to happen before education can happen. This is especially true for first-generation and non-traditional students. Eight of the twelve first-generation students in this study are returning/re-accessed students who had to stop-out for some time to take care of life responsibilities and then came back when they were able to find the support to meet those challenges, much of which come from kin ties. What this result tells me is that from a student’s perspective, *college access/re-access* is dependent on whether or not the student has access to the necessary support to make their college life feasible. Yet, from the institution’s perspective, *college access* has a different meaning. Community colleges identify themselves as “open access institutions”, however, this is only in terms of admission procedures and academic prerequisites. As a result, we see a clear disconnect between the student and the institution’s interpretation of access. This disconnect between how students are experiencing *college access* and how the system thinks about access suggests that two-year colleges need to broaden their definition and re-examine what it means to be an “open-access institution.”

Similar to the previous chapter, part of the discovery in this chapter is a re-conceptualization of the proposed framework, more specifically, a refinement of SCfCS. Going into this study, my proposed framework was as follows: SCfCS is comprised of two main parts: 1) socio-academic integration and 2) college-feasibility resources, and socio-academic integration is further sectioned into three pieces: 1a) sense of belonging & sense of competence, 1b) reinforcement of goal commitment, 1c) access to social capital, specifically *procedural agency*. I used this proposed framework for my first round of coding. However, after this initial analysis, it slowly became obvious that for better transparency, I needed to tease apart the first subcategory, (i.e., *sense of belonging & sense of competence*) and also be more specific with the third subcategory (*social capital*). In light of the collected data, I have made the following modifications: 1) *Sense of belonging* and *sense of competence* occur in different spaces and come

from different types of alters, and therefore, will be analyzed separately. 2) Forms of social capital include more variety than simply procedural agency and therefore, will be broadened to *institutional capital*. With these modifications, the revised framework of *Social Capital for College Success (SCfCS)* is composed of the following four elements: 1) *sense of belonging*, 2) *sense of competence*, 3) *reinforcement of goal commitment*, 4) *institutional resources*, and 5) *college-feasibility resources*.

From this revised framework, three key findings around SCfCS emerged: 1) The students in this study have very diverse SCfCS portfolios. 2) They report having more access to support that builds their *sense of competence* as opposed to their *sense of belonging*. 3) They have ample access to *college-feasibility resources*, and much of which comes from KIN ties. The rest of this chapter is divided into three parts, each devoted to one of the previously-mentioned findings.

PART 1: DIVERSE SCfCS PORTFOLIOS

Brief Summary on Methodology Specific to SCfCS Findings

To prime our discussion of the three key findings concerning SCfCS, I would like to begin with a brief summary of how data for this section was collected and analyzed as it is important to understand how I came to my findings²⁷.

How SCfCS Data Was Collected. This data comes from the second part of the *social network interview*. For this part of the interview, I had a list of resources, each connected to one of the five forms of SCfCS. During the interview, we went down this list for each alter that the student indicated in his/her social network map. For each resource, I would ask whether or not that specific alter is a provider for it. If the student says “yes”, I would mark yes on the handout and then ask them to elaborate on their answers in order to gather more details of how/what that resource was transmitted. When it came time to analyze the data, first, I began by organizing the data by transferring all responses from the handout to an Excel sheet. Each focal-student participant has their individual tab. In each tab, each row corresponds to one resource item on the list, and each column corresponds one *alter* in that student’s network. Furthermore, the

²⁷ A more detailed discussion of this process is available in the Methodology Chapter.

columns of alters are color coded.²⁸ And in each intersecting cell, is a checkbox. When that checkbox is ticked, it indicates that the *alter* is a provider of that resource item.

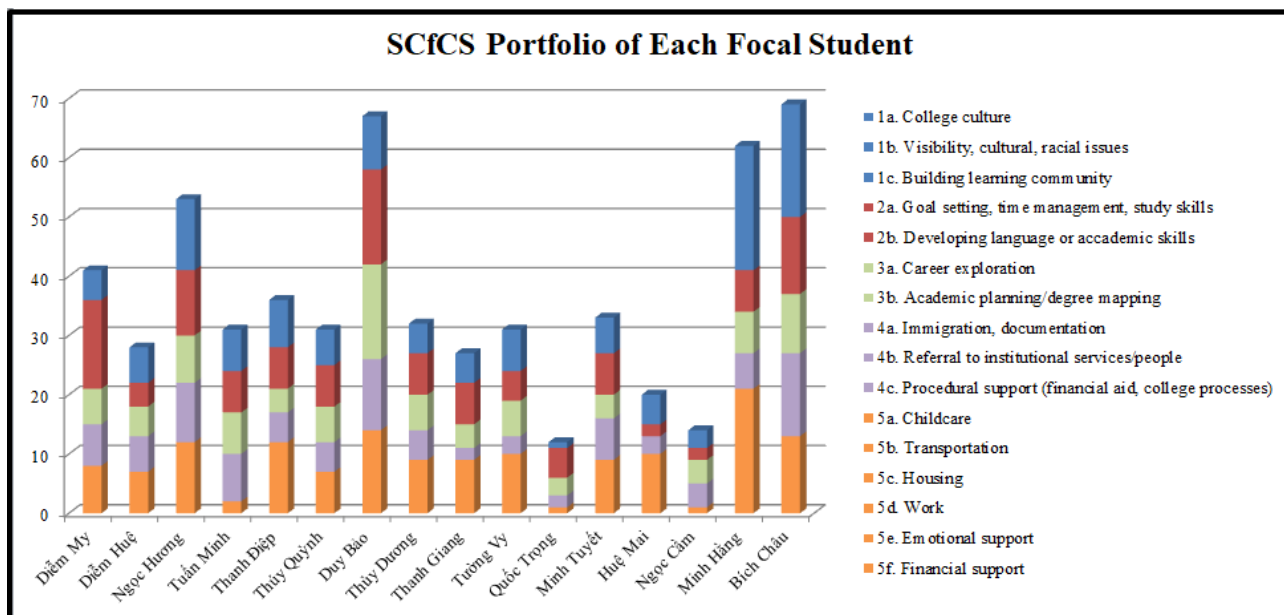
How SCfCS Data Was Organized and Analyzed. After inputting data for all sixteen students, I then tallied up all the tickers for each row and recorded it according to alter type. A screenshot of this next iteration is available in the appendix, link to appendix 6C. In this Excel sheet, each yellow column represents one alter type (within that student’s network) and the each number in the yellow columns represents the total number of support by that *alter type*. For example, DiễmHuê receives “college-culture support” from a KIN tie (i.e., her daughter) and a COMM tie (i.e., a Housing Authority Advisor); hence, she has a ‘1’ in both cells.

Next, I converted these numbers into bar graphs for in-group analysis. I was curious about two things: 1) Are there any correlations or patterns between *alter type* and the different forms of support? 2) If there are patterns, do those patterns across subgroups, i.e., first-generation versus second-generation students, Rainier College versus Olympic College students, etc. The graphs/charts that resulted from this step is in the appendix, link to appendix 8A. In general, almost everyone had very diverse SCfCS portfolios, as demonstrated by the colorfulness of each student’s bar in the graph below²⁹. The colorfulness of the chart is a visual description of how diverse these SCfCS portfolios are. One point to note here is that the idea for creating these graphs is not to use them as definitive findings in and of themselves, but rather, I wanted to use these graphs as “road signs” to give me clues as to where to examine more deeply within my piles of interview data and memos. For qualitative analysis of SCfCS-specific data (as with other types of data in this study), I employed the steps suggested by Creswell (Creswell, 2007). This was an iterative process that switched back and forth between *sketching ideas* to *focused coding* to *framework re-conceptualization* to *focused coding* again and finally to *axial coding*.³⁰ Altogether, quantifiably graphing and qualitatively analyzing the SCfCS-specific data helped me arrive at some of the findings discussed below.

²⁸ IA alters are blue. KIN alters are orange. PEER alters are purple. COMM alters are red.

²⁹ Each of the five forms SCfCS is represented by a unique color. *A sense of belonging* is blue. *A sense of competence* is maroon. *Reinforcement of goal commitment* is green. *Institutional resources* is purple. *College-feasibility resources* is orange.

³⁰ A detailed description of my process is available in the Methodology Chapter 3, under the subheading “Approach to Qualitative Analysis.”



Diverse SCfCS Portfolios Despite Small Homogeneous Ego-centric Networks

In the following paragraphs, I will present evidence for how qualitative and quantitative data complement each other to give a more complete picture of a student’s access to SCfCS. This is important to note as it supports the call for more SNA qualitative research. As first glance, almost everyone in this study has “diverse SCfCS portfolios.” This is true even for students who have small and homogeneous networks. Having a “diverse SCfCS portfolio” means that they have at least one *alter* to whom they can go to for access to each form of SCfCS. I make sense of this contradiction by pulling in qualitative data around egonet characteristics, specifically, the availability of *multiplexity* in their networks. The existence of *multiplexity* in some of their relationships enables small-homogeneous-networked students to still enjoy the benefits of having diverse SCfCS portfolios. For example, HuệMai has a small network of four alters, yet she still manages to have access to a wide range of SCfCS because her husband and friend Miên are *multiplex ties*. In another example, TườngVy has a very homogenous network with zero percent IQV, meaning that all her alters are from one category - KIN ties. Nevertheless, her SCfCS portfolio is still very diverse because her uncle is a *multiplex tie*. **In sum**, quantitative data alone gives a black-white picture of students’ SCfCS access and needs. Qualitative and quantitative data together give the picture more depth. The following two paragraphs will elaborate on these nuances.

Strong and multiplex ties allow students to have access to diverse forms of SCfCS in spite of having small-homogeneous networks. In this study, TuấnMinh and HuệMai have the

least number of ties in their networks. TuấnMinh only identified five people in his network, and HuệMai only identified four people in hers. Yet, both HuệMai and TuấnMinh manage to have very diverse SCfCS portfolios despite their small networks. For HuệMai, when we look at the five forms of SCfCS as a whole, then we see that she has someone to turn to for access to almost every type of SCfCS, with the exception of the second form SCfCS - *reinforcement of goal commitment*. When looked more closely, HuệMai also has some sub-areas where she reported as having zero alters to go to for support, such as 1) developing language or academic skills, 2) immigration/documentation, 3) navigational support, and 4) work/employment. From the qualitative data, I learned that for some of these areas, HuệMai reported that she has the ability to take care of these things herself. For example, even though she's only been in the US for three years, she has quite a good grip of English, especially in reading and writing. She started learning English in Vietnam when she was six years old, so her English is a lot stronger than her husband's. As a result, she's the one that takes care of all the documentation paperwork (her own immigration paperwork, billings, etc.) for her family and her husband's family as well. Similarly, she doesn't go to anyone for help in developing her language and academic skills besides the instructors themselves. When she needs clarification on an assignment then she would go see the instructor during office hour. When she doesn't understand a concept that's explained in lectures or in readings, she would research it in Vietnamese. She said that this method had worked well for her. She's able to find similar materials on Youtube or in other mediums in Vietnamese that helps her have a stronger grip of the main idea. Once she has the main idea then she goes back to the material in English and finds that the concepts are more digestible this second time. Similarly, for information regarding career pathways, she has been able to navigate much of that on her own as well. For other types of support, even though she mentioned in other parts of the interview that she has someone to go to, she somehow didn't consider that person an alter, and so that information did not make it into the data. For example, she talked about her brother-in-law helping her with the initial stages of signing up for classes when she first started at Olympic College. He was a former Olympic College student. However, she did not mention this brother-in-law in her network map. As a result, that information was not recorded.

Another student with a very small network is TuấnMinh. However, he also has at least one person that he goes to for every form of SCfCS. To say this another way, when we look at

SCfCS as a whole, TuấnMinh has at least one transmitter for almost every form of SCfCS that he needs. For a few sub-categories that reported having zero support, it turned out that those are areas where he doesn't need the support. For example, he reported that he has no one to go to for support around 1) immigration/documentation, 2) childcare, transportation, housing, work, and 3) emotional support. If we only look at his data quantitatively, then we might jump to the conclusion that he has unmet need gaps in his SCfCS portfolio. However, qualitative data explains that for TuấnMinh's situation, zero support doesn't necessarily mean that he doesn't have the support for it, instead, it's because he feels he doesn't have the need for it. At this present time in his life, he doesn't have the need for support around immigration/documentation and childcare. TuấnMinh is a healthy second generation Vietnamese American in his early twenties without any children, so understandably he doesn't have any need for support with immigration/documentation and childcare. As for having zero support with housing, it is because he didn't identify his parents as alters in his network. From the interview, he reported as having housing support from his parents. He is currently living with his mother and step-father.

For example, in this study, if we look at the quantitative data alone, we would say that these focal students have some unmet SCfCS-need gaps. However, from their qualitative data, students reveal that they do in fact have alters that they could turn to for support in those areas, but for one reason or another, they don't consider those individuals as alters who warrant a spot in their network map. Or, for some reason, they do not make the connection between that *alter* and that form of resource. As a result, they didn't mention that *alter* in the network map and hence that information didn't get captured in the quantitative data. For example, DiễmMy didn't consider her husband an *alter* yet mentioned that he takes care of their daily expenses. In other instances, it isn't that they didn't have access to a certain form of SCfCS, but that they didn't have a need for that form of support. For example, many of the younger students, such as TuấnMinh, ThùyDương, QuốcTrọng, ThanhGiang, etc., responded “no” when asked about childcare support, not because they do not have access to this form of support, but because they don't have any children and therefore don't have a need for childcare support.

In sum, all the nuances described above support the call for more qualitative research that uses SNA. As noted in the literature review chapter, SNA scholars argue that we need more qualitative SNA research because quantitative data alone does not give a complete picture (Jack, 2010). In this study, we see that the idea of *multiplexity* from qualitative data helps explain why

some students still have access to diverse forms of SCfCS even though they have small-homogeneous networks. This interworking between qualitative and quantitative data speaks to that call.

PART 2: SENSE OF COMPETENCE AS A FUNCTION OF STEREOTYPE PROMISE

In my original framework, *sense of belonging* and *sense of competence* were conceptualized as one piece because from Deil-Amen's explanation, socio and academic integration for community college students happen hand-in-hand, simultaneously. She explained that for community college students, they experience socio- and academic integration simultaneously. This means that one moment can serve as a conduit for both - sense of competence and belonging. For this reason, they were conceptualized as one piece in my original framework. At the same time, these were different areas of experience that needed to be captured with different interview questions. Hence, on the list of resources used in the social network interview, the first three items were meant to capture *sense of belonging* (1a, 1b, and 1c) and the last two items were meant to capture *sense of competence* (2a and 2b). Sometimes however, item 1c (*building a learning community*) is categorized under *sense of competence* if that learning community led to a heightened sense of competence for the student. For example, ThanhGiang said her mom introduces her to people at church who are in the healthcare field. Those healthcare individuals are current professionals, not current students at Olympic College. ThanhGiang goes to them when she has general questions about the major, requirements, or other academic questions. For this case, her learning community was a resource to help her build her *sense of competence*, not necessarily a *sense of belonging*. I created a few graphs/charts to zeroed in on *sense of belonging* and *sense of competence* to see if there were any in-group differences. For example, do first and second generation students report experiencing equal amounts of *sense of belonging*? These graphs/charts that zeroed-in on *sense of competence* and *sense of belonging* are available in the appendix, link to appendix 8B.

As illustrated in those graphs, these students do not have equal support when it comes to *sense of competence* and a *sense of belonging*. They reported having much more support for *sense of competence* than they do for a *sense of belonging*. Furthermore, they seem to be getting much of the support around *sense of competence* from IA ties.

Heightened *sense-of-competence support* from *IA ties* is likely a result of *stereotype promise*. Past research have noted that Asian students often benefit from *stereotype promise*, as opposed to being harmed by *stereotype threat*. *Stereotype threat* refers to situations where students perform badly as a result of the low expectations from institution agents, authoritative figures, and societal expectations. *Stereotype promise*, on the other hand, is when students rise to the occasion to meet the high expectations of those around them. Existing research has suggested that Asian students are often favorably viewed as the model minority group by faculty, school staff, advisors, etc. and this favorable outlook can influence their positive educational outcomes. In this study, data suggests that the heightened support around *sense of competence* that students are reporting is likely one of the many outcomes of *stereotype promise*.

Throughout my interviews with focal students, I heard multiple stories of how IAs have gone beyond their duties to provide students with a wide range of support that elevates their *sense of competence*, from meaningful encouragement to institutional information and resources. I argue that these generous acts are a result of the IA's favorable perception of Vietnamese American students, in general, and these particular students, specifically. In the following paragraphs, I will weave together data from multiple sources, interviews with IAs and focal students, in order to provide evidence for the claims made in this paragraph.

In general, the faculty, advisors and school staff who I interviewed for this study all see Vietnamese-American students as hard-working, quiet, studious, and respectful students. For example, Olivia, an IBEST instructor at Olympic College said, "*They're very dedicated. I would say 90 percent of students are very dedicated students who work hard and very respectful and they're very collaborative. They're just like excellent students.*" And Abigail, an advisor at Olympic College says, "*They tend to be extremely respectful of my time. Um, they very prepared questions when they come and they're also very clear with their educational goals.*" Matt, math faculty and current STEM dean at Rainier College has the following thoughts about the Vietnamese students he has worked with: "*I don't want to stereotype folks, but you know, umm, like kind of the, the, the stereotype of Asian students in general are that they tend to be quieter and not as likely, they don't answer ask as many questions in class.*"

Similarly, on the other side of the coin, the focal participants in this study also had a lot of positive things to say about the IAs with whom they had worked with, i.e., instructors, advisors, and school personnel. In the excerpt below, TruongVy praises the programs, resources

and IAs at her school. She talks about how helpful the teachers and advisors at Olympic College are in helping her improve her English.

TD: *So how do you think is your community involved in your education? How do you think friends, teachers, staff, neighbors, how do they help you in your education?*

TUÔNGVY: *“Well, teachers help me by showing me how to study. They give me good lessons in class. They have group assignments to help me practice speaking. Like I tell her that I have trouble speaking, so she sets me up with group members that allow me to practice speaking. And encourages me to get a tutor. And encourages me to take classes on ESL computer, ESL health, ESL math and things like that. And staff, like whenever I can't log in to a computer, this uncle (i.e., computer staff) helps me. And whenever I have any questions about classes, then I go to the Transitions Center to ask Lilian.*

TườngVy's view is very common, especially among the first-generation students in this study. In the excerpt below, DiễmMy, another first generation student, talks about her first ESL instructor and how the instructor introduces her to a whole new world of resources at Rainier College.

DIỄMMY: *Yeah, actually I'm very lucky. The first quarter I studied with a teacher, she's really helpful, very kind. She introduced for us everything. You know, we're the new student, we don't know anything. She taught us how to apply for scholarship and she's willing to write a recommendation letter for us and very helpful and she encourage us to go to the resources at school. Yeah, so through this teacher I know about the library, I know about the resources, where they can help me, everything.*

Stereotype promise leads to mutual positivity between IAs and the students with whom they work with. This positivity leads to support in various forms, such as encouragement source and information flow like in TườngVy and DiễmMy's examples. Sometimes, the support is tailored to a specific student's situation and that can lead to more meaningful institutional capital, as illustrated in the examples below. In all of these examples, NgọcHương, DiễmMy and MinhHằng shared stories of how their IAs have provided them with support beyond their regular duties.

When I interviewed NgọcHương during fall 2018, she said that she had been working on her application for admission to the university. She also mentioned that Jack, the AANAPISI advisor, had told her that he would be willing to look over her personal statement when it was ready. NgọcHương says, *“Next month I have to start my application to the university and he's*

the one that helps me the most. [...] So recently I have to, I have to like finish my personal statements. So he's the one that promise that he will take a look at my personal statement when I'm done." As an AANAPISI advisor, this is certainly not part of his job; he could easily have suggested for her to seek help at the writing center, but he did not. Instead, he offered to proofread her personal statement for her. This generous support could have stemmed from his positive perception of NgọcHương as a studious and hard-working student.

The second example is about DiễmMy and Grace, DiễmMy's ESL instructor. In the excerpt below, DiễmMy talks about how Grace wrote recommendation letters for her when she was applying for scholarships. Even though writing recommendation letters for students is not too far beyond regular responsibilities of faculty, the extraordinary part about this story is that Grace did this during her break. At the time, she was traveling abroad, yet she still managed to find the time and energy to write DiễmMy recommendation letters.

DIỄMMY: *One quarter, she was on vacation, she did not teach us, another teacher, but she still wrote a letter for me, even when she was overseas.*

TD: *And have you gotten a scholarship with the help of Grace? Are you on scholarship right now?*

DIỄMMY: *Yeah, I have it. They give me two quarters. So Grace wrote the letter for me.*

The next two examples are from MinhHằng and Lilian, an I-BEST advisor in the BTSD department. MinhHằng is currently working towards an AAS in Early Childhood & Family Studies (ECFS). During the last quarter of her first certificate, she needed to find a practicum site. The ECFS program provides students a practicum handbook with suggested sites that they could contact, but it is each student's responsibility to do all the communications and work out all the logistics of getting themselves placed. This could be a lot of navigation for some EL students. Lilian helped MinhHằng through this process by researching each site together and providing language support when MinhHằng made the call to childcare centers. Lilian also helped her look for scholarships to cover her tuition when her financial aid didn't come through, *"Yeah, I remember two years ago, that class was four or five hundred. And they [financial aid] only gave me three hundred. And Lilian said can you pay for it? But I said uhh, I don't have a job. And Lilian said, ok, I'll help you find a scholarship."* Lilian's support did not stop with educational issues, but also extended beyond. After finishing the first two certificates, MinhHằng found a job at Hai Ba Trung Preschool. When she ran into problems at work, such as

how to navigate work politics, handle workloads, communicate with her coworkers and supervisor, etc., she confided in Lilian, and Lilian helped her brainstorm ideas on handling the situation. The amount of support that Lilian provided for MinhHằng was undoubtedly beyond her call of duty. She generously gave MinhHằng her time, expertise and resources, most likely because she also viewed MinhHằng in a positive light. Lilian was one of the *alters* from MinhHằng's network whom I interviewed. When I asked Lilian to describe MinhHằng, this is what she said, “*Um, she's very motivated, very, um, happy, umm happy. It's probably the wrong word, but just kind of joyful person. And she was really good about asking questions and checking in all the time, which is really helpful, I think, in a program like this. So umm, yeah, I'd say those things.*”

PART 3: STRONG COLLEGE-FEASIBILITY RESOURCES FROM KIN TIES ENABLES for COLLEGE RE-ACCESS

“*There's a lot that happens before education can happen,*” says Anna, BíchChâu's alter, one of the SEA navigators stationed at Olympic College. Anna's words beautifully sums up one of the major ideas in this section. There are so much that students have to go through before they can physically be in a classroom or when learning can cognitively and mentally happen. Unfortunately, sometimes our education system forgets that and views education -- where, how, when it happens – in a narrow frame that does not provide the necessary preparational support. Metaphorically, this process can be likened to planting a tree; farmers have to prep the soil before planting the seed. In the context of this study, the soil-prep work can be metaphorically understood as providing students with the necessary *college-feasibility resources*, which are the types of support that help students manage their family-and-work commitments. Some examples of these include things such as childcare, food shortage, housing instability, transportation, etc. From interview data with the focal students in this study, they reported to be well-supported in this area. Moreover, KIN ties turned out to be the top provider for *college-feasibility resources*.

Having access to *college-feasibility resources* can be critical to student success, especially for nontraditional adult students. Unlike traditional students, nontraditional students at community colleges, especially minority adult students, when they drop-out, most drop-out because of family and work related reasons (Price, 1993; Karp, 2011; Samuel & Scott, 2014). This holds true for the focal students in this study as well. Almost everyone spoke positively

about their educational experience - how grateful they were to their teachers and advisors or how much they enjoyed class activities/materials. Yet, eight or half of the students are returning students: DiễmHuệ, ThanhĐiệp, ThúyQuỳnh, BíchChâu, MinhTuyết, MinhHằng, HuệMai, and QuốcTrọng. The chart below is a summary of these eight students' educational journeys, i.e., the year/quarter of when they originally started school, a brief description of why they stopped-out, and the year/quarter of when they returned. A clear pattern here is that these students stopped-out because of personal life circumstances.

NAME	DATE STARTED	DESCRIPTION OF RE-ACCESS STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY	DATE RETURNED
Diễm Huệ	Fall 2010	Diễm Huệ originally started in fall of 2010, in ESL level 2B at Rainier College. She progressed continuously through ESL program. After exiting ESL, she took some GED classes in the ABE program. After that, she stopped in 2015 and came back in 2017. Upon her return, she took First Step for one quarter before enrolling in the Medical Office Program.	2017
Thanh Điệp	2011	Thanh Điệp started in ESL at Rainier College in 2011 right after coming to the U.S. However, she only enrolled for a few quarters and then stopped due to childcare issues. She came back in 2015.	2015
Thúy Quỳnh	2015	Thúy Quỳnh started in 2015 in ESL 4B at Rainier College but only stayed for one quarter. She stopped-out to give birth to her daughter. After recovering from childbirth, she re-enrolled, but only for a few days before stopping out again. This second time, she stopped-out because of work. Then in the fall of 2017, she came back again and was placed in level 5-6.	2017
Bích Châu	2011	Bích Châu started in 2011 at Olympic College with the intention of going into Business & Information Technology. Unfortunately, she didn't do well in her classes and stopped out in 2013. She later re-enrolled in 2015 for Early Childhood & Family Studies. Since returning, she's been enrolling part-time.	2015
Minh Tuyết	2016	Minh Tuyết started in 2016 in ESL 4A at Olympic College. She stayed in ESL for a year and then had to stopped out due to lack of childcare. Then in the fall of 2018, she came back and took I-BEST Medical Assistant classes. At the time of the interview, she was finishing up her first quarter in the program.	Fall 2018
Minh Hằng	2014	Minh Hằng started in 2014 in ESL level 2 at Olympic College. She stayed in ESL for two years. During that time, she moved through the ESL program and finished the first two certificates of the Early Childhood Education Program. After that, she stopped school and went to work. She later came back in the fall of 2018.	Fall 2018
Huệ Mai	Spring 2016	Huệ Mai started in spring 2016 in ESL at Renton College. She was only there for one quarter before stopping out due to childbirth. She came back in fall of 2017. This time she enrolled at Olympic College and took Transitional ESL.	Fall 2018
Quốc Trọng	About 2013	Quốc Trọng began at Olympic College in the ESL program in level 1 in 2013. He got to about level 4 or so and stopped. He went to work and tried different occupations, including working in construction and at a nail salon. He later came back to school and enrolled at SVI, in an ESL class designed specifically for construction workers. After a few quarters of there, he learned about financial aid and began taking college level classes at Olympic College. He shares that every quarter, he only enrolls part-time, usually one main class and one elective, such as yoga or keyboarding.	About 2016

Certainly, the educational journeys of these students have not been smooth and continuous. Below are some excerpts of how students talked about their journeys:

MINHTUYẾT: *I started in 2016. But I stopped out for a year, a little more than a year. Because I had a small child and no childcare. At that time, we didn't have anyone to watch her, my husband was in school.*

TD: *Can you describe a little bit about your experience when you first started in 2010?*

DIỄMHUỆ: *I studied a little bit of English in Vietnam, for a few months. And then when I came over here, I tested into 2B. And then I studied ESL up to level 5. And then I took GED classes. And then I stopped out for sometime. And then I returned to school and took the placement test again. And then took First Step class. And then I went into Medical Office after First Step.*

TD: *So when you started in 2010, how long did you stay?*

DIỄMHUỆ: *2015. And then I stopped for awhile and came back in 2017.*

TD: *So when you started, did you start in ESL? And then did you stop and then come back?*

THÚYQUỲNH: *Yeah, I started in ESL. Yeah.*

TD: *And when you first started, what classes did you take?*

THÚYQUỲNH: *About 2015. ESL level 4B.*

TD: *And how long were you in ESL classes and when did you stop?*

THÚYQUỲNH: *Only one quarter. Only one quarter and then I stopped because I gave birth. And then I came back, but I only came back for one week and then I got a job at McDonald's so I stopped again. Then last year I came back again.*

TD: *So last year, last fall?*

THÚYQUỲNH: *Yeah, fall 2017.*

TD: *So fall 2017 was when you came back? And when you came back, what level did you get placed?*

THÚYQUỲNH: *I did the test again and I was placed between level 5 and level 6. So I started in level 5, and then level 6 and then last summer 2018 I took ABE and then now fall 2018 I go to college.*

TD: *How long have you been a student at this college?*

BÍCHCHÂU: *Uh, well it started 2011 and then I didn't finished, so and I stopped in 2013 before and then I came back in 2015. And then I started different major and I ever since the fall of 2015, I started Early Childhood and Family Studies all the way until the present now.*

TD: *So you started in Business and Information Technology, but you didn't have a lot of interest in that program and then you stopped?*

BÍCHCHÂU: *It's like, I think I stopped because I had a hard time in that class or maybe because I lacked something and then I wasn't able to finish and complete that class with a good grade. So I failed. That's basically why I stopped in 2013 and then later on I came in 2015 for something else.*

TD: *And how far along are you in your program?*

BÍCHCHÂU: *Um, I was part time. So I started fall 2015 all the way until now. But I skipped one summer quarter, probably in 2016. Yeah.*

As evidenced in the excerpts above, the reason that most of these students stopped-out is related to either work or family or both. For almost every student except for BíchChâu, they explicitly mentioned that they had to stop-out because it conflicted with their work and/or family responsibilities. These students put their education on pause in order to focus on other life priorities, and when they got support with those other responsibilities, they came back to school. In examining these students' postsecondary-re/access decisions, I noticed the following patterns regarding how they strategized to meet life's challenges: 1) They recruited help from extended

family members, especially parents and parents-in-law, to help with childcare and other family responsibilities. 2) They cobbled together short pathways to build longer roads in order to meet their family's immediate financial challenges. This reflects a Vietnamese proverb that states: Lấy đường ngắn nối đường dài. 3) Couples alternated family responsibilities and took turns pursuing individual educational goals. In the following paragraphs, I will elaborate on each of these strategies.

They recruit extended family members to help with childcare and other family responsibilities, (ThanhDiệp, MinhHằng & HuệMai). Three students in this study show clear examples in using this strategy - ThanhDiệp, MinhHằng and HuệMai. One common thread between all three stories of ThanhDiệp, HuệMai and MinhHằng is that they have parents and/or parents-in-law close by to share family responsibilities and spouses who are willing to be the main breadwinner for the family. ThanhDiệp and HuệMai both have small children. HuệMai lives in an extended family environment, meaning that she lives with her husband, son, parents-in-law and siblings-in-law. Her children are still very young - one toddler and another on the way. On a regular basis, her retired father-in-law watches her son while she is at school and her husband is at work. Her husband, as the oldest son in the family, works to support most expenses in the family. Her mother-in-law and brother-in-law provide supplemental income in the family. HuệMai works a few hours a week on campus. When she's not in class or working at her part-time job, she is usually at home with her son. During finals, her parents-in-law would take care of her son even when she's home so that she could have more time to study. Like HuệMai, ThanhDiệp's husband is also the sole breadwinner in the family. However, her living situation is a little different from HuệMai's in that she only lives with her immediate family members, i.e., husband and children, who are elementary school age - eight and six years old. Another point of difference is that HuệMai's biological parents are in Vietnam, ThanhDiệp's are here in the Pacific Northwest. This means that they have an extra set of hands to help with the kids. In the excerpt below, ThanhDiệp talks about how both sets of parents help her take care of the kids and household chores when she has too much to do for school.

TD: *What does your family think about your education?*

THANHDIỆP: *Yeah, they encourage me to follow. They help me so much. My husband help me to pick up my children when he can go early. My parents sometimes help me to cook.*

TD: *Any other ways that they support in your education?*

THANHDIỆP: *Yeah, they always encourage me by talking with me, encourage*

me for me to try my best. They always help me. They help me a lot.

Throughout both interviews, whenever she talked about either set of parents, she always praises how helpful and encouraging they have been in her educational journey. They give her more time by taking over some of the household chores and caring for her children.

THANHDIỆP: *So my parents, I have my parents on my side and my parents in law. So I talk with them regularly, like every week. [...] Yes, they support me a lot. They ask me to study. If difficult, I can study one by one. Like I'm not good in English, so I can take longer than other people. So they support me a lot. [...] They're always ready to help me when I need it. They also help me when I need help with my children. They ready to help me. To pick up, or keep them for one day, two days so I can study.*

MinhHằng's story is a little different than ThanhDiệp and HuệMai in that she is working full-time. She and her husband don't have any children at the moment. They live with his parents, so similar to HuệMai and ThanhDiệp, the parents also help them with household chores like cooking and cleaning. All three students in this section share one commonality in that they have financial assistance from their supportive spouses and kind parents/parents-in-laws who are able and willing to help with family responsibilities. If it weren't for these two sources of support, it is very likely that they wouldn't be able to return to school after stopping out.

They cobbled together short paths to build longer roads, (MinhHằng & MinhTuyết). The second strategy that students use to help them meet life's challenges while also pursuing their educational goal is by planning out their courses carefully, in such a way that would allow them to go to work while working for a more advanced degree. In MinhHằng's case, her long term goal is to be a public school teacher. For MinhTuyết, her goal is to be a medical interpreter; however, she couldn't find a program here in the Pacific Northwest, so her runner-up goal is to be a nurse. For both, the immediate program that they're in is not the program of their long-term goal. However, fortunately for MinhHằng, her program offers a stackable degree model, which allows her to earn short certificates and go to work so that she can support herself first. Then while she's financially stable she can come back and continue to earn higher degrees to achieve her occupational goal and increase earnings. The classes within this program is tightly designed and clearly mapped out and as a result she doesn't waste time and money taking any unnecessary classes. This model works well for adult students who need short-term support to get themselves financially stable first, and at the same time, also have clear long-term goals. As for MinhTuyết,

her situation is not as fortunate as Minh Hằng because her program is not available as a stackable degree; however, her strategy is similar. She goes for a short-term certificate first, something that would allow her to go to work and have an income to contribute to her family. Then once her financial situation is more stable, then she could continue part-time for her nursing degree. Even though there isn't a stackable certificate available, she is choosing degrees within the same major cluster. Her current program is Medical Assistant. Both Minh Hằng and Minh Tuyết cannot afford to pursue their long-term goal directly because they need to financially support their family. Therefore, their strategy is to pursue a short-term certificate so that they could go to work while continuing to pursue the longer occupational goal.

Couples rotated family responsibilities and took turns pursuing education (Minh Tuyết & Thanh Diệp). The third strategy that I noticed is that some couples would alternate, taking turns going back to school. This was especially true for couples who immigrated together, at the same time. Minh Tuyết and Thanh Diệp shows examples of this strategy. A few years ago, their husbands went to school while the wives worked and/or took care of the family. Now, it is the women's turn to pursue their education. As Thanh Diệp puts it, *"He [referring to her husband] studied here before me, so after he graduated from Rainier College, so it's my turn to go to Rainier College to study. Before he was always working and study. He's very good."*

Circling back to the agricultural metaphor at the beginning of this section, conversations around student success is usually focused on "improving the seed" -- meaning we talk about elevating students' academic skills (math, writing, reading, etc.), social/emotional skills (grit), technological skills, study skills, etc.; yet, we don't give enough attention to the conditions in which students grow. There is no denying that those skills are important; however, those skills alone cannot be the only lens to account for student success. For example, a student who has all the academic skills required might still have a hard time persisting on their educational journey if they have conflicting family-and-work commitments. Just as no matter how healthy and perfect a seed is, if you plant that seed in the middle of a desert or at the center of barren land, then the chances that it would sprout may be sparse. Similarly, a student who possesses all the skills and knowledge necessary for educational success but lacks the support to meet his/her college-feasibility challenges might be less likely to succeed educationally.

In sum, half of the focal students in this study are returning students. After a thorough examination of the reasons why they left and the resources that enabled them to come back, it is

clear that access to *college-feasibility resources* is a critical factor in their educational success. This discovery suggests that we need to re-examine what we mean when we say that community colleges are “open access” institutions. If the lack of college-feasibility resources is keeping students from returning to pursue their education, causing students to stop out, or hindering their chances of success, then we as an institution are not meeting our mission. If we do not have an institutionalized system to support students in meeting their family-and-work challenges, then are we actually an “open access” institution?

In sum, to address the last subsidiary research question, this chapter discussed three findings around forms of SCfCS that students have harvested. 1) *Multiplexity* allow students with small-homogeneous networks to have access to diverse forms of SCfCS. The interworking of qualitative and quantitative data in this finding supports the call for more qualitative SNA research. 2) Students report having more access to support that builds their *sense of competence* as opposed to *their sense of belonging*. Furthermore, students identify IAs as the supplier for much of the resources around building their *sense of competence*. I argued that the heightened *sense-of-competence support* that students receive from IAs is likely a function of *stereotype promise*. 3) They receive much access to *college-feasibility resources* from KIN ties. This finding raises questions around college access and re-access.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION - DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Results from my attempt to understand Vietnamese-American students' process of cultivating *social capital for college success* – as mediated by their *community cultural wealth* and facilitated or impeded by the *implicit* and *explicit structural forces* at their institution – have led me to argue that institutional possibilities and shortfalls matter in the following four ways: **1)** While it is important that we honor and celebrate the multiple forms of cultural wealth that students bring, it is problematic to simply stop there. More specifically, forms of cultural wealth such as *resistant capital*, while they highlight the student's mental strength, they are also signals of a broken system and imply the following reflective question: what is it in the system that requires students to need resistance in order to reach college success? **2)** While *explicit structural forces* determine a student's technical competencies, *implicit structural forces* shape a student's worldview. Given its deep and enduring impact, I propose that two-year institutions invest more attention and resources in professional-development efforts that examine the institution's *implicit structural forces*. **3)** Results show that for the focal students in this study, *tie strength* is characterized by *multiplexity*, *comradery*, and *trust*; furthermore, these characteristics are reliable indicators of favorable conditions for cultivating *social capital for college success*. This finding urges two-year institutions to design student experiences that foster *multiplexity*, *comradery* and *trust* in student-PEER, student-IA and student-COMM relationships. **4)** Results show that for first-generation and nontraditional students, access to *college-feasibility resources* is a strong predictor of college access/re-access. Connecting these last two findings, I assert that one way institutions can support students in cultivating *college-feasibility resources* is to foster PEER, IA and COMM relationships that are characterized by *multiplexity*, *comradery* and *trust*.

In this chapter, I will share my reflection of the study's findings and its methodology in three parts: Discussion, Significance of Findings, and Future Directions. Subsections in the Discussion will include the following elements: 1) a brief synopsis of the finding, 2) my interpretation of that finding, and 3) my reflection on how that finding fits within my original framework as well as the larger literature, (i.e., What does that finding mean in light of my original theoretical framework? How does it fit within the broader body of literature on

immigrant students and their post-secondary education?) After the Discussion, I will then consider the significance of these findings, both theoretically and practically. Finally, building on the first two sections, I will make recommendations for practitioners and researchers in the last part entitled Future Directions.

PART 1: DISCUSSION

Vietnamese Diaspora

Much of the literature on the Vietnamese diaspora do identify the unique characteristics of each of the three waves of Vietnamese immigrants and discuss how these characteristics contribute to their adaptation and mobility in the United States. However, no where in the literature has there been a systematic analysis of the distinctions between these waves. On examining the literature on Vietnamese diaspora, I have systematically characterized these waves according to three indicators: a) their transnational capital, b) their manner of immigration, and c) their time of immigration. On examining the characteristics of recent Vietnamese immigrants, I discovered that this group has one additional attribute that makes them distinct from previous waves. This additional attribute is that upon arrival, they have kin ties and cultural ties who are economically and/or socially integrated into the host society. This attribute is not surprising when we consider their manner of immigration, which is predominantly through family reunification. In order to sponsor family members from abroad to the United States, the sponsoring individual needs to demonstrate a certain degree of economic and social stability so that they can support their recently-arrived family members get established in the new country. In turn, this point serves as a plausible explanation for the following finding -- that data from this study show that Vietnamese-American students do in fact get much of their *institutional resources* from their *cultural ties*. Even though this finding contradicts previous studies on minority students (Stanton-Salazar, 2011), it is not surprising when we consider the points mentioned above.

Systematic Analysis of the Vietnamese Diaspora. While the idea that there are consequential differences between the sub-groups within the Vietnamese diaspora is not new, a systematic analysis of these characteristics is something that previous studies have not done before. Previous studies have discussed the variability between the three waves of Vietnamese immigration; they pointed out the characteristics of each group as they relate to the group's

varying degree of adaptation in the host society. However, none of systematically characterized these waves. In establishing clear indicators for examining the variability between these waves, I have contributed theoretically to the landscape on Vietnamese diaspora research.

After applying these indicators in the immediate study, it was revealed that the most recent group of Vietnamese immigrants exhibit one additional characteristic that set them apart from all previous groups - their access to resource-rich cultural ties. Unlike their predecessors, this is the only group who, upon arrival, has cultural ties that have already socially and economically established themselves in the host society. This is a logical finding as their manner of immigration is predominantly through family reunification. This finding serves as an explanation for another finding discussed in chapter 7 (on *social capital for college success*), which is that these students do in fact receive much of their *institutional resources* from *cultural ties*. Although this finding contradicts existing studies on minority students' access to institutional capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2007), it is logical given this group's manner of immigration and hence their context of arrival. In order to sponsor a family over from Vietnam, the sponsoring family needs to be socially and economically stable so that they can support their newly-arrived family member(s). As such, it is not a surprise that the focal students in this study reported that they receive various forms of institutional capital from their cultural ties, i.e., family members and individuals in the Vietnamese community.

Resistant Capital

For the students in this study, *resistant capital* manifested differently from what Yosso had envisioned. For these students, *resistant capital* meant having the practical skill-sets and the mental endurance to wade through a system that was not designed to support them. This finding did not fit perfectly with my original framework. Because I went into this study employing a direct interpretation of Yosso's six forms of *community cultural wealth*, it was not easy for me to identify *resistant capital* at first. These students did not show evidence of engaging in oppositional behaviors as Yosso's definition had suggested. They possess *resistant capital* not because they speak out at town hall meetings or participate in strikes, but instead, they exercise their *resistant capital* by refusing to succumb to the status quo. For example, the very fact that Quốc Trọng is still enrolled and making progress towards his degree despite having been challenged with numerous hurdles throughout his path is a prime testament that *resistant capital*

do exist for Vietnamese-American students. Due to this modification and digression from Yosso's original definition, this finding is, in a way, an anomalistic finding.

This finding is, in a sense, the silver lining around a dark cumulonimbus cloud. It is a celebratory finding that demonstrates the *cultural wealth* of minority students, at the same time, it also speaks to the brokenness of our postsecondary education system. On the one hand, it is a positive and encouraging piece of information; the finding chips away at the deficit narrative of nontraditional students by presenting evidence that they not only have access to an unrelenting characteristic but they can also draw on this form of capital to further their education. On the other hand, this finding acts as a dark cloak that hides the tough questions we ought to ask ourselves about our two-year college system: What is it in the system that makes it so hard for students to succeed? Is our system functioning as we intend if students need to have the skills and endurance to swim upstream in order to succeed? In other words, it is great that students possess *resistant capital* and manage to persist; however, shouldn't institutions aim to design a system where the status quo is for all students, not only the traditional and privileged, succeed? Without this additional level of interrogation on the institution, we are romanticizing an old narrative of minority students and their success; and more importantly, if we only stop at the celebratory aspect of this finding, we are unfairly exonerating the system of its responsibility for all students, including nontraditional students.

College-Feasibility Resources & College Access

One of the most conclusive findings in this study is that Vietnamese-American students do in fact get much of their *college-feasibility resources* from their *kin ties*. This finding aligns with those from previous studies on immigrant and API students, which emphasized the important role of family in their educational journeys (Goyette & Conchas, 2002; Bankston & Zhou, 1998). On top of that, this finding adds an additional layer of specificity by identifying the different forms of *college-feasibility resources* that *kin ties* provide, i.e., finance, childcare, housing, transportation, etc.

Furthermore, in examining the implications of *college-feasibility factors*, I found that the availability of (or lack thereof) access to *college-feasibility resources* is a critical factor that heavily influences a student's decision on whether or not to stop-out as well as if/when to return. In other words, from a student's perspective, *college-feasibility factors* are tightly connected to their college-persistent and college-access decisions. Theoretically, this finding suggests that

two-year college institutions ought to re-examine what we mean by “open access” and “college retention.” There is a disconnect between what institutions practice and what students actually experience. “Open access” is one of the defining characteristics of two-year college systems. From the system’s perspective, this is interpreted as open enrollment, immunity from course prerequisites, exemption from college-entrance exams, an abbreviated college admissions process, etc. Within the Basic Studies Department, when we discuss ways to retain students, the conversation circles around ideas such as building more I-BEST programs, ramping up academic support, redesigning the curriculum, amending the class schedule, etc. At the college-wide level, this discussion involves academic pathways, major clusters, alert systems, information accessibility, etc. However, from the reality of students, as shown by the results from this study, students would enroll or re-enroll when they have people to support them with life's necessities, i.e., childcare, housing, transportation, finance, etc. Conversely, they would stop-out when that support disappears. In this study, I saw this pattern played out in the lives of eight returning students. Reflecting on this disconnect between the institution’s interpretation of access and retention versus the student’s reality and their pattern of enrollment, I argue that there are theoretical implications to this finding and that the system needs to re-examine and broaden our definitions of *access* and *retention*. On a more tangible level, this finding suggests that two-year colleges need to collaborate with local NGOs, CBOs and GOVs in order to bring wrap-around services onto college campuses.

Structural Forces: Consequences of Implicit Structural Forces

There are two types of *structural forces* - *explicit structural forces (ESFs)* and *implicit structural forces (ISFs)*. While each serves a different/unique purpose, both have equally important impacts on a student’s outcome. *ESFs* dictate the tangible competencies and technical skills that a student gains from his/her education, i.e., how to write a lesson plan, how to code a computer program, how to draft a blueprint for a house, how to interpret a patient’s vital signs, etc. On the other hand, *ISFs* socialize a student’s identity and color their worldview, i.e., the lens that influences how they see the world, themselves and their place in that world.

The Reciprocal Relationship between Schooling & Identity. In this paragraph, I will attempt to argue that there is a reciprocal relationship between schooling and identity, yet we often let half of this relationship overshadow the other. For example, we create activities to activate a student’s schema before delving into a reading exercise, or we design lessons that tie-

in elements of a student's home life, or we showcase cultural representations from students in classrooms and hallways. These pedagogical strategies honor the identity that students have outside of the classroom and recognize the added-value of that identity to their education. While these are effective and equitable pedagogical practices, they are only half of the equation for two reasons: 1) They only address *ESFs*; *ISFs* is missing. 2) They only focus on the identity that students bring into the classroom but ignore the socialized identity that the schooling process has shaped.

I contend that students also have a layer of identity that is socialized through their schooling process. This socialized identity is shaped by factors that I refer to as the *implicit structural forces (ISFs)*, i.e., institutionally-assumed norms and practices, untaught subjects, avoided conversation topics, etc. As argued in chapter 5, *ISFs* influence a student's educational experience and thereby shape their socialized identity. In this study, I argue that this socialized identity is manifested in two world-view lenses, which I called their *Colonialistic Lens* and *Meritocratic Lens*. There is a discrepancy between the consequences of *ISFs* and two-year college system's unbalanced focus on *ESFs*. This discrepancy suggests that we ought to broaden our scope when it comes to professional development at two-year colleges.

Implicit Structural Forces that Perpetuate Colonialistic Lens. *ISFs* influence a student's educational experience, which in turn, shape their world-view lens. These socialized lenses have subtle yet deep and long-lasting consequences in different areas of a student's life. Two socialized lenses that emerged from the data in this study are: *the Colonialistic Lens* and *the meritocratic lens*. Students displayed a highly favorable view of the English language and Americanism, a perspective that I referred to as their ***Colonialistic Lens***. They also exhibited high trust in the system, believing that we live in a fair world that rewards talent and hard work, a perspective that I referred to as their ***Meritocratic Lens***.

I make sense of the *Colonialistic Lens* that these students exhibit by drawing on two structural factors: 1) Vietnam's colonial history with France and the United States and 2) the Eurocentric positionality of the system and *institutional agents* in the system. To the first point, I believe that colonialism can be internalized just as there is the concept of *internalized racism*. Economically, colonialism is about exploiting the physical resources and manual labor from a group of people. Politically, it is about exerting political influence in the region. In order for these things to happen, colonizers have to suppress the cultural values of the colonized. In other

words, for pragmatic reasons, the colonizers have to establish their superiority and legitimize their dominance in order to remain in control. Over time, the colonized come to internalize their own inferiority and the colonizer's superiority; he comes to imitate his master's actions and set it as standards to aspire to. As Frantz Fanon, the West Indian psychiatrist, political philosopher, revolutionary, and writer, once wrote: "The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards," (Fanon, 1986, p. 18). **In sum**, I believe that the pedestaled view of Americanism and the English language is partly the residue of an internalized colonized psyche that have solidified as a result over a hundred years of French rule and American involvement, from 1858 to 1975.

The second explanation of students' *Colonialistic Lens* comes from the system's Eurocentric positionality. As elaborated in chapter five, this Eurocentric positionality manifests itself in ways such as the English-only rule in ESL classrooms, the low number of minority faculty and staff at the college, and the subtle micro-aggression in student-IA interactions. I argue that these elements of Eurocentric positionality in the college environment perpetuate the internalized colonialism in Vietnamese-American students and culminating what I referred to as the *Colonialistic Lens*, through which they view the world and themselves.

Implicit Structural Forces that Shape Meritocratic Lens of Educational Success. The other lens molded by *implicit structural forces* in the college environment is something I referred to as their *meritocratic view of educational success*, the belief that one's educational success is proportionate to one's ability and effort. Through this lens, students believe that their classmates and they themselves make progress/advancement based on their individual merits. I came to this hypothesis (conclusion?) by drawing on two ancillary findings: their experience with *stereotype promise* and display of *system justification*. In the following paragraph, I will attempt to explain how *stereotype promise* and *system justification* are plausible antecedents for a *Meritocratic Lens* of educational success.

Data from this study finds that Vietnamese-American students do indeed benefit from *stereotype promise*, which supports previous research done on Asian American students (Lee, 2014). *Stereotype promise* (as opposed to *stereotype threat*) is a concept used to convey the idea that when students are viewed positively, they will perform in such a way that confirms that positive stereotype (Lee, 2014; Lee & Zhou, 2015). This study extends the idea of *stereotype promise* by asserting that there is a cyclical relationship between the positive stereotype that IAs

project, to the positive performance that students display, to the institutional resources that IAs transmit, resources that are beyond the IA's "official job description," as demonstrated through the following student-IA pairs in this study: Thúy Quỳnh-Grace and Minh Hằng-Lilian. In other words, institutional resources, positive performances and positive stereotypes are elements that feed into each other, within a cyclical process that I will refer to here as the *promise cycle*.

The second ancillary finding that contributes to students' *Meritocratic Lens* is their strong sense of *system justification*, one of the measures I used to capture *trust* in this study. As elaborated in chapter six on *Ego-centric Network Characteristics*, data showed that the focal students in this study displayed a high sense of *system justification*, meaning they exhibited trust in the institution and faith in IAs. They trust that the system operates fairly, where every student's talent and effort are appropriately rewarded. Additionally, they have faith in the benevolence of authoritative figures such as *institutional agents (IAs)*, believing that they work objectively on behalf of every student. I speculate that this high sense of *system justification* is partly a function of their repeated participation in the *promise cycle* (and partly a function of other historical factors that I will elaborate when discussing *trust* as an indicator of *tie strength*). In other words, students who experience *promise stereotype* over time will more likely have a strong sense of *system justification*. Furthermore, I hypothesize that the Vietnamese-American students' *meritocratic lens of educational success* is a culmination of students' accumulated participation in the *promise cycle* and their strengthened *system justification*.

Structural Forces: Implications of Explicit Structural Forces

Two key findings emerged from the data regarding ESFs at Rainier College and Olympic College: 1) Students are more likely to utilize college services that are integrated into their course curriculum. 2) While students report seeing value in attending faculty office-hour, the college district does not offer equitable policies around office-hour for all faculty members.

Integration of Student Services & Course Curriculum. From student-interview data, we see a pattern where students report that they are more likely to utilize a campus service when that service is integrated into the course curriculum. The manner in which that integration happened varied - in the form of a guest speaker, an assignment, a campus tour, etc. Students talk about, mention, and self-report that they use services that their instructors introduced in class. This finding echoes previous studies in higher education that have called for a universal-design approach to postsecondary instruction (Shaw, 2011). Moreover, this finding also serves as

evidence that advocates for stronger and more meaningful collaboration between two departments: student services and instruction.

Faculty Office Hour. There is a disconnect between what students shared about their experience in attending office-hour and the college district's policies around this resource. Office-hour is a conduit for the exchange of trust and information to happen, not only between one student and one instructor, but also between a student and his/her peers (i.e., as in ThanhGiang's case, where the instructor facilitates small-group discussions and study sessions during their office-hour). Given its important role, it is surprising to find out that the college district does not have a formal mechanism to incentivize all faculty to offer office-hour to their students, especially adjuncts, who make-up a majority of the faculty body in the district. Furthermore, this pattern is common throughout the two-year college system. This finding emphasizes the positive effects of faculty office-hour as has been discussed in previous studies on higher education (Limberg, 2010). Even though it is not a new discovery, it is still worth repeating because the problem related to it still exists, meaning that the working conditions of faculty still have not changed. Similar to the finding above, this one also has practical implications that I will elaborate later in this chapter. In brief, it suggests that administration and union work together to establish a structure that encourages and incentivize all faculty, tenured and adjuncts alike, to hold office-hours in order to improve students' educational experience.

Indicators of Tie Strength

For the focal students in this study, their *tie strength* is indicated by one or a combination of the following measures: 1) *comradery*, 1) *trust*, and 3) *multiplexity*. Of these three indicators, *trust* was most complicated to capture and analyze due to its multi-layered nature, as I will briefly touch on in this paragraph.

My analysis of *tie strength* was an iterative process, both at the conceptual and organizational levels. Due to its convoluted and non-linear nature, I would like to include a brief reflection of this process in the discussions chapter. Going into the study, I wanted to examine the following three dyadic characteristics of student-alter relationships: 1) *tie strength*, 2) *trust*, and 3) *perception of support*. However, after the data was collected and during the initial stages of analysis, I realized that there were some overlaps between these characteristics; more specifically, I realized that *trust* is actually a sub-measure of *tie strength*. Then, after deeper examination of the data, it became apparent that *tie strength* for the focal students in this study is

characterized by additional two indicators that I had not considered before: 1) *multiplexity* and 2) *comradery*. At the end of this process, *tie strength* was re-conceptualized as *multiplexity*, *comradery* and *trust*. The re-conception of *tie strength* in itself is a finding that has theoretical implications. Due to its elusive nature, social network researchers have often called for more conceptual tools to investigate the notion of *tie strength*. Therefore, this re-conceptualization of *tie strength* is a response to this call and a contribution to the literature.

Comradery. Using three pairs of *comradical relationships* as examples, I demonstrated that *comradery* is a plausible indicator of *tie strength* because they create sustainable and organic conditions in which critical and diverse forms of resources are transmitted. This finding adds another option to current student-retention and student-transition practices, which are built around the idea of mentorship. As such, the notion of *comradery* as an element tie-strength has practical implications for student services and instructions alike.

Trust. When it comes to *trust*, the results were mixed; focal students displayed a low degree of *interpersonal openness* yet a high degree of *system justification*. Their *system justification* was demonstrated through their belief in the fairness of the system and in the benevolence of *institutional agents (IAs)* who work within that system. As I discussed above, this finding on *system justification* has theoretical implications as it acts as a precursor to a fore-mentioned finding regarding students' *Meritocratic Lens*. In the following paragraph, I will explore plausible explanations for this finding from a historical perspective.

The finding that Vietnamese-American students display a high degree of *system justification* was unexpected and refutes previous studies on minority students; these other studies asserted that most minority students do not trust authority figures and the system (Yeager, Purdie-Vaughns, Hooper, & Cohen, 2017). I make sense of this disconnect by approaching it from a historical perspective, more specifically, the US-VN dynamics during and after the US-VN War. During the war, many Rainier College Vietnamese supported the US government, in fact, at the end of the war, it was recorded that there were well over one million personnel in the RVNAF (Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces), Vietnamese who fought alongside the US army. After the war, through various means, most of these military personnel and their families resettled in the U.S., i.e., via the evacuation effort between 1973-1975, as boat people from the late seventies into the late eighties, or as a result of the Humanitarian Operation Resettlement Initiative in the eighties and early nineties. I argue that these events contributed to

a positive persona of the US government/authority in the eyes of Vietnamese-Americans. As illustrated in the excerpt below, many former RVNAF militants did and still see the U.S.'s role in the conflict as "protector/savior." "*Although there was terror in the streets, there was still a belief the Americans would protect us. I shared this faith that the Americans would save us with many other Southerners. Though they pulled out their troops in 1972, we believed they would still help us. [...] We held this hope the Americans would save us. Eventually, with the Humanitarian Operation resettlements, the United States did bring many former political prisoners and their families to America,*" (<https://crosscut.com>). This quote is representative of the sentiment within the former-RVNAF community. I speculate that this favorable view of the U.S. government trickles down to younger generations, such as the focal students in this study; moreover, that favorable view got translated into a heightened sense of *system justification*.

Multiplexity. The third indicator of *tie strength* is *multiplexity*, which is a bi-dimensional concept that refers to an *alter's* multiple roles and/or the diverse forms of support that they are able to provide. *Multiplex ties* were common among this sample of Vietnamese-American students. For example, ThúyQuỳnh's ESL instructor Grace was also her mentor and confidant. Grace gave ThúyQuỳnh academic advice and connected her to resources in the community to help her through her divorce. This pair is an example of a *multiplex tie* because Grace, the *alter*, served multiple roles in their relationship and transmitted multiple forms of support to ThúyQuỳnh, the *ego* or focal student. *Multiplexity* is an important indicator to consider as it serves as a plausible explanation for why students who had small *network size* and/or low *network heterogeneity* still had access to multiple forms of resources; in other words, they had a diverse portfolio of *social capital for college success (SCfCS)* despite having few alters and/or few *types* of alter in their networks.

Network Size, Network Range and Diversity of SCfCS Portfolio

The *network size* of focal students in this study ranges between four and sixteen. Additionally, the *heterogeneity* of their network, i.e., their qualitative variation index (IQV), ranges between 0% to 96% – the lower the IQV, the lower the variability of that network. Contradictory to conventional logic, the size of their networks and the degree of variability within their network did not correlate with the amount and/or diversity of their SCfCS portfolio. Logically, one would think that a student who has a small and/or homogeneous network would have unmet needs in their SCfCS portfolio, however, this is not the case. In the example with

TườngVy, she only has four people in her network and all of whom are kin ties (i.e., meaning an IQV of 0%), yet she still managed to have access to a variety of types of *social capital for college success*. TườngVy's situation is a prime example of a pattern seen in several other cases (though at a lower degree in other cases) -- that the amount and type of resources that students have access to are independent from the heterogeneity and size of their network. I account for this phenomenon by drawing one particular characteristic of their *tie strength* - the *multiplexity* in their relationships. This characteristic makes it possible for students who have few *alters* or a homogeneous network to still have access to multiple forms of resources. For example, in the case of TườngVy, she only had four *alters*, all of whom were kin ties; however, thanks to the *multiplexity* of her relationship with her uncle, she was able to have a diverse SCfCS portfolio. He provided her with multiple forms of resources. He gave her encouraging advice when she wanted to quit school, connected her with employment opportunities when her family was going through financial hardship, listened and explained to her wonderings when she had questions about social norms in the United States, suggested resources to her when she wanted to improve her English skills, etc. The lack of correlation between *network size*, *network range* and *SCfCS-portfolio diversity* (i.e., resource accessibility) described here speaks to a methodology issue that I will elaborate in the following paragraph.

As demonstrated above, qualitative and quantitative data, each provides a different perspective/angle/layer of a student's social network. Quantitatively, we are shown two holistic characteristics: *size* and *range*. If I had stopped there, based on these quantitative results alone, I might have incorrectly speculated that students with small homogeneous networks have unmet gaps in their SCfCS portfolios; however, that was not the case. So, how did I reconcile these incompatible findings? I explained this disconnect by pulling in qualitative data. Qualitatively, I was revealed another network characteristic: *multiplexity*. This characteristic helped me explain the actuality of the situation, which is that students have *diverse SCfCS portfolio* despite having small homogeneous networks thanks to the *multiplexity* in some of their ties. This interworking between qualitative and quantitative data has theoretical implications because it supports the ongoing argument that we need to have more qualitative research that uses SNA.

PART 2: SIGNIFICANCE of FINDINGS

As you might have noticed, a few implications had already been sprinkled and woven into the discussion above. Here, I will elaborate on those and particularly significance. These significances will be organized in two broad domains: theoretical and practical implications. In the theoretical-based section, I will begin with items that have heuristic relevance to practitioners and then move on to those with methodological contributions. In the practical-based section, I will begin with institutional-level implications and then move down to BTSD.

Theoretical Implications

Below are theoretical-based implications that have practical/pedagogical/heuristic/pragmatic relevance to practitioners:

1. The *resistant capital* of the Vietnamese-American students found in this study signals that two-year college systems need to reflect on its mission and evaluate the validity of that mission. It raises the following question: If the mission of a two-year college is to serve the mass, to prepare all students for success, then are our institutional practices aligned with or living up to that mission? Do practices and services at the college truly represent the mission and value that the college aspires to?
2. The link between *college-feasibility resources* and *college re-access* found in this study implies that two-year colleges ought to re-examine their perception of “access” and “retention.” Furthermore, at the heuristic level, this link substantiates the call for colleges to collaborate with local NGOs, CBOs and GOVs to bring wrap-around services onto postsecondary campuses.
3. The *reciprocal (bi-directional) relationship between the schooling process and student identity* found in this study, as manifested into their *Colonialistic Lens* and *Meritocratic Lens*, urges us to recognize the impact of *implicit structural forces (ISFs)* on students’ socialized worldviews. (It is worth noting that I use the pronoun “us” here in the widest sense possible; it encompasses a wide community of stakeholders because its impact is far-reaching and layered, from institutions to IAs to students. In this item, however, I will only address its impact at the institution level; subsequent items will address other layers of impact.) Currently, much of the work around professional development only focuses on *explicit structural forces* and/or one side of the *school-and-student-identity*

relationship. Therefore, recognizing the impact of *ISFs* can help institutions broaden their scope and be more critical of their professional development efforts.

4. The *analysis of Vietnamese-American students' Colonialistic Lens* as argued in this study has two layers of implication. For students, it helps them recognize that *internalized colonialism* has historical roots and tangible consequences. For *IAs* in BTSD, it helps clarify that the *Eurocentric positionality* within an institution -- manifested through institutional practices and interactions -- can perpetuate and/or reinforce colonialism or colonialistic views. This finding can influence how we design BTSD policies and practices.

Below are theoretical-based implications that have methodological contributions:

5. Like previous research, findings in this study support the argument that social-network-qualitative data adds a deeper layer of understanding to the phenomenon that quantitative data alone cannot capture. Case in point is the uncorrelated relationship between *size*, *range*, *multiplexity* and *SCfCS-portfolio diversity*, as summarized in the discussion above and elaborated in detail in chapter six. The *interworking between qualitative and quantitative data -- (in order to provide a more complete picture/story of Vietnamese-American students' ego-centric social network)* -- amplifies the call for more qualitative research that uses SNA. In other words, this study substantiates the argument that we need more qualitative-SNA research.
6. This study's *systematic analysis of the Vietnamese diaspora* can be used as a tool to do intragroup examination of other immigrant populations. This tool could be replicated with other immigrant groups.
7. This study has deepened our understanding of *tie strength* by identifying and elaborating on three *tie-strength* measures: *multiplexity*, *trust*, and *comradery*. The discussion of these three *tie-strength indicators* can have implications for future ENA studies because it adds to our knowledge base of what constitutes a strong tie.

Practical Applications

8. This study finds that student services are more meaningful and effective when they are integrated into the curriculum. This finding has practical implications as it encourages collaboration between two departments at the college: student services and instructions.

9. This study finds that faculty office-hour is a conduit for the exchange of *trust* and *information*, not only between students and faculty, but also between students and their peers. The value of office-hour urges administrators and the union to institutionalize this practice across the institution, including adjuncts.
10. This study finds that *comradery*, one of the indicators of *tie-strength*, spawns organic and sustainable conditions for students to exchange resources. This finding has practical implications around designing peer-to-peer support services.

PART 3: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A couple of recommendations emerged from this study; one is due to the study's limitations and the other is stemmed from one of its findings. ***Recommendations for Researchers.*** In regards to limitations, some questions that arose are those revolving around *trust*. For example, what are the institutional affordances that foster trust in students? Furthermore, what are the implications of that trust? While this study touched on some *structural factors* that affect *trust* in Vietnamese-American students, I think a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the connection between institutional practices and student trust, perhaps even cross-culturally, is important for several reasons. I believe the benefits gained from this understanding are two-folds: it would further the field of qualitative SNA research, and at the same time, it would inform practitioners in their efforts to retain and engage students.

Recommendations for Practitioners. With regards to findings, one of the findings that emerged from this study is the impact of *implicit structural forces*. Given that professional development (PD) at the community college (especially in BTSD) tends to focus on *ESFs*, my recommendation here is for colleges to broaden their PD scope. Towards that goal, I recommend that colleges begin by forming a committee charged with the specific task of evaluating their current PD efforts. This committee would begin by itemizing all of their PD activities within the past academic year. Next, item by item, they would determine whether the PD activity is focused on an *ESF*. For example, a PD workshop on teaching reading strategies might be too focused on *ESFs*. On the other hand, a workshop where participants examine and reflect on how instructors choose class readers might be *ISF* oriented. Once all PD activities from the previous year has been surveyed and assessed, the committee can then use that information to help plan for future PDs that are more balanced between *ESF* and *ISF*.

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Appendix 1A: Interview Protocols and Observation Guide for Focal Students

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL & BLANK NETWORK MAP

Part 1. Background Information.

Questions related to educational background.

- *How long have you been a student at this college?*
- *When did you start? What classes were you taking?*
- *What program/major are you in now?*
- *How far along are you in your program/major?*
- *What was your schooling experience like before here?*

Questions related to immigration/generational and EL status.

- *Where were you born?*
- *If you were born outside of the United States, at what age did you come to the US?*
- *When did you begin learning English?*
 - *Follow-up: When, where, how long? What was your experience like?*
- *What is your primary language now? What language do you speak at home? With friends?*

Part 2: Six Forms of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW).

CCW1: Aspirational Capital

- *Tell me about your plans after college.*
 - *Follow-up: career plans? Educational plans? Dream job? Why do you want to do those things? What inspires/motivates you? Who inspires/motivates you? Role models?*

CCW2: Linguistic Capital

- *Have you had EL classes?*
 - *Follow-up: Where was it at? High school? BTS? Tell me about that experience, with EL teachers, classmates, program, etc.*
- *Do you speak more than one language?*
 - *Follow-up: What languages do you speak? For each language, where and with whom do you use that language?*
- *How do you feel about knowing multiple languages?*
 - *Follow-up: Has it helped your education? Specific moments of when it has effected your education? What happened? Where? How did things turn out?*

CCW3: Familial Capital

- *Tell me about your family.*
 - *Follow-up: siblings? Cousins? Other extended family members? Are they in college? Where? Schooling of siblings and cousins? Nature of relationship? How often do you talk to them? What do you talk about? Do you talk to them about your college experiences? Ask for advice? Share problems?*
- *How does your family view your education? Does your family support you in your education?*
 - *Probe for specifics: type of support (advice, finance, time, etc.), people involved, specific stories related to those forms of support.*

CCW4: Social Capital

- *Tell me about your community.*
 - *Probe: Who do you see as part of your community? How do you identify them? Are you involved in your community? What events or activities are you involved with?*
- *Is your community involved in your education?*
 - *Probe: Can you tell me specific examples of how your community is involved in your education? Specific events/activities, people?*

CCW5: Navigational Capital

- *Tell me about your experience in navigating college.*
 - *Follow-up: Have you ran into any confusion with any processes? Ex: financial aid, registration, program selection, enrollment/pre-requisites. Describe those situations. What happened? What was confusing about it? How did you resolve those situations? Who do you usually go to for questions like this? Who were involved? What's your relationship with that person? Do you go to that person for other types of support?*

CCW6: Resistant Capital

- *Have you felt any challenges during your educational journey?*
 - *Probe for specifics: Tell me about those experiences. What happened? How did you feel? How did you overcome that challenge? Who were involved? What's your relationship with that person? Do you go to that person for other types of support?*

Part 3: Four Forms of Social Capital for College Success (SCfCS)

SCfCS1: Sense of belonging and competence

- *Tell me about your relationship with people at this school.*
 - *Follow-up: with other students? With instructors? With counselors or staff? How often do you talk to them? What do you talk about? What is the nature of your conversations? How do you feel before, during and after your interactions?*
- *Where and how do you spend most of your time when you are on campus?*
 - *Follow-up: Classroom? Library? Lunch room? Tutoring center? Writing center? Counselor's office? Student lounge? Tell me about your experiences at those places. What do you do? Who are you with? What do you talk about? How do you feel during those times? Do you feel welcomed or comfortable? What makes you feel that way?*

SCfCS2: Reinforcement of goal commitment

- *Tell me about your goals.*
 - *Follow-up: What were your goals when you started college? Have they changed? If so, please tell me about that change process. How did it happen? Who were involved? Why did it change? If your goals haven't changed, have they strengthened? Do you have a clearer vision of what you want to do? Why do you say so? How? Anyone involved in that process in helping you crystalize your goals? What's your relationship with that person? Do you go to that person for other types of support?*
- *Tell me about why you are in college.*
 - *Follow-up: What are you studying? What motivates you? Do you feel motivated to reach your goals? When you feel stressed or unmotivated, what do you do? Who do you turn to? Specific examples of when this has happened? Can you tell me about it? What happened? How did you get your motivation back? Who were involved? What's your relationship with that person? Do you go to that person for other types of support?*

SCfCS3: Access to institutional resources

- *Tell me about your thoughts and experiences related to college processes.*
 - *Follow-up: financial aid application process? Other funding? Registration process? Transitioning out of basic studies? Pre-requisites for majors/programs? Internships? When did you go through the process? How did you feel during the process? Did you get any help or advice? Who? Relationship with that person? What help did they provide? Do you go to that person for other types of support?*

SCfCS4: College-feasibility resources

- *Tell me about your commitments and responsibilities outside of school.*
 - *Follow-up: What kind? Work? Family? Children? Tell me about the nature of those responsibilities.*
- *How are you balancing those responsibilities with school?*
 - *Follow-up: Do you get any help? What kind of help (transportation, childcare, time, basic financial support)? Who lends that help? What is your relationship with that person? Do you go to that person for other types of help?*
- *Do you have any challenges preventing you from being successful in college?*
 - *Follow-up: Tell me about those challenges. Alternative responsibilities/commitments? Transportation? Housing? Time? Emotional challenges? Psychological challenges?*
- *How are you coping with these challenges?*
 - *Follow-up: Do you get support for coping with these challenges? Who helps you with them? What is your relationship with that person? Do you go to that person for other types of support?*

Part 3: Seeking Permission to Observe/Shadow

For our next meeting, I would like to ask if I could observe/shadow you for a few hours while you participate in something that helps you succeed in school. For this, I would like for you think of a place, a person or an activity that has a positive and important role in your education.

Can you think of something/someone that gives you a sense of belonging and competence on campus?

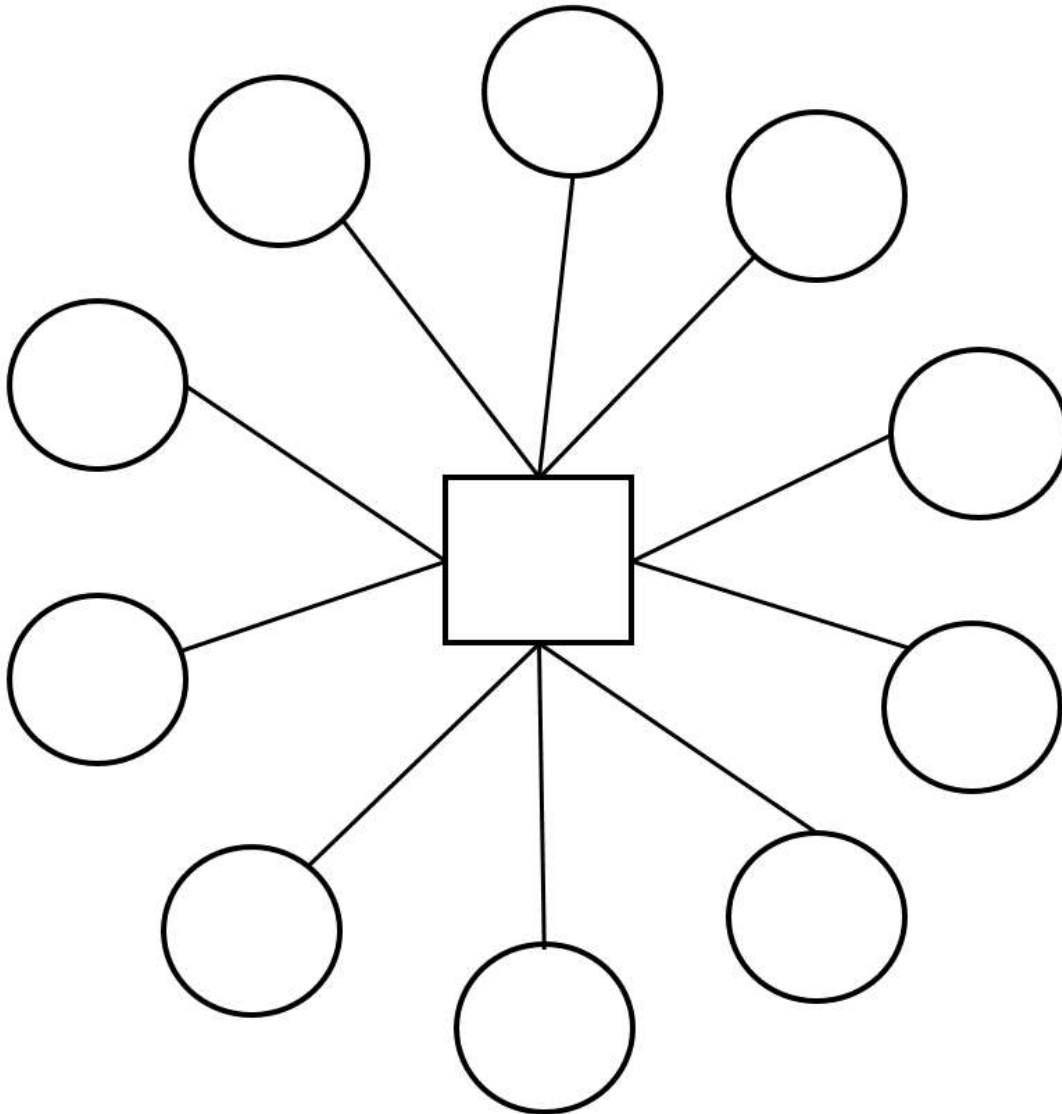
Can you think of something/someone that helps you strengthen your educational goals?

Can you think of something/someone that helps you gain access to resources?

May I shadow you for a few hours while you _____?

Part 4: Social Network

Thank you for your time thus far. We are now at the last part of our interview. (Hand student social network handout.) For this part, please think back to your entire time in college. Thinking through all your challenges and successes – who were the people who had been with you during those times? These can be anyone who helped you overcome your challenges or add to your successes. They can be someone who works at the college, a friend/classmate, someone from the community, or someone from your family (immediate or extended). Please write your name in the square in the center and the names of people in your support network in the surrounding circles.



SOCIAL NETWORK INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hand student the social network map that he/she created at the end of the previous interview/shadowing.

Ask:

- ❖ *These are the people I have seen you interact with or you have told me are important in your network as related to your college success. Are there others that I missed? Or others that don't belong? [Have students add or omit individuals on the map.]*

For each alter, ask focal student the following questions:

- 1) **How often do you interact with him/her?**
 - a. *Make sure you understand **frequency, mode, and length of communication.***
- 2) **What are your conversations usually about?**
- 3) **Can you describe your relationship with him/her?**
 - a. *Make sure you understand what his/her **role** is (i.e., type of alter).*
 - b. *Make sure you understand degree of **trust.***
 - c. *Make sure you understand degree of **interpersonal openness.** (What kind of personal information do you share with this person?)*
- 4) **Do you ask for or give advice/support from/to this person?**
 - a. *Make sure to understand his/her **perception of the person's support/advice** (i.e., type of support, degree of accuracy, degree of timeliness, and tailored to individual needs.)*
- 5) **Does this person influence how you receive support for college success? How?**
 - a. **Does this person help you get the support you need to be a successful student?**
- 6) **List of college success support.* Did you discuss, get materials about, get assistance for or ask advice about any of these types of support with this person?**
 - a. *Are there other types of support that I missed that should be included with this person?*

*LIST OF TYPES OF COLLEGE SUCCESS SUPPORT.

A. SCfCS1: Sense of belonging and competence

1. Support around U.S. college culture.
2. Support around visibility or cultural/racial issues.
3. Support around goal setting, time management or study skills.
4. Support around building learning communities.
5. Support around developing skills in language or academic subjects

B. SCfCS2: Reinforcement of goal commitment

1. Support around career exploration/planning.
2. Support around academic planning/degree pathway mapping.

C. SCfCS3: Access to institutional resources

1. Support around immigration or documentation.
2. Referral to people or services at the college or in the community.
3. Support around navigating financial aid and other college processes.

D. SCfCS4: College-feasibility resources

1. Support around childcare, transportation, housing or work.
2. Emotional support around transitions in life (from VN to US; from pre to post college life).
3. Support around financial issues.

Finally, ask student to rank the top three people in his or her network in relation to his/her acquisition of social capital for college success.

*LIST OF TYPES OF COLLEGE SUCCESS SUPPORT.

Alter: _____

A. SCfCS1: Sense of belonging and competence

	YES	NO	NOTES
1. Support around U.S. college culture.			
2. Support around visibility or cultural/racial issues.			
3. Support around building learning communities.			
4. Support around goal setting, time management or study skills.			
5. Support around developing skills in language or academic subjects			

B. SCfCS2: Reinforcement of goal commitment

1. Support around career exploration/planning.			
2. Support around academic planning/degree pathway mapping.			

C. SCfCS3: Access to institutional resources

1. Support around immigration or documentation.			
2. Referral to services or people at the college			
3. Support around navigating financial aid and other college processes.			

D. SCfCS4: College-feasibility resources

1. Support around childcare			
2. Support around transportation			
3. Support around housing			
4. Support around work.			
5. Emotional support (ex: from VN to US, pre to post college life, etc.)			
6. Support around financial issues (not FAFSA process)			

Are there other types of support that I missed that should be included with this person?

FOCUS STUDENT OBSERVATION GUIDE

Student pseudonym: _____

Date: _____

Reminder for observer: *Goal of observation is to understand how students navigate college processes and how they make use of the resources available (i.e., which resource, how was it accessed).*

1. Context and background. (Where is it? Who's there? Relationship to student? Purpose of activity.)

2. Quotations/Observations & Observer's Comments.

Time	Quotations/Observations	Observer's Comments (OC)

Appendix 1B: Interview Protocol for Institutional Agents

Interview Protocol for Semi-Structured Interview with Institutional Agents

1. *What is your role at this institution?*

Probe: *What are your major duties?*

2. *What sort of information do you give students about navigating the college landscape?*

Probe: *In what ways is this information conveyed to students? Through which channel, i.e., one-on-one meetings, workshops, flyers, emails, phone calls, etc.?*

3. *Would you say that there is a main focus or a main theme of the resources you provide or a trend in the type of questions that students ask? For example, if you had to come up with a slogan or a short sentence to advertise your role, your services, and the resources you offer to students, what would this be?*

4. *Who are the students you often interact with? How would you describe their demographic characteristics? (For example: first generation college students, immigrant students, English Learners, working adults, etc.)*

5. *Have you worked with Vietnamese students?*

Probe: *Of those you have worked with, how would you describe these students' demographic characteristics? (For example: generational-immigration status (1st, 1.5, 2nd), age, gender, enrollment status, employment status, academic track, BTS/prof-tech/acad-transfer, employment goals, educational goals, educational history, etc.)*

Probe: *Of those you have worked with, how would you describe your interaction with Vietnamese students? In terms of frequency, mode of communication, length of contact, etc.*

Probe: *What sort of information or support do Vietnamese students usually ask for?*

Probe: *What are some needs or challenges that are unique to Vietnamese students? You can share anecdotally or share trends that you've observed.*

Probe: *What about advantages? Do you think they have advantages that are different from other student populations? Again, anecdotally or trends you've observed.*

8. *Can you tell me some of the college success/college navigational resources available at the college?*

Probe: *From your experience in working with students, what other support you wish we had that we currently don't have? What are some unmet needs that you have observed?*

9. *If you had to come up with a summative phrase or sentence that explains your perspective about the work that do, what would it be?*

10. *I'm also looking for Vietnamese immigrant students who can participate in the study. Do you know of anyone who might be interested?*

Follow-up: *When I reach out to _____ [name of referred student], may I tell them that you have referred them?*

Appendix 1C: Interview Protocol for Alters

Interview Protocol for Semi-Structured Interview with Alters

Reminder to researcher: Alters is a diverse group of participants as they can be kin members, community members or college official. Below are general questions to guide the conversation. These questions can be tailored (added, deleted, modified) to fit each student-alter's situation.

- 1) *How long have you known _____?*

- 2) *As his/her _____, how would you describe him/her?*

- 3) *How would you describe your interactions with _____? How often do you communicate? By what means (email, f2f, text messages, phone calls, etc.)?*
 - *What are some of your conversation topics?*

- 5) *Does _____ share with you his/her education goals, occupational aspirations, and/or school experiences? If so, would you mind sharing some examples of those conversations?*

- 6) *Does _____ come to you for support or advice? If so, what kind of support, advice, or questions does he/she usually have?*

- 7) *Do you sometimes connect _____ to resources (people or agencies) in the community or at school? If so, would you mind sharing some of those conversations?*

Appendix 1D: Document Analysis Guide

Document Analysis Guide

Research Question: What are the formal college success resources at the colleges?

The goal of this phase is to find data to understand:

- 1) **Formal Definition of College Success:** How does the college system think about college success?
- 2) **Formal Resources of College Success:** How is the system supporting/ushering students toward college success?

Look for how College Success & College Success Resources are reflected in the college system's:

1. **Meaning:** beliefs & values
2. **Control:** policies & rules
3. **Action:** functions & services
4. **Association:** networks & relationships

Examples of types of documents:

- 1) Website & PIO literature
- 2) Navigator meeting memos
- 3) Job descriptions
- 4) Student handbook
- 5) Guided Pathway Docs
- 6) Mission Statement

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE DOCUMENT INTERPRETATION

- 1) What **type of document** is it?
- 2) **Physical characteristics** of the document (if applicable). How does the document look like? Material? Format? Condition?
- 3) **Date** of the document.
- 4) **Author(s)** of document. Name of office or individual(s). Where does the document come from? Who wrote the document? Who takes responsibility for it?
- 5) **Intended purpose** – why was the document written? **Intended aim** of the document - what is the *intended* message of the document? Does aim relate to any of the four forms of social capital for college success? If so, which one(s)? How? Give evidence for how/why you see the aim of this document addressing the four forms of SCfCS. (Four Forms of Social Capital for College Success: Sense of belonging & competence; Reinforcement of goal commitment; Access to institutional resources; College-feasibility resources)
- 6) **Intended audience** – for whom was the document written?
- 7) **Content**/internal characteristics of the document. What content is in the document? What is the *actual* message in the document? Does it relate to any of the four forms of social capital for college success? If so, which one(s)? How? Give evidence for how/why you see SCfCS reflected in this document. (Four Forms of Social Capital for College Success: Sense of belonging & competence; Reinforcement of goal commitment; Access to institutional resources; College-feasibility resources)
- 8) What is the **alignment between the content (actual message/content) and intended purpose** of the document? (Does the document actually do what it is set out to do?)
- 9) Other questions to think about: Are there other views/dimensions of college success mentioned in the document? What is the most important message in the document? Any SCfCS-related questions raised from the document?

Appendix 2A: Initial Codebook

INITIAL CODEBOOK

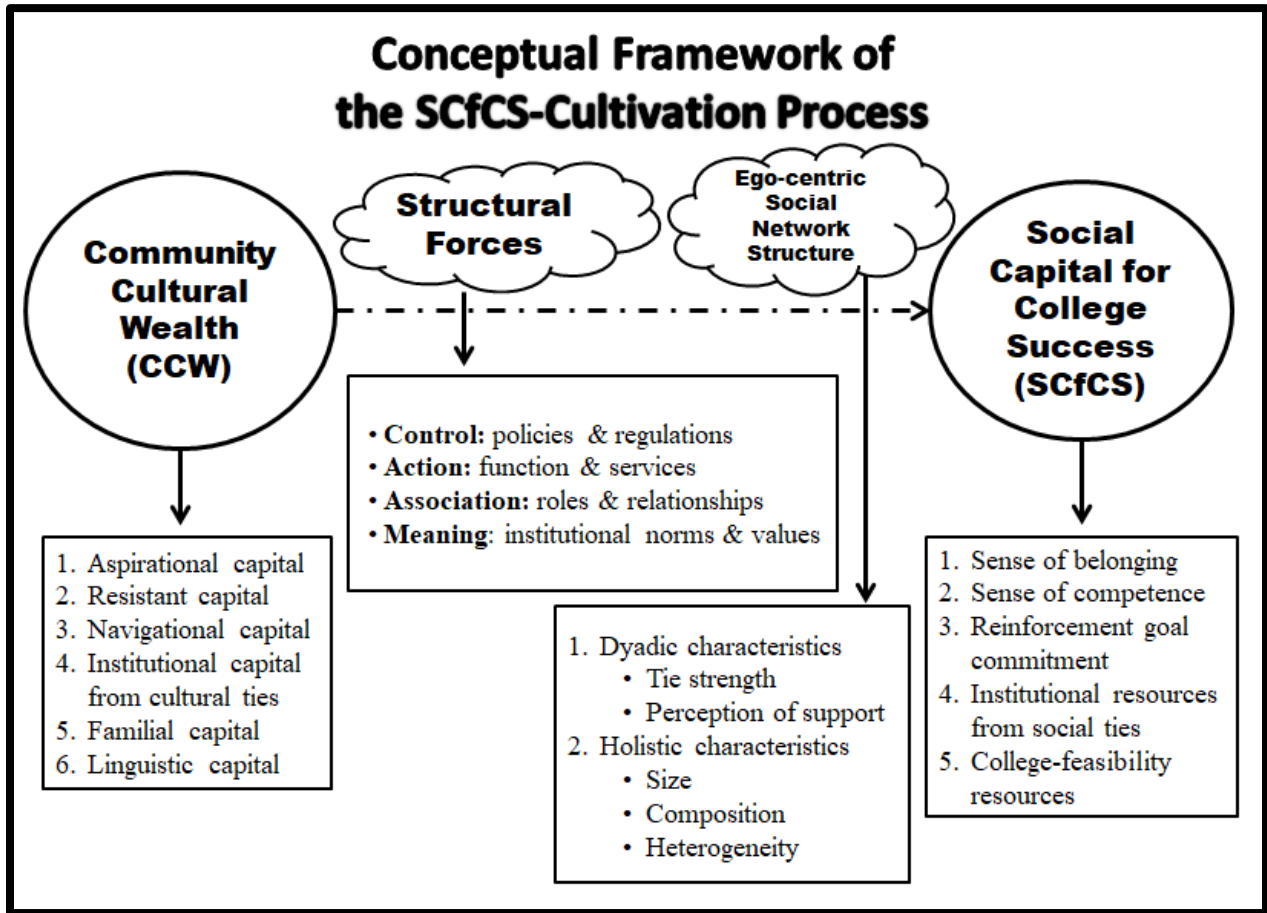
THEMES	SUBTHEMES	DEFINITIONS
COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH	Aspirational Capital	the educational hopes and dreams that students bring with them
	Resistant Capital	the skills that students have developed as a result of engaging in oppositional behaviors that challenge systemic inequity
	Familial Capital	resources that students have acquired from family members
	Navigational Capital	the skills and abilities that minority students have developed as a result of having to maneuver through institutional roadblocks within a system that was not designed for them
	Linguistic Capital	communication skills that students have attained from speaking multiple languages
	Social Capital	having access to institutional resources from social ties
SOCIAL CAPITAL for COLLEGE SUCCESS	SCfCS1: Sense of belonging & competence	Belonging: experiences or resources that lead to feelings of acceptance and membership. Competence: experiences or resources that build their academic confidence, ability to succeed as a college student.
	SCfCS2: Reinforcement of goal commitment	experiences or resources that help student strengthen or refine their educational goals
	SCfCS3: Access to institutional resources	Resources from institutional agents
	SCfCS4: College-feasibility resources	resources that help students overcome non-academic life-need challenges, such as finance, childcare, transportation, etc.
EGO-CENTRIC NETWORK ANALYSIS	Degree of trust in alter	Believe in the integrity of the information, advice, resources, etc. from that alter
	Tie Type	Nature of their relationship. Type of tie/relationship - IA, peer, kin, community member
	Degree of openness with alter	Sharing of personal information, space, or time.
	Communicative descriptors	Typical/general context information about their interactions, such as location of interaction, mode of communication, length of interaction, frequency of interaction, etc.
	Perception of support	How does the student perceive the support that they're getting from their alters, in terms of accuracy, timeliness and personalization of the support.
TYPE of SUPPORT	SCfCS1: Sense of belonging & competence	Belonging: experiences or resources that lead to feelings of acceptance and membership. Competence: experiences or resources that build their academic confidence, ability to succeed as a college student.
	SCfCS2: Reinforcement of goal commitment	experiences or resources that help student strengthen or refine their educational goals
	SCfCS3: Access to institutional resources	Resources from institutional agents
	SCfCS4: College-feasibility resources	resources that help students overcome non-academic life-need challenges, such as finance, childcare, transportation, etc.
	Other	Other types of support that were not identified in my SCfCS framework
FORMAL RESOURCES for COLLEGE SUCCESS	Institutional resources	Formal resources that are officially offered or make available by the college.
	Formal community resources	Formal resources that are sponsored by governmental organizations or non-profit organizations in the local community.

Appendix 2B: Revised Codebook

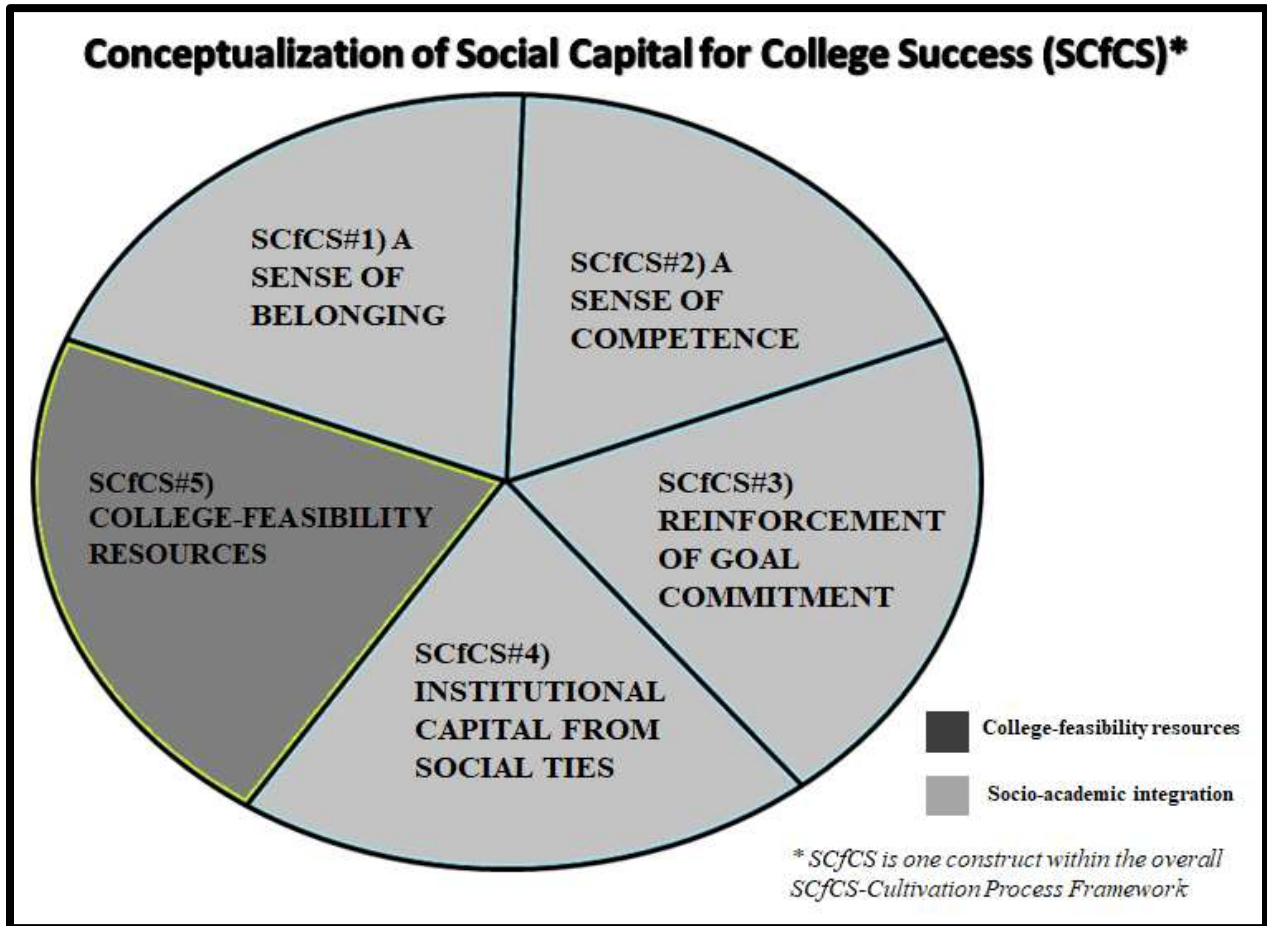
ABBREVIATED VERSION of the REVISED CODEBOOK

THEMES	SUBTHEMES	DEFINITIONS
COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH	Aspirational Capital	the educational hopes and dreams that students bring with them
	Resistant Capital	the skills that students have developed as a result of engaging in oppositional behaviors that challenge systemic inequity
	Familial Capital	resources that students have acquired from family members
	Navigational Capital	the skills and abilities that minority students have developed as a result of having to maneuver through institutional roadblocks within a system that was not designed for them
	Linguistic Capital	communication skills that students have attained from speaking multiple languages
	Institutional capital from cultural ties	institutionally-valued resources from cultural ties
SOCIAL CAPITAL for COLLEGE SUCCESS	SCfCS1: Sense of belonging	Experiences or resources that lead to feelings of acceptance and membership.
	SCfCS2: Sense of competence	Experiences or resources that build their academic confidence, ability to succeed as a college student.
	SCfCS3: Reinforcement of goal commitment	experiences or resources that help student strengthen or refine their educational goals
	SCfCS4: Access to institutional resources	interactions with any social tie that leads to institutionally-valued resources
	SCfCS5: College-feasibility resources	resources that help students overcome non-academic life-need challenges, such as finance, childcare, transportation, etc.
EGO-CENTRIC NETWORK ANALYSIS	Degree of trust in alter	Believe in the integrity of the information, advice, resources, etc. from that alter
	Tie Type	Nature of their relationship. Type of tie/relationship - IA, peer, kin, community member
	Degree of openness with alter	Sharing of personal information, space, or time.
	Communicative descriptors	Typical/general context information about their interactions, such as location of interaction, mode of communication, length of interaction, frequency of interaction, etc.
	Perception of support	How does the student perceive the support that they're getting from their alters, in terms of accuracy, timeliness and personalization of the support.
TYPE of SUPPORT	SCfCS1: Sense of belonging	Experiences or resources that lead to feelings of acceptance and membership.
	SCfCS2: Sense of competence	Experiences or resources that build their academic confidence, ability to succeed as a college student.
	SCfCS3: Reinforcement of goal commitment	experiences or resources that help student strengthen or refine their educational goals
	SCfCS4: Access to institutional resources	experiences with or resources from social ties (any tie type) that lead to institutionally-valued resources
	SCfCS5: College-feasibility resources	resources that help students overcome non-academic life-need challenges, such as finance, childcare, transportation, etc.
	Other	Other types of support that were not identified in my SCfCS framework
STRUCTURAL FORCES (SFs)		Structural elements in the college environment. Double code with either implicit or forms of explicit structural forces.
	Explicit Structural Forces (ESFs)	Publicly announced programs, services, roles/relationships, procedures, etc. Factors that the college has advertised in their official messages. Double code with one of four sub-forms of ESFs.
	ESF1: Control	Policies and regulations that dictate how the college operates
	ESF2: Action	Relating to the college's functions and its services
	ESF3: Association	Relating to the formal social network system at the institution. Roles and relationships between individuals and departments at the institution.
	ESF4: Meaning	Explicit beliefs and value systems as declared by official college communications
	Implicit Structural Forces (ISFs)	Hidden messages, the implicit norms/values/protocols, the academic subjects that we do not teach, the conversation topics that we avoid. Factors that institutions do not have printed in their official literature, yet, permeate throughout the college atmosphere.

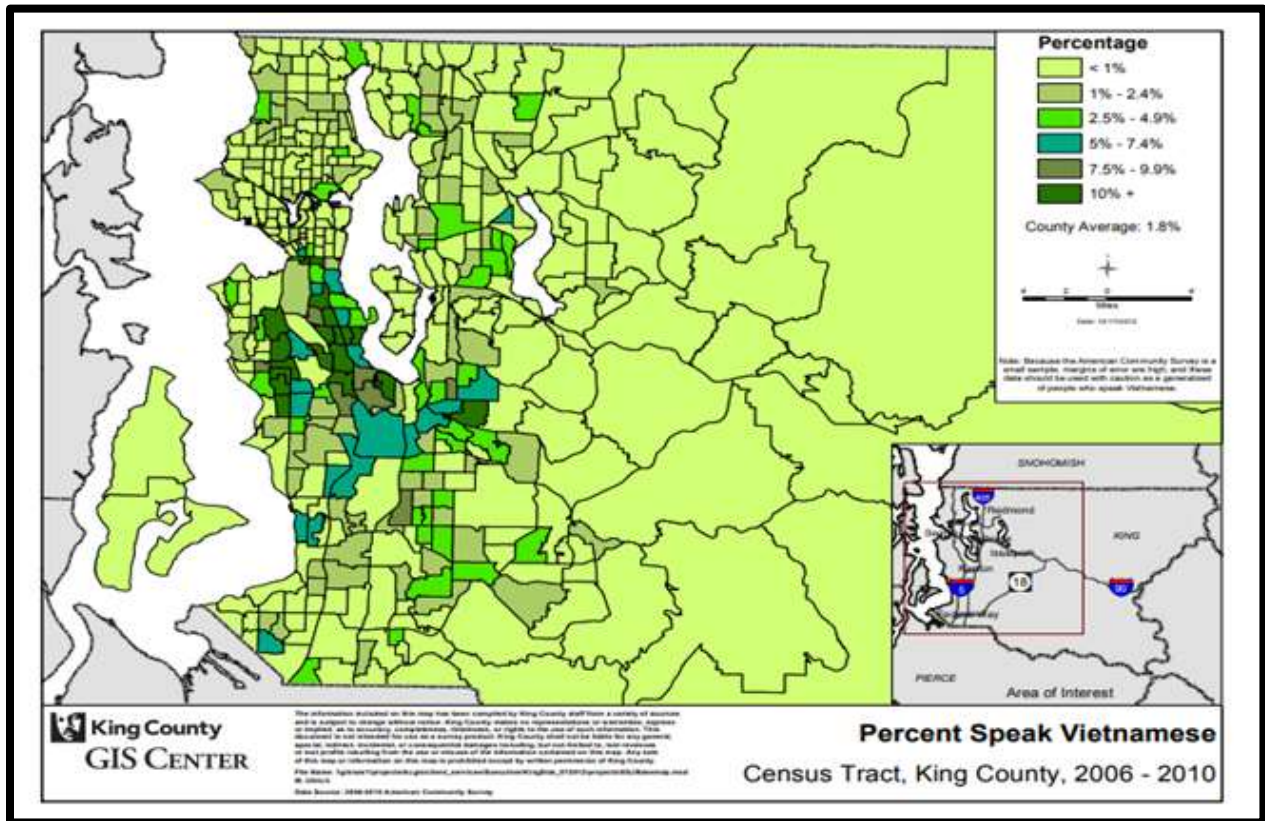
Appendix 3A: Conceptual Framework of the SCfCS-Cultivation Process



Appendix 3B: Revised Construct of SCfCS



Appendix 4A: Demographic Map³¹ of Vietnamese Speakers in the PNW



³¹ <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/documents/maps/Vietnamese.ashx?la=en>

Appendix 4B: Washington State Quality Award Standards

Washington State Quality Award Standards³²

The community and technical college system (SBCTC) is required to meet additional requirements to fully comply with Washington State Quality Award Standards:

- Each college will post its most recent full accreditation report on its website. Information will be updated per accreditation review cycle.
- Each college will post a brief list of NWCCU accreditation commendations and recommendations related to its most recent accreditation visit on its college website.
- Colleges will complete an annual status report on accreditation progress and submit the status report to SBCTC by Nov. 15 of each year.
- SBCTC will post Student Achievement Initiative outcomes for each college by Nov. 15 of each year.

³² <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/policies-rules/wa-state-quality-awards.aspx>

NWCCU Standards ³³

STANDARD ONE – MISSION AND CORE THEMES

The institution articulates its purpose in a mission statement, and identifies core themes that comprise essential elements of that mission. In an examination of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations, the institution defines the parameters for mission fulfillment. Guided by that definition, it identifies an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

STANDARD TWO – RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

By documenting the adequacy of its resources and capacity, the institution demonstrates the potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered. Through its governance and decision-making structures, the institution establishes, reviews regularly, and revises, as necessary, policies and procedures that promote effective management and operation of the institution.

STANDARD THREE – PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The institution engages in ongoing, participatory planning that provides direction for the institution and leads to the achievement of the intended outcomes of its programs and services, accomplishment of its core themes, and fulfillment of its mission. The resulting plans reflect the interdependent nature of the institution's operations, functions, and resources. The institution demonstrates that the plans are implemented and are evident in the relevant activities of its programs and services, the adequacy of its resource allocation, and the effective application of institutional capacity. In addition, the institution demonstrates that its planning and implementation processes are sufficiently flexible so that the institution is able to address unexpected circumstances that have the potential to impact the institution's ability to accomplish its core theme objectives and to fulfill its mission.

STANDARD FOUR – EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT

The institution regularly and systematically collects data related to clearly defined indicators of achievement, analyzes those data, and formulates evidence-based evaluations of the achievement of core theme objectives. It demonstrates clearly defined procedures for evaluating the integration and significance of institutional planning, the allocation of resources, and the application of capacity in its activities for achieving the intended outcomes of its programs and services and for achieving its core theme objectives. The institution disseminates assessment results to its constituencies and uses those results to effect improvement.

STANDARD FIVE – MISSION FULFILLMENT, ADAPTATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Based on its definition of mission fulfillment and informed by the results of its analysis of accomplishment of its core theme objectives, the institution develops and publishes evidence-based evaluations regarding the extent to which it is fulfilling its mission. The institution regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact its mission and its ability to fulfill that mission. It demonstrates that it is capable of adapting, when necessary, its mission, core themes, programs, and services to accommodate changing and emerging needs, trends, and influences to ensure enduring institutional relevancy, productivity, viability, and sustainability.

³³ <https://www.nwccu.org/accreditation/standards-policies/standards/>

Appendix 5A: Summary of data collection strategies

SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS	
Focal student participants (FSs)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questionnaire regarding demographic information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-structured interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social network interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ego-centric social network maps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow-up interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participatory shadowing
Institutional agents (IAs)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-structured interviews
Alters of FS (ALTERs)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-structured interviews
Document analysis of Rainier & Olympic College's official literature	
Non-participatory observation of college events & activities	

Appendix 5B: Matrix of Research Questions by Data Sources

Matrix of Research Questions & Data Sources	
Subsidiary Research Questions	Data Sources
1) What forms of <i>community cultural wealth (CCW)</i> do these students possess?	*Semi-structured interviews with FS *Shadowing of FS to build rapport *Questionnaires from FS
2) What <i>structural forces (SFs)</i> in the college environment might facilitate or impede their SCfCS-cultivation process?	*Official college literature/documents *Observation of institutional events *Semi-structured interviews with IAs *Surveys from IAs
3) What are the dyadic and holistic characteristics of their ego-centric network structure?	*Social network (SN) interviews with FS *Ego-centric social network mapping with FS
4) What forms of <i>social capital for college success (SCfCS)</i> have they cultivated?	*Semi-structured interviews with FS *Social network (SN) interviews with FS *Ego-centric social network mapping with FS

Appendix 6B: Screenshot of spreadsheets used to support data analysis – SCfCS

This is a screenshot of how SCfCS was organized. Names have been omitted to maintain confidentiality.

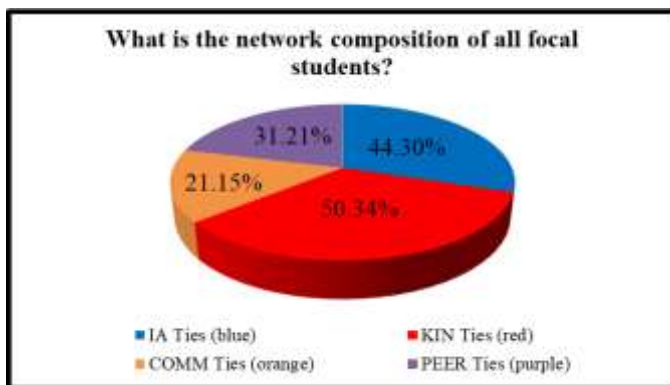
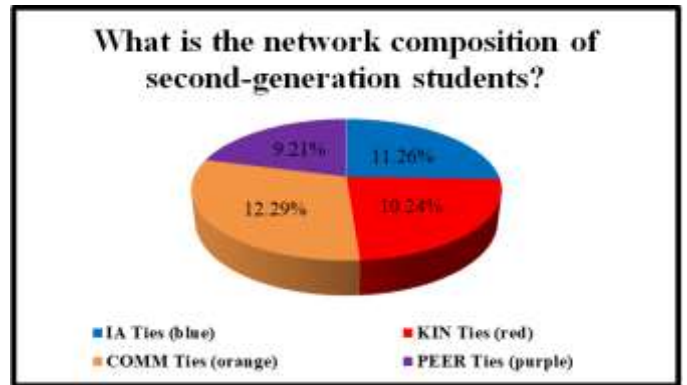
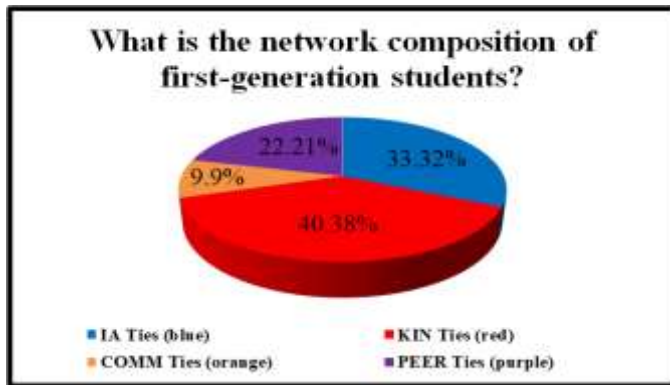
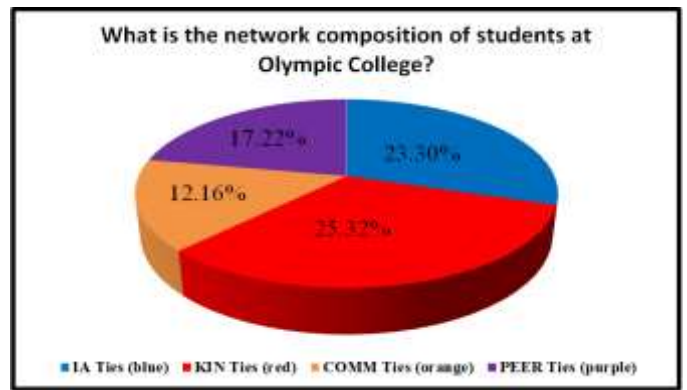
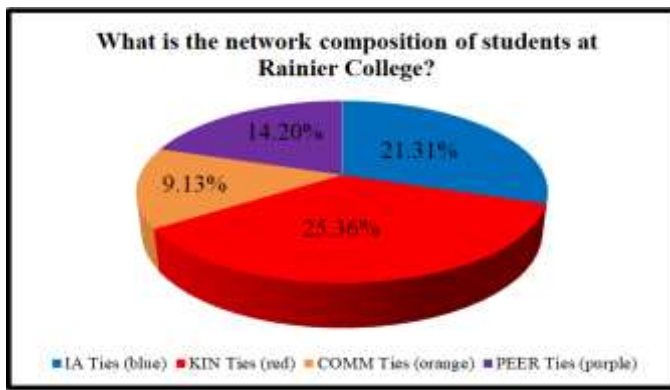
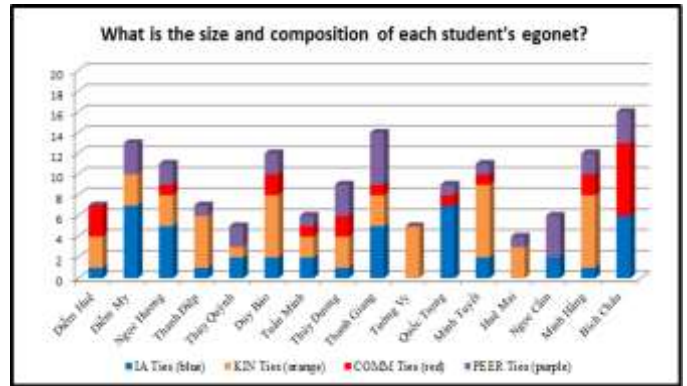
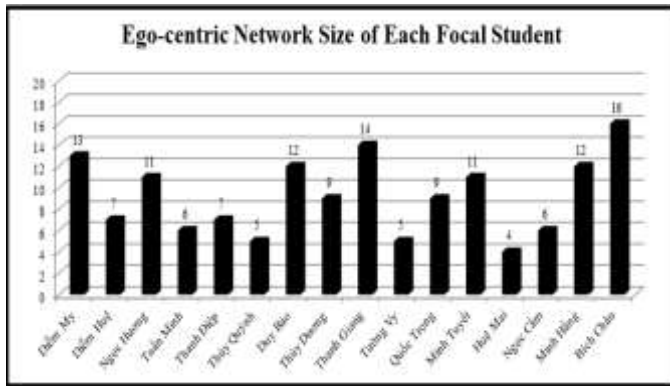
		Diem Hub					Ngoc Huong							
		7	daughter	husband	doctor at interning office	Housing Authority advisor	Joblink Navigator	11	ESL instr	advisor	dad	bro in law	friend	friend
SCfCS1: Sense of belonging														
a	College culture	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b	Visibility, cultural, racial issues	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d	Building learning community	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCfCS2: Sense of competence														
c	Goal setting, time management, study skills	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e	Developing language or academic skills	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SCfCS3: Reinforcement of goal commitment														
a	Career exploration	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Academic planning/degree mapping	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCfCS4: Access to institutional resources														
a	Immigration, documentation	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Referral to institutional services/people	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c	Procedural support (financial aid, college processes)	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCfCS5: College Feasibility Resources														
a	Childcare	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Transportation	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Housing	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Work	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e	Emotional support	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f	Financial support	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 6C: Screenshot of spreadsheets used to support data analysis – SCfCS & alter type

This is a screenshot of how I organized SCfCS and alter type.

		Diễn Huệ					Mạc Hương																			
		IC	ICP	CCM	PEER	SUB	degree	subsid	state of housing	Housing Allowance	state of transport	IC	ICP	CCM	PEER	SUB	IC	ICP	CCM	PEER	SUB	IC	ICP	CCM	PEER	SUB
SCfCS1: Sense of belonging																										
a	College culture	0	1	1	0	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	2	0	1	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Visibility, cultural, racial issues	0	0	0	0	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	2	0	1	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Building learning community	0	1	3	0	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	1	0	1	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCfCS2: Sense of competence																										
c	Goal setting, time management, study skills	0	0	1	0	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	2	0	2	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e	Developing language or academic skills	0	1	2	0	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	2	0	1	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCfCS3: Reinforcement of goal commitment																										
a	Career exploration	0	1	3	0	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	2	0	1	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Academic planning/degree mapping	0	0	1	0	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	1	0	0	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCfCS4: Access to institutional resources																										
a	Immigration, documentation	0	0	1	0	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	2	0	0	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Referral to institutional services/people	0	1	2	0	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	2	0	2	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Procedural support (financial aid, college processes)	0	0	2	0	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	2	0	0	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCfCS5: College Feasibility Resources																										
a	Childcare	0	0	0	0	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	0	0	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Transportation	0	1	0	0	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	2	0	0	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Housing	0	0	0	0	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	1	0	0	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Work	0	0	1	0	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	1	0	0	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e	Emotional support	0	2	0	0	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	2	0	2	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f	Financial support	0	1	2	0	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	2	0	0	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

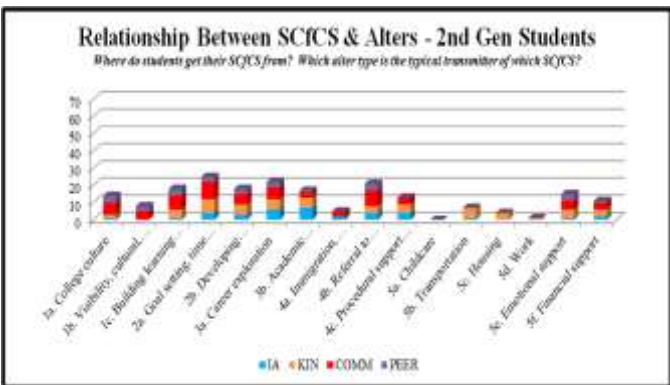
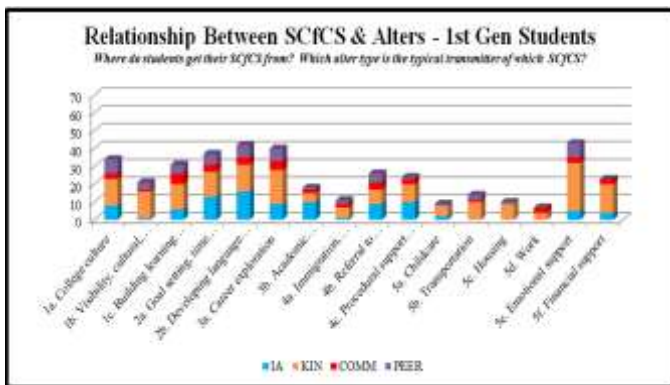
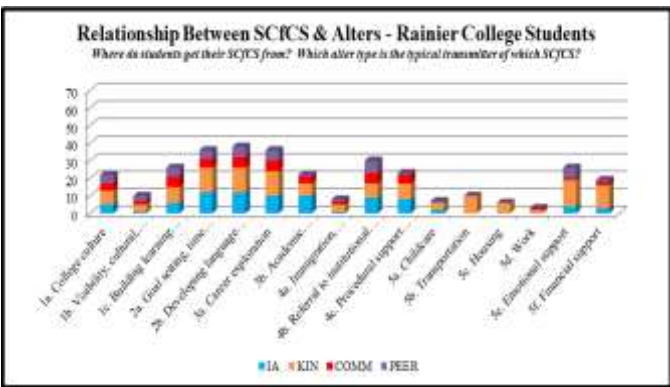
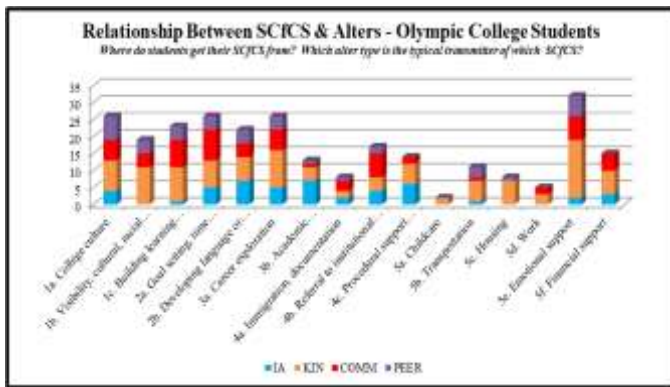
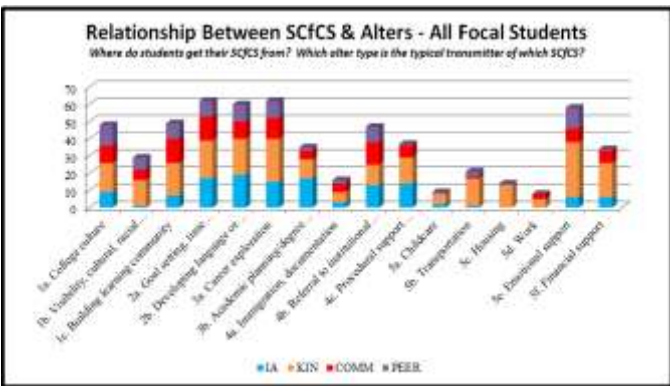
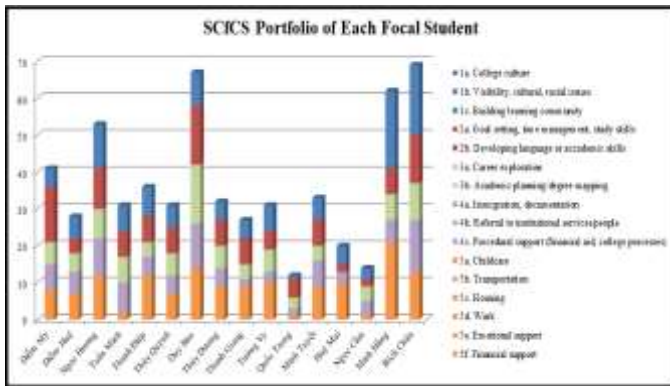
Appendix 7A: Graphs & charts regarding network size & composition



Appendix 7B: Focal-student participants and their IQV

What is the heterogeneity of each focal student's ego-centric social network? <i>The higher the IQV, the more heterogeneous the network. IQV = Index of Qualitative Variation</i>							
	Olympic C. Rainier C.	1 st -Gen 2 nd -Gen	IQV	IA Ties (blue)	KIN Ties (orange)	COMM Ties (red)	PEER Ties (purple)
Hoàng Anh	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minh Tuyết	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	72.70%	2	7	1	1
Minh Hằng	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	79.60%	1	7	2	2
Thanh Giang	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	92.50%	5	3	1	5
Huệ Mai	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	50.00%	0	3	0	1
Quốc Trọng	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	0.00%	0	5	0	0
Ngọc Cẩm	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	59.30%	2	0	0	4
Tường Vy	Olympic C.	1 st -Gen	0.00%	0	5	0	0
Bích Châu	Olympic C.	2 nd -Gen	84.40%	6	0	7	3
Thùy Dương	Rainier C.	2 nd -Gen	95.50%	1	3	2	3
Tuấn Minh	Rainier C.	2 nd -Gen	96.00%	2	1	2	1
Duy Bảo	Rainier C.	2 nd -Gen	88.90%	2	6	2	2
Ngọc Hương	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	90.40%	5	3	1	2
Diễm Huệ	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	81.60%	1	3	3	0
Thanh Điệp	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	59.90%	1	5	0	1
Thúy Quỳnh	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	85.30%	2	1	0	2
Diễm My	Rainier C.	1 st -Gen	80.50%	7	3	0	3

Appendix 8A: Graphs & charts regarding SCfCS and alter type



Appendix 8B: Graphs & charts regarding *sense of belonging* and *sense of competence*

Note: These charts are intended for intragroup comparison, i.e., between the sub-groups within the larger group of focal students. They are not meant for comparison between the different forms of SCfCS, as sense-of-competence has more subcategories than sense-of-belonging.

