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Community Cultural Wealth Goes to College: A Review of the Literature for Career Services Professionals and Researchers



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Abstract

Created by LatCrit scholars in the mid-2000s, Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) is an anti-deficit framework for understanding educational inequality.¹ Since its publication, Yosso's (2005) seminal paper on the topic has been cited thousands of times by scholars in fields as distinct as engineering, K12 education, and public health. This report reviews the recent scholarship on college students' experiences and outcomes that uses CCW as a guiding framework. Although the intended audience for this review is career services professionals in colleges and universities, my hope is it can also be helpful for scholars of career development who want to brush up on the CCW literature and consider future research questions the framework presents. The existing literature offers insights on the college-to-career transition: it reveals the centrality of familial capital in shaping students' career pathways, the function of resistant capital in forming students' career interests, the utility of students' existing social capital in the job search process, and the role of counterspaces in activating CCW for career success. However, CCW scholarship typically focuses on college students' matriculation, persistence, sources of support, and well-being, not on their career development—including the psychological, spiritual, socio-cultural, political and economic factors influencing students' career interests and the knowledge, relationships, and environmental contexts shaping their career choices (Duffy & Dik, 2009). This gap presents opportunities for researchers and career services professionals to partner in creating and evaluating programming with CCW in mind. There are also opportunities to increase the methodological diversity of CCW scholarship, to consider the ways in which students mix CCW with "dominant" forms of capital for career success, to collect data from employers, faculty, and other gatekeepers, and to account for the role of institutional context.

Introduction

In 2005, the Chicana/o studies and education scholar, Dr. Tara Yosso, published "Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth", which laid out a model for documenting the strengths students of color are likely to possess. Today, it remains the most cited article ever published in *Race Ethnicity and Education* and has influenced work across a range of disciplines (Tichavakunda, 2019). Yosso was inspired by Critical Race Theory (CRT)—a theoretical tradition started by legal scholars in the mid-1970s that examines the role of traditional claims to legal neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness and meritocracy in perpetuating racial inequality (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). In the CRT tradition, Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework offers a critique of deficit-based perspectives of students of color. Rather than pointing out what students of color *lack*, CCW provides a vocabulary for identifying and communicating their *assets*. In this way, CCW is also an extension of theories that describe human and relational assets in terms of their use and exchange value—for example, human, social, and cultural capital theories (Colina Neri et al., 2021). Rather than depicting students of color as lacking in these forms of capital, CCW highlights the unique and valuable information, obligations, trust, and norms that pool in communities of color, *because and in spite of* their historical marginalization (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998).

Despite its growing popularity in education research and practice, Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) has

1 LatCrit aims to develop a "critical, activist, and interdisciplinary discourse on law and policy toward Latinas/os/x" (Valdes & Bender, 2021, p. 1) and make this knowledge accessible to agents of social and legal change. LatCrit is distinctive in its focus on the internal diversity of Latinas/os/x, their relationship to other minoritized populations, and their position in domestic (i.e., U.S.) and global structures of inequality (Valdes & Bender, 2021). However, LatCrit also belongs to a broader family of critical race theories that all "examine how multiple forms of oppression can intersect within the lives of People of Color and how those intersections manifest in our daily experiences" (Pérez Huber, 2010, p. 77).

only been applied to the college-to-career transition on rare occasions (Duffy et al., 2020; Garriott, 2020). This omission is somewhat surprising, as both the college student career development literature and CCW are centrally concerned with students' capital in various forms (Nichols & Islas, 2016). Here, my goal is to introduce the concept to career services professionals using the recent literature published on CCW at the collegiate level. This literature points to ways to identify the diversity of experiences that shape students' career aspirations, harness the strengths inherent in students' networks, develop culturally-aware strategies for growing these networks, communicate students' strengths to employers and other gatekeepers, and develop programming that helps students recognize and use the assets that come from their families, home communities, and life experiences. As an added benefit, I also hope that such a review can prove useful to scholars of career development who may be interested in the kinds of research questions that CCW inspires.

Terminological and Methodological Notes

While CCW was originally developed with “students of color” (Yosso, 2005, p. 70) in mind, it has also been applied to low-income and first-generation college students from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. For this reason, I will use the term “students of color” when describing the framework and its origins, but will discuss other dimensions of student identity throughout the paper. As low-income students remain a minority at many college campuses across the United States (Lee & Harris, 2020), I will use the term “underrepresented student” to refer to those who may experience educational marginalization due to their race, income, and/or experience being the first in their families to attend college. Similarly, while some argue that the “capital” described in the CCW framework cannot be used in the reproduction of inequality and therefore, is not really capital in the Bourdieuan sense (Colina Neri et al., 2021), I use the words “capital”, “assets”, and “strengths” interchangeably here. Doing so allows me to more accurately describe the literature on this subject, much of which also equates “capital” with the more colloquial term “assets”.

This literature review is based on 76 empirical, peer-reviewed articles published between 2008 and 2020 that use CCW as a guiding framework for understanding undergraduates (including community college students), as well as younger students making the decision to attend college and graduate students reflecting on their time as undergrads. It is not systematic: the articles referenced here are not all directed at the same phenomenon nor do they use comparable methodologies. To gather these articles, I searched several databases (Google Scholar, Web of Science, ERIC, Education Source) and conducted forward and backwards citation searches until I encountered the same articles repeatedly.

I excluded articles that referenced Yosso (2005) but did not use CCW as a guiding framework, as well as those primarily concerned with elementary or secondary education. I also excluded unpublished dissertations, although there are some wonderful theses (e.g., Carr, 2019) that offer examples of CCW-based career programming. The sections entitled “What Exactly Is CCW?” and “Insights from Recent Work on College Students” draw most heavily from the articles I found in my searches. However, I also place non-CCW literature in conversation with these articles, as doing so highlights connections with career development scholarship. It is unlikely that these articles represent all the recent CCW research at the college level. Even so, those who are interested in conducting further research may be able to use this work as a jumping off point for their own searches.

Background: What does it mean for students to have “capital”?

Economists have a long history of considering humans—including their health, skills, and education—part of the production process that is distinct from material wealth (e.g., land, raw materials, equipment) (Kiker, 1966). The 1960s, in particular, saw a flurry of economic research attempting to define and quantify the concept of “human capital”, including a focus on individuals’ investment in their own human capital through education or other workforce training (Becker, 1962). Today we use the term “human capital” casually in our everyday language to mean “the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of individuals that generate economic output” (Martin, 2005, p. 1013). A company offering health benefits to its employees is investing in its human capital by promoting physical well-being and productivity, and reducing sick leave. At the same time, a young person going to college is investing in their human capital by boosting their employability and earnings throughout their life course.

In the 1970s and 80s, social scientists like Glen Loury, Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman began conceptualizing capital in a decidedly sociological sense—considering the impact of relationships, social structures, and culture on human capital development and other economic returns (Darity, 2008). Coleman (1988), for example, describes social capital as obligations, expectations, trust, information, norms, and sanctions that exist in the relationships between and among individuals and facilitate social action. While Coleman focused on social capital as a public good, Bourdieu’s definition also considers benefits to the individual of participating in a group (Portes, 1998). For Bourdieu, social capital is “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to a possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition...which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 21). Learning of a job opening from a friend, getting information on what a company is looking for, and receiving a recommendation from a current employee are examples of how collectively-owned information can increase an individual’s earnings and enhance a company’s productivity.

Both human and social capital are terms that career services professionals are likely to be familiar with, as they have been used in career development research and practice for many years (Seibert et al., 2001). In contrast, Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital is less tangible and, therefore, it is worth explaining its various forms, its role in our educational system, and its connections to Community Cultural Wealth in more depth. Writing in 1977, Bourdieu offered the following assessment of our educational system:

By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it demands the dominant culture (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 494).

Here, Bourdieu argues that schools reproduce inequality by rewarding students who already know how to talk, how to behave, how to engage with authority, and what to wear, read, eat, listen to, etc. Along with bodily markers, material objects, and formal academic credentials, these kinds of knowledge, skills, and preferences are called “cultural capital” (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). There are, according to Bourdieu (1986), three different forms:

Table 1. Forms of Cultural Capital

Form	Description	Example
Embodied	Deeply ingrained habits, tastes, and dispositions, features of the body and comportment, and style of communicating that signal membership in a particular group.	Smooth hands and skin, indicating that one has not engaged in much manual labor, are a symbol of belonging to the upper class.
Objectified	Material goods that can be exchanged for money, signal that the owner has certain tastes, or can be used to inculcate—even unintentionally—certain tastes in children.	A cello can be sold for money, used to signal taste in music traditionally associated with the upper class, or help a child develop musical skills and an interest in Western genres.
Institutionalized	Academic qualifications that are sanctioned by well-respected institutions, thereby “conferring institutional recognition on the cultural capital possessed by any given agent” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 21).	An alumna of a selective university may be more competitive on the labor market than graduates of other institutions and may win higher paying job on the market.

Adapted from Bourdieu, 1986

Families with money, information, and other resources can more easily pass on to their children the kinds of embodied and objectified capital schools like, thereby helping them earn institutionalized capital more readily. For example, the middle-class parents in Calaraco’s (2014) ethnography of a mixed income elementary school taught their children how to ask for help or special accommodations, and coached them in offering explanations for poor performance. Working class parents, in contrast, tended to model “no excuses problem solving”—accepting the authority of teachers and encouraging their children to overcome challenges on their own (Calaraco, 2014, p. 1022). The result of the working class parenting style is adult children with “plenty of grit [but] little cultural knowledge” (Lareau, 2015, p.8). Differences in parents’ embodied capital—in this case, their dispositions toward remedying mistakes and their style of communicating with authorities—influenced the amount of support teachers gave students.

As this example suggests, the way in which schools typically reward cultural capital creates a distinct disadvantage for underrepresented students when competing for educational credentials and jobs. However, society readily accepts these unequal outcomes. This is because our educational system masquerades as a meritocracy—leading us to believe that the social patterns it produces are the result of the best and

brightest students rising naturally to the top (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu was offering a *critique* of schools when he wrote about cultural capital (Davies & Rizk, 2018) and places responsibility for oppression on oppressive structures themselves, not on the people who inhabit them (Tichavakunda, 2019). In a misguided interpretation of Bourdieu's work, however, education scholars and practitioners often focused on underrepresented students' lack of capital as the problem that needed to be remedied (García & Guerra, 2004; Yosso & Burciaga, 2016). Consider, for example, Ovink and Veazey's (2011) review of a program designed to improve the persistence and achievement of students of color in the life sciences. The authors explain that the program:

...addresses students' *lack* of middle- and professional-class cultural and social capital: socialization into the academic community, networking (social capital), and the opportunity to practice these new-found skills and dispositions (emphasis mine, p. 375).

While programs like these are very useful, in focusing too closely on what students "lack", they run the risk of ignoring the forms of capital students already possess and placing the burden of change on them and their families—as opposed to schools or employers. As sociologists have pointed out, not all culture is "highbrow" (Lareau & Weininger, 2003) or White (Carter, 2003; Wallace, 2017). Every student possesses cultural assets: the question is, merely, what kind? An important function of the Community Cultural Wealth model is highlighting forms of capital—aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant—that have not been included in previous theories.

Yosso (2005) uses the word "capital" in the CCW framework to draw a clear connection to Bourdieu and to bring attention to the deficit lens inherent in the misuse of his ideas. However, as Colina Neri et al (2021) argue, Yosso is using the term somewhat differently than Bourdieu did. CCW is primarily concerned with the *use value* of students' assets—for example, the way a student employs advice from family members to navigate transfer from community college. Capital, however, also has *exchange value*—it derives additional worth when it is possessed by few, but valued by many. Like other forms of capital, those in power have a vested interest in keeping their cultural capital scarce, so that it retains its exchange value when passed on intergenerationally. Assets are not truly capital until they "confer powerfully accumulated status that can be further invested to accumulate yet more capitalizing power" (Colina Neri et al., 2021, p. 8). One challenge of the CCW framework's use of "capital" is the fact that institutions do not yet value the assets students of color possess and therefore, these forms of wealth cannot be used to reinforce unequal power structures. Nor would we want them to. Instead, the end goal of CCW and other non-deficit perspectives is to build fair schools that recognize and reward the strengths students bring, empower them to use these strengths to challenge oppressive structures in society, and help them weave together their own assets with the skills elites value (Colina Neri et al., 2021). Career services professionals have an important role to play in the pursuit of this goal.

Why should career services professionals care about Community Cultural Wealth?

Previous research suggests that underrepresented minority, low-income, and/or first-generation college students (FGCS) face unique challenges in the college-to-career transition. Recent Black and Latina/o graduates are more likely to be under- or unemployed than their White counterparts (Kroeger & Gould, 2017; Williams & Wilson, 2019). Racial differences persist even after accounting for the selectivity of graduates' alma maters,

which points to the enduring problem of racial discrimination in hiring (Gaddis, 2015). Similarly, bachelor's degree holders from low-income backgrounds can expect to make two-thirds as much as their higher-income peers at the beginning of their careers (Hershbein, 2016). FGCS apply to fewer positions, receive fewer offers, and are less likely to accept job offers than continuing-generation students (Eismann, 2016; Fang & Saks, 2020). These disparities result from a complex interplay of individual (e.g., major choice), institutional (e.g., college selectivity and support services), and labor market (e.g., discriminatory hiring) factors, but may also be exacerbated by differences in the accessibility of career resources.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) *2020 Student Survey Report* finds that continuing-generation students are more likely to use their parents and other relatives as resources in the job search process than are first-generation students. In contrast, FGCS are more likely to use "job ads, trade associations, virtual career fairs, and employer brochures and presentations" (NACE, 2021, p. 20). Similarly, the *Gallup Alumni Survey*—a national study of alumni's career outcomes and experiences in college—reports that, while professors remain a key source for career advice, FGCS and underrepresented minority graduates are less likely to have mentors who are faculty. These students rely more on staff for mentorship than their continuing-generation and non-minority peers (Gallup, 2018). While these search strategies are useful, they rely heavily on formal resources that are widely available to all applicants. They do not provide students with the competitive advantage that comes from knowledge of the "hidden job market" (Hatala & Yamkovenko, 2016; Tate et al., 2015) in the same way as parental networks (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2015; McCoy et al., 2017; Nichols & Islas, 2016) or other professionally relevant social connections formed in college (Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen, 2012).

In addition to providing students information about available jobs, network-based strategies also signal an applicant's quality to prospective employers (Castilla et al., 2013). Previous research suggests that, while Black job seekers are just as likely to utilize their social networks as White job seekers, they are less likely to receive an offer using network-based methods (Pedulla & Pager, 2019). This is because they are less likely than White applicants to know someone at the organizations to which they are applying and their contacts are less likely to reach out to an employer on their behalf. Because of differences in the composition and capital in their networks, "African American job seekers would need to utilize twice as many network contacts as White job seekers to accrue the same labor market benefits" (Pedulla & Pager, 2019, p. 996). For these reasons, is important to support underrepresented students as they grow their networks and develop strategies for using them effectively.

Fortunately, career centers have an important role to play in this process. FGCS use campus career services at higher rates than continuing-generation students. Similarly, Black students report going to the career center more than their White peers—an average of 2.13 visits during the 2019-20 school year, as compared to 1.99 for Asian American students, 1.60 for Latina/o students, and 1.37 for White students (NACE, 2021). FGCS and underrepresented minority graduates also rate their visits to career services more positively than continuing generation and White students, respectively (Gallup, 2016). These findings indicate that "career centers provide an important equity function" (NACE, 2021, p. 12): FGCS and minority students are willing to use the career center and find these experiences helpful. How can career services professionals build on this existing interest to provide targeted support that is even more accessible, useful, and cognizant of the unique strengths of these student populations?

While there is growing interest in the college-to-career transition for low-income college graduates and graduates of color (Martinez & Santiago, 2020; UNCF, 2016), there remains little practical guidance for career advisors and educators hoping to better serve these student populations (Garriott, 2020). One challenge is designing career services for underrepresented students that does not depict them as “lacking” essential resources for career success. Work volition—the extent to which students feel capable of making their own career decisions, even in the face of obstacles—is an important part of career satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2016). Programs that (even unintentionally) communicate to students that they are not capable or agentic may damage work volition and subsequent career satisfaction (Garriott, 2020). In contrast, critical awareness of unequal opportunity structures has been found to be positively associated with career development indices like work salience, vocational identity, career commitment (Diemer & Blustein, 2006) and vocational expectations (Diemer & Hsieh, 2008) for low-SES youth living in urban communities. In other words, as students “learn how to play the game on an uneven playing field, they may become more efficacious in applying their individual efforts in navigating the arenas that are oppressive to them” (Diemer & Blustein, 2006, p. 230).

Learning more about the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework may help faculty and career services staff recognize the strengths that underrepresented students bring to the job search process, empower them to use their assets in pursuit of their goals—even in the face of challenges—and advocate for institutional changes that reward students for these skills. To this end, the following review includes a more detailed explanation of the theory and its central features, key takeaways from the recent literature on CCW at the college level, and questions for researchers and career services professionals as they consider incorporating CCW into their work. Throughout this review, I include direct quotations from students who were interviewed by other scholars. My hope is that students’ own words will provide tangible examples of CCW and how it works.

What exactly is Community Cultural Wealth?

Yosso is not the first to recognize “funds of knowledge” (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992), “pedagogies of home” (Delgado Bernal, 2001), and the virtues and values (Foley, 1997) that support low income students and students of color as they pursue their educational goals. However, one of the biggest contributions of her Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework is putting a name to the forms of capital many underrepresented students may already possess, which, in turn, helps gatekeepers see them more clearly. Yosso’s model has six forms of capital: aspirational, familial, linguistic, social, navigational, and resistant.

Table 2. Forms of Community Cultural Wealth

Form	Description	Example
Aspirational	The capacity “to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77).	Parents who refer to their children by the careers they aspire to (e.g., “Allí va mi maestra”) as a way to support them in their goals (Peralta et al., 2013).
Familial	Knowledge, sense of history, intuition, values, and lessons of caring and coping that are inculcated in and passed through kinship networks and that foster collective consciousness.	Student organizations that provide members with a tight-knit community for social and emotional support (Duncheon, 2018).
Linguistic	Skills developed through communicating in more than one language or style.	Children who translate for family members and, in the process, learn how to attend to different audiences (Orellana, 2003).
Social	Networks of people and community resources that provide emotional support, information, and financial or other material needs.	Advanced undergraduates who offer guidance to younger students from their communities, thereby “lifting while we climb” (Luedke, 2020).
Navigational	The ability to navigate institutions and spaces that were “not created with communities of color in mind” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).	Students who use “constellation mentoring” to piece together support and advising from various sources (Hines et al., 2019).
Resistant	Knowledge and skills derived from challenging inequality, racism, and subordination.	Black women who consciously raise their daughters to value themselves as intelligent, beautiful, strong, and deserving of respect, thereby resisting societal messages that devalue Black womanhood (Ward, 1996).

Adapted from Yosso, 2005

Aspirational Capital refers to students' hopes for their future, which drive them to pursue their goals, even in the face of obstacles. Aspirations often come from interactions with individual family members: for example, a parent who may have little formal education themselves, but who understands the value of education and communicates this regularly to their children (DeMirjyn, 2010). In other cases, stories of families struggling to survive or making great sacrifices for their children, motivates students to succeed, "pay back" their families, and "pay it forward" by helping other underrepresented students (Crisp et al., 2020; Luedke, 2020). Brenda, an undocumented Chicana student, interviewed by Pérez Huber (2009), explains how her father's hard work inspires her to work hard in college:

I always see my dad working. When I was little, he would work seven days a week and it bothered me so much, because he [could] never spend time with us. Now I'm older...I see my dad's hands and they're not soft. I remember when I was little touching his hands, I don't know why, but back then they were softer. He works in landscaping, so touching all the grass and stuff like that, his hands are really rough. And my dad, for many, many, years, he sold shrimp cocktails [outside]. He's really much darker, and you could see the manchas from the sun, like one big one he has right here [pointing to cheek]. And so when I saw his face, and his hands, I was like "Ugh! This is the reason why I'm going to school!" I just see how much he works, and how brave they [her parents] were to come here, it motivates me" (p. 715).

As Brenda's statement suggests, the forms of capital outlined in the CCW framework can be mutually reinforcing. Her familial capital (e.g., knowledge of her father's work history) generates aspirational capital. Similarly, a student who is a parent may be driven (aspirational capital) by a desire to provide a better life for their children (familial capital) (Waterman & Lindley, 2013). Yosso included aspirations as a distinct form of capital because Latino families maintain consistently high hopes for their children's achievement, even as they experience some of the poorest educational outcomes of any racial group in the U.S. (Langenkamp, 2019). This resilience is an extremely valuable resource and is tightly linked to family and community.

Familial capital encompasses knowledge, orientations, and practices that are passed on by families—including fictive kin and the broader communities in which students live. Through kinship connections, students form commitments to serving their community, develop socio-emotional skills, experience the responsibility for caring for others, and cope with challenges by modeling the behaviors of those around them. Families provide students with social support, but also a sense of their history and pride in their culture (Martinez, 2012). Knowledge possessed by one's family, can also help students navigate educational institutions. First-generation college students, for example, often gain information from older siblings or high school friends who enrolled in college just ahead of them (Martinez et al., 2020; Pérez & McDonough, 2008). After they arrive in college, underrepresented students benefit from forming new "family" networks composed of peers, faculty, and staff. Duran and Pérez (2019), for example, found that queer Latino men received guidance navigating campus from Latina faculty and staff who took on the role of maternal figures in their new collegiate *familias*. Similarly, work done by and for families help students develop useful skill sets. Bejarano and Valverde (2012) interviewed the college-going children of migrant farm workers, whose experiences helping their families in the fields made them responsible beyond their years.

Linguistic capital includes the ability to communicate "in more than one language and/or style" (Yosso, 2005, p. 78) and the skills gained from this linguistic flexibility. Children who are called to be "language brokers" (Hall,

2004) for non-English speaking parents or other family members, gain literacy skills, cross-cultural awareness, audience awareness, and social maturity in the process of translating (Orellana, 2003). As other scholars have pointed out, these kinds of interactions can be stressful for children and adolescents—particularly when they are asked to translate important government, medical, or financial documents (Weisskirch, 2007). However, they are also opportunities for students to experience pride, responsibility, and independence, and to develop their self-esteem (Sukhwant, 1993; Tse, 1996). Bilingualism itself is a skill highly valued by employers that serve non-English speaking clients or customers (Murillo et al., 2017). Beyond knowing another language, linguistic capital also includes the ability to communicate in different styles and to switch styles depending on one's audience (Heredia et al., 2018; Ortiz et al., 2019). It also encompasses language arts not historically recognized by schools (e.g., oral histories, parables, and proverbs) that help students develop memorization skills and other dramaturgical talents (Yosso, 2005).

As previously mentioned, *social capital* is a construct social scientists have long been concerned with (Coleman, 1988). At the individual level, it consists of relationships between people and the knowledge, beliefs, monetary resources, emotional support, and status that come from these relationships (Volker, 2020). For example, several studies (Holland, 2017; Liou et al., 2009; Martinez, 2012), have found that college-bound youth from underrepresented populations gained knowledge about and support for attending college from their places of worship. In some cases, they even received money from these kinds of social ties—as when their church, mosque, or parents' social club took a special collection for scholarships (Pérez Huber, 2009). At the macro level, social capital is a collective good that one can access simply by being a member of a group, regardless of whether one has actual ties to particular group members (Volker, 2020)—for example, a university healthcare clinic that students can access for no or low cost because of their affiliation with the institution.

Historically, social scientists have focused on high-status social capital—the kind that gains one access to prestigious institutions (Ochoa, 2013). However, CCW reminds us that the social capital underrepresented students already possess has enormous value as well. When Espino (2014) interviewed Chicana PhDs about their early educational experiences, they described their parents using “marginalized social capital” by getting information about the school from teachers' aides, as well as custodial and cafeteria staff (p. 559). Similarly, Kiyama (2010) described a grandfather who passed along valuable information about college to his grandchildren from his job repairing vending machines on campus. The first-generation college students of color Hines et al (2019) interviewed were adept at cultivating “constellation mentoring”—turning to several different mentors who offered different forms of support and advice for achieving their goals (p. 55). These are all forms of social capital that remain understudied and undervalued by institutions of higher education.

Navigational and resistant capital are closely linked concepts related to students' ability to recognize and challenge injustice (resistant), and navigate institutions that perpetuate inequality (navigational). Cuellar (2019b) refers to students' commitment to solving society's pressing challenges through social and political involvement as “social agency”. Latina/o students who experience racism on campus, take ethnic and/or women's studies courses, participate in student cultural organizations, aspire to an advanced degree, discuss spirituality regularly with their family, and find a faculty or staff mentor during their time in college demonstrate more social agency (Cuellar, 2019a). These findings indicate that navigating higher educational and other institutions as an underrepresented student can generate a commitment to changing society and build skills for

doing so. While there are many positive benefits from learning to navigate complex institutions, highly self-directed students can sometimes avoid seeking help from student services. For example, many of the Latino men in Sáenz et al.'s (2018) study were “uncomfortable asking for help due to their sense of autonomy and responsibility for their own success” (p. 53).

A classic example of resistant capital in the higher education literature is the “prove-them-wrong” behavior of students from groups that face stereotypes about poor academic performance (Brooms & Davis, 2017, p. 309). Some students take great pains to perform at the top of their class, to prove that they (and people like them) are capable of great things (Ortiz et al., 2019; Peralta et al., 2013). As Ricardo, a high-achieving Latino college student interviewed by Pérez (2014), points out, this attitude helps one bounce back from racist attacks:

I will do better than you. That's all I care about. You can call me a “spic” or tell me to “mow your lawn,” but I don't give a fuck because I will get an “A” on that test, deliver a better presentation than you, and get involved in more things...Is that a form of retaliation? Yeah, it is. But, that's the only way I know how to prove that I'm equal, if not better than them...I'm doing this to affect change in my community. That's my reward (p. 755).

Similarly, the feeling of being a representative for one's group can push students to keep going during especially difficult times. Fernanda, interviewed by Espino (2014), reminds her Latina friends who are thinking of quitting their doctorate programs: “*Si una Gringa...no termina* [if a White woman doesn't finish] it's okay. *Pero tú eres Mexicana y lo que tú haces* [but you are Mexican and what you do] reflects on your whole community” (p. 567). Likewise, Damon, interviewed by Brooks (2018), explains how his participation in a program for Black male college students helped him develop a connection to a broader community, which, in turn, motivated him to graduate:

...it was to motivate us as African American males to graduate. I feel like even directly telling us that we needed to graduate wasn't enough because we knew we needed to graduate and anyone could tell us that. But they were giving us the big picture and pointing out the impact it could have on our communities and even the whole Black America (p. 147).

As these quotes demonstrate, the desire to buck stereotypes can be motivating, community-building, and sustaining during times of challenge. However, it can also place enormous pressure on students to act as representatives for their communities (Pérez & Taylor, 2016) and, in some cases, leads to undue stress and burnout (Brooms & Davis, 2017a). For this reason, it is important for educators not to rely too heavily on the notion that underrepresented students have something to prove when designing support services.

Scholars of higher education have suggested ways to expand the original CCW model to acknowledge the strengths of specific student populations. For example, Ballysingh (2019) uses the term *maternal cultural wealth* to highlight the special role Latina mothers play in inspiring their children to achieve and supporting their educational trajectories. Similarly, Rendón et al. (2015) identify four additional *ventajas* (assets) that Latina/o students possess that are not covered in Yosso's original formulation.

Table 3. *Ventajas* Employed by Latina/o Students

<i>Ventaja</i>	Description
<i>Ganas</i> (determination)	Students <i>con ganas</i> draw from deep wells of “determination, self-reliance, and inner confidence” (Rendón et al., 2015, p. 108) to overcome challenges associated with being undocumented, living in poverty, attending under-resourced schools, and/or becoming responsible for their family’s financial well-being, among other experiences.
Ethnic Consciousness	Students develop pride in Latina/o culture, form relationships with others based on their ethnic identity, and take on the important responsibility of acting as a role model for others.
Spirituality or Faith	Students with this <i>ventaja</i> report being guided by a sense of purpose—either from God, a particular religious faith or community, or a general sense of spirituality (i.e. gratitude, compassion). Often, this includes having a positive worldview, trusting in a higher power during difficult times, seeing the best in others, and having high standards for the treatment of others. Pérez Huber (2009) and Park et al. (2020) also use spiritual capital in their research.
Pluriversal	In navigating multiple and diverse words, students develop a “tolerance for ambiguities and contradictions” (Rendón et al., 2015, p. 111) that helps them avoid black and white thinking. Similar to Yosso’s concept of navigational capital, this <i>ventaja</i> allows students to move easily in and out of different social situations and to shift their behaviors in response to social cues as necessary.

Adapted from Rendón et al., 2015

These *ventajas* point to connections to the career development literature that remain underexplored. Spiritual capital, for example, has clear connections to the literature on calling—defined by Duffy and Dik (2009) as “the experience of a transcendent summons originating beyond the self, the pursuit of activity within the work role as a source or extension of an individual’s overall sense of purpose and meaningfulness in life, and viewing other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation” (p. 35). What role does spiritual capital play in the development of a calling? Do students with spiritual capital enjoy the “career metacompetencies” (e.g., psychological adjustment, career planning, vocational self-clarity) associated with having a calling (Hall & Chandler, 2005, p. 157)?

Although most CCW research is concerned with K-12, postsecondary, and graduate education, it has been used in fields ranging from religion (Chao Romero, 2020) to public health (Manzo et al., 2018). It has been applied to refugee students (Tuliao et al., 2017), undocumented students (Romo et al., 2019), LGBTQ students (Whitehead, 2019), the children of migrant workers (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012), deaf learners (Braun et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2020), parents (Fernández & Paredes Scribner, 2018), and teachers at various levels

(Burciaga & Kohli, 2018). Most recently, there has been a flurry of research using CCW to better understand STEM persistence (Denton et al., 2020; Peralta et al., 2013; Rincón et al., 2020b), which points to potential future connections between the framework and the development of research self-efficacy and science identity among culturally diverse undergraduates (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019). Given the breadth of CCW research, the following discussion focuses only on recent work on *college and community college students'* cultural wealth.

Insights from Recent Work on College Students

The following is a set of key takeaways from 76 empirical, peer-review articles published between 2008 and 2020 on Community Cultural Wealth in U.S. postsecondary institutions. While these articles employ a range of methodologies and answer a variety of research questions, there are notable patterns. Most of this work is qualitative and focused on the experiences of Latina/o students. Fifteen of the articles are related to STEM majors, in particular, and 18 discuss a specific initiative—for example, BRAINS, a professional development program to support underrepresented students in neuroscience (Margherio et al., 2020). While many of the articles reference students' major and career choices, professional identities, and interest in graduate school, few are directly related to the college-to-career transition (Duffy et al., 2020; Garriott, 2020; Margherio et al., 2020; Martinez, 2018; SAIRO, 2017).² Instead, the most common topics in these articles are the formation of college aspirations, the choice of which college to attend, strategies for persisting and graduating, and the experience of being an underrepresented student on campus. Despite the fact that it is not centrally concerned with career development—including the psychological, spiritual, socio-cultural, political and economic factors influencing students' career interests and the knowledge, relationships, and environmental contexts shaping their career choices (Duffy & Dik, 2009)—the literature still offers interesting insights for career services professionals and researchers.

Takeaway 1: Familial capital is a key form of community cultural wealth and may play a central role in the formation of career aspirations as well.

Most articles identified familial capital as one of the most important forms, if not the most important form, of community cultural wealth for underrepresented students. This may be due, in part, to the expansive definition of familial capital, which often includes the families students create at college through close peer and staff relationships (Duran & Pérez, 2019). Family capital is so important because students regularly convert it into other forms of wealth, like aspirational capital. For example, students' often attribute their interest in STEM careers to encouragement from their families (Burt & Johnson, 2018), the desire to serve their communities of origin through fields like medicine or engineering (Rincón & Rodriguez, 2021), and early exposure to math and science through their parents' jobs (Rincón et al., 2020b)—including construction (Dika et al., 2020) or technician positions not requiring a college degree (Mobley & Brawner, 2019). In addition to service-oriented jobs that help them “pay it forward” (Crisp et al., 2020), students also value high paying and stable careers that allow them to “pay back” parents who have supported them (Ayala & Contreras, 2019). Kobe, interviewed by Ballysingh (2019), describes the financial stability his degree will bring to his family:

² Notably, however, there is a growing body of research that describes the career development of underrepresented students in ways that subvert deficit thinking without directly referring to CCW (e.g. Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Duffy et al., 2016).

We're always happy and so, I mean, that helps me a lot because it gives me peace; that we love each other...the only issue is money, but soon those will go away, as soon as I graduate...I can start providing (p. 6).

Because familial capital often brings students to their academic interests and propels them into their careers, it may be useful to think of it as a central form of community cultural wealth from which other strengths spring.

Given the importance of family and community, it is unsurprising that created family also plays an important role in helping many students navigate college. Much of the programming described in the literature relies on creating supportive networks of peers (McGowan & Pérez, 2020) or faculty (López et al., 2020; Martinez, 2018) who share salient identities. Students talk about these relationships as being “family-like” in the degree of trust and warmth involved (Revelo & Baber, 2018, p. 261). Perhaps for this reason, some students express discomfort at the idea of forming instrumental relationships—the kind of networking that, in its purest form, views other people a means to a lucrative job (Rincón et al., 2020a). Even so, students regularly use their family-like relationships to gain information about school and careers (Ortiz et al., 2019). Networking events that focus on membership in a shared community may be more appealing, as evidenced by the excitement students express in meeting “others who look like me and have similar interests” (respondent quoted in Margherio et al., 2020, p. 11).

While it is generally an asset, on some occasions, familial piety can pose challenges for students (Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017). Those who feel a strong obligation to support their families may feel compelled to do so while in college—taking on more work and spending less time on classes in order to do so (SAIRO, 2017). For example, the young men Saenz et al. (Sáenz et al., 2017) interviewed report receiving conflicting messages from their fathers regarding schooling and work:

My father he works every day and everyday he sees me going to college he wants me to finish college but at the same time he wants me to work. He wants me to do both. And sometimes I have discussions with him because of that (p. 101).

The engineering students Dika et al (2020) spoke to expressed similar concerns. While their families were generally supportive, they did not always understand how rigorous engineering courses are and asked students for help that they did not have time to give. A strong desire to support one's family or be geographically close may also lead students to make different choices about graduate school and careers than they would have if were they only responsible for their own well-being (Ballysingh, 2019; Storlie et al., 2016).

Finally, as sociologists have long pointed out, weak ties are useful for accessing diverse forms of information—including about jobs (Granovetter, 1973).³ The strong, family-like ties that help students navigate college may not be as useful in the career-building stage (Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen, 2012). Rincón et al. (2020b) find that, while parents play a key role in helping students develop aspirations for attending college and choosing a STEM

3 Granovetter (1973) suggests that “the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize a tie” (p. 1361). As these are somewhat independent, but interrelated, facets one could define weak ties as being low on some or all of these dimensions. Granovetter himself uses frequency of contact to measure tie strength in his sample of professional, technical, and managerial job changers in Boston (p. 1371).

major, they become less important than siblings, extended family members, teachers, and other institutional agents at the STEM career choice stage. Similarly, some respondents of color interviewed in these studies expressed concern about relying *too heavily* on peers of their same race (Ayala & Contreras, 2019; Pérez, 2017; Wilson, 2014; Yamamura et al., 2010). While such spaces are important for activating CCW (see below), building connections to those from other backgrounds can help students grow their networks and enhance their understanding of human diversity (Pérez, 2014). There is evidence that underrepresented students can benefit from first navigating new cultural spaces alongside peers with whom they feel a sense of kinship, and later branching out to pursue their own interests as their comfort grows (Carr, 2019; Duncanson, 2018; Kolluri, 2020). However, more research is needed to better understand how students use family capital at various stages in their educational and career development—including ways to convert this form of capital into weak ties, how students balance individual interests and familial obligations in their job search, and the skills they gain from working to support family during college (Nuñez & Sansone, 2016)

Takeaway 2: Students' career interests may be highly influenced by resistant capital.

Although there is little existing research on the role of CCW in students' career choices, it seems likely that resistant capital plays an important role in shaping students' job interests. As students engage in “oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80) they may become oriented toward community service (Pérez, 2017) and develop a commitment to social change (Cuellar, 2019a). Students' service orientation can drive them to become mentors and role models for younger students of color (Luedke, 2020), including younger cousins or siblings (Mobley & Brawner, 2019; Sáenz et al., 2020). It can also draw them to careers with a clear service focus like teaching (Crisp et al., 2020), social work (Olcoñ et al., 2018), medicine (Rincón & Rodríguez, 2021), or engineering (Rincón et al., 2020b). On the flip side, cultural norms like “doing your own thing” and “realizing your own potential” (Rendón et al., 2015, p. 97) can be alienating for students with collectivist values and educators should take caution in describing certain occupations this way.

The professoriate—which, for obvious reasons, is a career path that is well-represented in this literature—offers an example of how the service orientation of a particular career is often a matter of perception. Research on students that have already chosen the professoriate, tends to describe it as a service occupation—focusing on teaching, mentoring, inspiring students, and the inclusion of marginalized voices as its central features (Espino, 2014; Martinez, 2018). Viewed from a different angle, however, the professoriate can appear individualistic and disconnected from real world problems. As Lorenzo, a Latino STEM student interested in teaching, explained to Rincón et al. (2020a):

Professor, no...What I want to do is be a teacher, like a high school teacher, especially in the communities I grew up in because I feel like I can really impact those students. But in college, I'm probably going to be teaching kids who...really don't have anything to lose, so I want to make an impact. I've had a lot of people make an impact on me, and that's why I wouldn't see myself being a professor, but I definitely would consider my PhD (p. 848).

These two different views of the same occupation show how easy it is for some students to dismiss careers that appear to have no impact on their lives (Rincón et al., 2020a). Students who are committed to service-oriented work may benefit from a clear understanding of the various ways they can serve their communities in different occupations. Broadening one's definition of “service”, might increase the number and kinds of jobs

one applies to. As Malik, interviewed by Frett (2018) explains, even actions that initially appear “selfish” can ultimately be directed toward community service:

It’s never just about me. When I’m making decisions, I think about everybody that I’ve ever come in contact with me, I think about everybody that has ever invested a dollar in me or time in me. My village is huge. Absolutely when I’m making decisions, they’re not just about me. Sometimes they come off as very selfish but they’re about everybody that has supported and poured into me throughout my life (p. 72).

Working to accumulate personal wealth that can be reinvested in one’s community of origin is a canonical example.

In addition to shaping their career paths, resistant capital might also help students maintain optimism about their futures. Previous research shows that underrepresented students have high career aspirations before enrolling in college and have comparable levels of work hope as their peers (Garriott, 2020). Juntunen & Wettersten (2006) define work hope as “a positive motivational state that is directed at work and work-related goals and is composed of the presence of work-related goals and both the agency and pathways for achieving those goals” (p. 97). Thompson et al. (2014) find that psychological distress and experiences with racism and classism are negatively related to work hope, but perceived social status (i.e. perceived access to economic and social resources) is positively related. As previously mentioned, higher critical consciousness—including an understanding of societal injustices—is associated with stronger vocational identity, career commitment, and work salience (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). Given these findings, researchers might consider whether resistant capital moderates the relationship between experiences of racism and classism and work hope. In other words, does an understanding of inequality and a commitment to challenging it (resistant capital) protect students’ work hope? Similarly, might other forms of CCW increase students’ perceived social status and, subsequently, their work hope?

Takeaway 3: Students already have valuable social capital to use and develop in their job search.

Underrepresented students may not always see their friends or families as useful social networks, in part, because colleges and universities do not always talk about them this way. Some research seems to reinforce this perspective. For example, students whose parents work in high-skill labor can access advice, information, and industry connections more easily than those whose parents have “lower level career trajectories” (Parks-Yancy, 2012, p. 513) and such networks may appear more diverse as well. Pérez and McDonough (2008) refer to the process by which Latina/o students learn about college from siblings, cousins, or other family members as “chain migration”, because it is highly specific information (often about one college) that comes from a close tie. Chain migration relies heavily on the direct experiences of a significant other and therefore, may limit the diversity of students’ choice sets.

However, even though the social capital of first generation, low-income, and/or students of color might not look like those of their peers, it is still very valuable. The question becomes how students can use and grow the social capital they have. There are a number of articles that explain how underrepresented students use social capital in the college application and choice process (Brooms & Davis, 2017a; Luna & Martinez, 2013; Mobley & Brawner, 2019; Oropeza et al., 2010). Many successful college students reported having

an older sibling, cousin, or other family member who attended college and gave them advice about how to enroll (Holland, 2017; Martin et al., 2020). Those students who were discouraged from college by high school teachers and counselors, often turned to religious organizations (Pérez Huber, 2009), extracurricular activities, or other community organizations for advice and moral support (Liou et al., 2009). Low-income students who participate in extracurricular activities alongside high-income students can benefit from knowledge that would otherwise remain trapped in these well-resourced circles. Lu (2013), for example, explains how working class Chinese American families gain access to information about college admissions because their children attend the same classical musical schools as higher income kids.

Similarly, once they arrive at college, students build social networks for surviving and thriving (Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen, 2012). Dual credit (Allen et al., 2020), summer bridge (McGowan & Pérez, 2020), research (Ortiz et al., 2019), and other identity-based organizations and programs (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012; Brooms, 2018; Jehangir, 2010; Margherio et al., 2020; Martinez, 2018) connect students to other high achievers, from whom they learn about study skills (Crisp et al., 2020), job opportunities (Dika et al., 2020), and specific professors and classes (Rincón et al., 2020a). Even social media (Purgason et al., 2020) and online forums (Rincón & Rodriguez, 2021) can act as useful points of connection for underrepresented students. Institutional context matters as well. As Wells (2008) finds, dominant forms of social capital matter less for persistence in community college than at four-year institutions—although they remain a significant determinant of persistence at both.

Because it may not look like the social capital others possess, students might dismiss these connections when thinking through their resources for job search. Carr (2019) describes how the students in her Career Collaborative Project had an “aha” moment when thinking about their use of social capital:

Dee (junior, Black male) shared a story of how he and his friend’s parents connected during a spring break trip to New York City where his friend’s parents put him in touch with someone in marketing sales. Angie (senior, Latina female) shared a story about her connecting other students to one another, and Frank (sophomore, Black female) having the connections with her friend’s mother if she wanted to talk to someone about the field of education (p. 75).

Although these students did not initially see their own social capital as useful, further reflection revealed its richness. For this reason, some scholars suggest that students and families use their existing social ties, build from the social capital they already possess, and share their networks with peers—as doing so boosts their confidence in seeking new information (Kiyama, 2010). In short, just because the social capital of underrepresented students may be undervalued by educational institutions does not mean it is worthless. Indeed, because networking is itself a highly desirable skill, creatively using their social capital helps students gain experience that is useful to employers.

Takeaway 4: Counterspaces help activate and transform CCW, which might also prove useful to students in the college-to-career transition.

It is not enough for educators to *recognize* students’ strengths: they must help students *activate* their community cultural wealth and *convert* it into forms of capital gatekeepers value (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). To this end, the literature emphasizes the importance of counterspaces, where students can interact with peers, faculty, and staff who understand their experiences and goals (Margherio et al., 2020). Counterspaces are,

broadly speaking, settings that “work to facilitate collective processing of experiences that are related through shared elements of identity” (Shirazi, 2019, p. 481). These can include clubs, fraternal organizations, housing, and other extracurricular activities organized around a cultural community or shared identity.

It is important to note that, in Bourdieu’s conceptualization, capital is distributed in specific fields, where individuals occupy positions of power or subordination in relation to one another, engage based on the rules of the field, and use their capital advantages to gain more capital within the field. The social world is made up of several large fields—e.g., education, art, politics, science—and subfields that influence one another (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). While these fields structure much of social action, actors do have some agency, including creating *subfields* and capitalizing on changes in adjacent fields (Thompson, 2008). For example, some scholars think of campus counterspaces as subfields, formed by actors from non-dominant groups, that have rules of engagement and structures of power that are influenced, but not fully determined, by the larger field of higher education (Luedke, 2019). As such, they offer students the opportunity to occupy new positions and acquire new forms of capital they would not otherwise be able to access in the larger field (Luedke, 2017).

How does capital accumulation within these counterspaces (or subfields) work in practice? Watching and imitating high-achieving peers (Pérez & Taylor, 2016) or forming relationships with TAs or professors who share one’s background (Espino, 2014; Martinez, 2018; Ortiz et al., 2019) can increase students’ aspirational capital. Bob, interviewed by Revelo and Baber (2018), describes attending meetings of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers:

When I came [to the university] and I met members from SHPE, I was like “Man, these people are almost like gods” because they looked like me, they spoke like me, but yet they didn’t have...they basically...they shattered that stereotype of Latinos not being able to achieve whatever it is...or at least Latinos over exceeding the expectations (p. 261).

Here, the simple act of gathering of Latina/o engineers in one place is enough to boost Bob’s aspirational capital. The counterspace makes these high achievers more visible.

Counterspaces also give students the opportunity to activate resistant and navigational capital by nurturing a positive self-concept (Martinez et al., 2020; Santa-Ramirez et al., 2020). The first-generation students Tate et al. (2015) interviewed saw themselves as being more persistent and motivated than the average college student. They also described themselves as being more appreciative of the opportunity to attend college, less entitled, and more adaptable, self-reliant, and responsible. A strong self-image helped the students weather challenges in the college-to-career transition—including their concern that their networks were not as well-developed as those of their continuing-generation peers. Rather than internalizing this shortcoming, the students applied the same persistence to networking as they had to other challenges they faced in life. One interviewee explains:

It’s kind of scary a little, because you can make your own connections, but then it’s kind of worrisome I guess that *sigh* there’s other people that have that [network] and you’re just like “no it’s OK because I’ve done this, like getting here and everything and that worked out,” but for me, I know that I’m going to have to push more and work harder and be better because I’m not going to have help like that (Tate et al., 2015, p. 302).

While Tate et al. (2015) did not frame their work using CCW, one could imagine that this additional language could be useful in helping students' further describe their assets.

As previously mentioned, counterspaces help build social capital by connecting students to others who share their background and experiences (McGowan & Pérez, 2020). Underrepresented students who learn how to successfully navigate college are often keen to share their knowledge with younger students (Luedke, 2020; Rincón & Rodríguez, 2021; Romo et al., 2019). They take on the (largely unpaid) work of being mentors and role models for high schoolers and first years (Holland, 2017; Means et al., 2019; Revelo & Baber, 2018; Sáenz et al., 2020; Yamamura et al., 2010). They then graduate to become professionals who are eager to hire other underrepresented students (Frett, 2018). Even though students might not see mentoring as professional development, these experiences provide them with skills that many employers value. Career services staff can help students recognize and describe these skills to gatekeepers (e.g., a grad school essay that describes a student's experience advising younger Chemistry majors as evidence of their teaching ability). Or, as Luedke (2020) suggests, institutions can reward this work by providing students with formal titles and pay—both of which can help them on the job market. Future collaborations between researchers and career services staff might consider how to best design peer and alumni mentorship programs to support underrepresented students in the career-to-college transition.⁴

While counterspaces are key to building these forms of capital, such spaces can be more or less effective depending on their design. Programming for underrepresented students that does not fully acknowledge their identities or question the power dynamics of the broader field—that simply conveys information about how to play the existing game—can perpetuate deficit narratives (Colina Neri et al., 2021). Without care, these subfields can become silos where students who are labeled “behind” are sent for remediation. In contrast, Luedke et al. (2019) describe a counterspace, “Project Scholar”, where students receive “bi-directional socialization”: they learn academic skills and are exposed to undergraduate research while nurturing their existing talents, backgrounds, and identities. In Project Scholar, students read social science research about the assets of communities of color, talk about themselves as “aggressive learners” who are adept at navigating different educational settings, and connect with alumni of color who have used their unique perspectives to advance scientific knowledge. Bi-directional socialization was deliberately built into every aspect of Project Scholar from the outset—not added as an afterthought or one-off experience (Luedke et al., 2019).

Finally, there are two oft-repeated concerns with counterspaces that the literature does not fully address. The first is the question of students limiting the capacity of their networks by building only strong, “family-like” social ties in college (Ayala & Contreras, 2019; Pérez, 2017; Yamamura et al., 2010). There is some evidence that students can convert these strong ties into weak ones. For example, Cristina, interviewed by DeMirjyn (2010), learned about the Latina/o youth organization Future Leaders of America from her best friend. Joining FLA helped her make more instrumental connections with other high achieving students. Similarly, Victor, interviewed by Pérez et al (2018), noted that, while “mainstream” student organizations did not take any interest in him, he was actively recruited by Latina/o student organizations. He took on leadership roles in these groups, which increased his overall visibility on campus. Students interviewed by Kolluri (2020) and

4 For interested readers, Carr (2019) provides an excellent example of a dissertation that aims to do this very thing.

Duncheon (2018) describe teaming up with friends to attend office hours until they felt comfortable doing so on their own. The students of color who participated in Carr's (2019) Career Collaborative Project attended a large regional job fair together, which made the experience less daunting. In each of these cases, students used counterspaces or close friendships to develop a broader social network. Researchers should learn more about where and how these transformations of capital are likely to happen, so that career services staff can design programming that replicates these experiences.

A second concern relates to the absence of faculty in student counterspaces. For the most part, students described getting more information and support from their peers than from any institutional actors (Pérez, 2017; Revelo & Baber, 2018; Whitehead, 2019). This was true even in instances where faculty and staff may expect students to turn to them first—like figuring out the requirements for transferring from community college (Mobley & Brawner, 2019). Since faculty play a role in providing students with career advice and connecting them to employers (Gallup, 2016), student-faculty relationships may shape career attitudes for underrepresented students (Trolan et al., 2021). The impact of such relationships on student success depends on the type (e.g., informal, about coursework or careers) (Anaya & Cole, 2001; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2008) and quality (e.g., respect, accessibility) (Komarraju et al., 2010) of interactions, as well as institutional context (McCoy et al., 2017). At predominantly White institutions, for example, students of color are more likely to be building inter-racial relationships with faculty, which may add friction to a process that is already daunting (Anaya & Cole, 2001; Cotten & Wilson, 2006). In the existing literature, students of color report being ignored (Arnold, 1993), underestimated (Brooms & Davis, 2017b) or actively “weeded out” (McCoy et al., 2017) of certain fields (e.g., STEM) by White faculty. Furthermore, first-generation college students may feel uncomfortable asking faculty for help (Jack, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2018) or feel less entitled to make demands of faculty members' time (Tate et al., 2015). Notably, however, there is some evidence that first-generation college students are more likely to identify teachers and professors as the most important source of career messages—even above family members (Powers & Myers, 2017).

Programs that bring faculty into student counterspaces or allow students to partner with faculty in solving problems of mutual concern (e.g., Stanton, 2018) may promote network building. For example, Lopez et al. (2020) describes a participatory action research collective composed of Latina faculty, students, and staff called *Las Comadres*. *Las Comadres* helped students see themselves as researchers and facilitated the exchange of aspirational and navigational capital across all three groups. Unfortunately, programs like these seem relatively rare. Most articles described students forming relationships with faculty on their own—often through bonding with minority faculty over a shared identity (Brooms & Davis, 2017b; Cooper et al., 2017; Martinez, 2018). Career services professionals and researchers should consider the effectiveness of bringing faculty into student counterspaces for the purposes of sharing career advice and building job networks in a low-intensity setting. When is it helpful for students to interact only with their peers? When might the presence of a faculty member add value?

Gaps in Collegiate Community Cultural Wealth Research

Although the literature on CCW in college is robust and growing every day, there are limits to how it has been used. These limits point to opportunities for scholars and career services professionals to partner in producing evidence to inform best practices. The existing research tends to rely heavily on qualitative methods and focuses on college matriculation and persistence to the exclusion of career development. As other scholars have pointed out, the critical race theory tradition also runs the risk of ignoring individual agency and intragroup diversity, and creating a false dichotomy between “dominant” and “non-dominant” capital (Carter, 2003). The CCW literature has been attentive to these risks to varying degrees and any new research using the framework should continue to pay careful attention to these issues.

Methodological Diversity

Most CCW research tends to be qualitative. As CCW is in the critical race theory tradition—which values “describing and understanding a particular phenomenon as experienced by a group of individuals” (Romo et al., 2019, p. 394)—this tendency is understandable. However, relying on qualitative research to the exclusion of other methods keeps us from understanding “how these multiple assets are related to a variety of student outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, occupational attainment, and civic participation)” (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011, p. 167). As such, it may be useful to investigate associations between CCW and career outcomes through quantitative or mixed methods. For instance, does having certain forms of familial capital increase students’ career satisfaction (Garriott et al., 2017)?

While there has been some quantitative work on college students using CCW as a guiding theoretical framework (Alvarado et al., 2020; Cuellar, 2019a, 2019b), few have attempted to measure the constructs in CCW quantitatively (Dika et al., 2018). One notable exception is Sablan (2019), who surveyed 772 undergraduates in two open access Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions to create scales for assessing students’ community cultural wealth. She found that items measuring aspirational, familial, navigational, and resistant capital had preliminary reliability and validity evidence—although she suggested modifications to items for aspirational and resistant capital. Most importantly, her work demonstrates the potential of using quantitative measures of these constructs while keeping the spirit of CCW intact. Like other scholars (Garcia et al., 2018), she warns of the possibility of slipping into deficit perspectives in posing questions and interpreting quantitative results. With regards to the question posed above, for example, if we find that familial capital is not associated with work satisfaction we should not then dismiss the importance of family in students’ academic lives. Instead, we should consider how colleges can help students activate and transform their familial capital to further their career goals. We might also think about ways colleges can communicate the value of students’ familial capital to major employers. Here, intent is key. All CCW research, regardless of method, is “driven by the notion that students bring cultural assets to schooling that, while important to home communities...are not valued by the dominant school culture” (Sablan, 2019, p. 198).

Individual Agency and Intragroup Diversity

Critical race-based theories, like CCW, are often limited in their explanation of individual agency and intragroup diversity. Critical race theory (CRT) has a difficult time explaining the perspective of people of color who do not agree with its central tenants (e.g., that racism is pervasive in American society) or who adopt deficit

perspectives of communities of color. CRT also runs the risk of ignoring intra-racial differences based on class, sexuality, gender, and other dimensions of identity (Tichavakunda, 2019). To its credit, the CCW literature recognizes the experiences of LGBTQ+ students as distinct from their cisgendered peers (Duran & Pérez, 2019; Whitehead, 2019), and considers differences and similarities in strategies employed by first- and continuing-generation students of color (Duran et al., 2020; Martin et al., 2020). Rincón et al (2020a), for example, found that while both groups use CCW to navigate STEM majors, continuing-generation Latina/o students were more adept at moving “between and across CCW and traditional forms of capital” (p. 845)—for example, forming kinship networks with upperclassmen of the same race and seeking information on classes and professors from these networks. The CCW literature also recognizes that not all underrepresented students believe that racism is pervasive or that systems of inequality in education need to be fixed (Pérez et al., 2018; Revelo & Baber, 2018). Samuelson & Litzler (2016) refer to “conformist resistance”, which students enable when they are motivated by racial pride, but feel little impetus to change systems of oppression (p. 97). The authors interview a student who prefers to ignore racism and dedicate more time to his own achievement:

I’m here to do work. So, quite frankly, unless you’re saying something to me directly that adversely affects me, I don’t care what you have to say...So, personally, for me, unless you’re blatant with something like that [racism], then honestly, I’m busy, I have stuff to do. Essentially, it’s to a point where you have to move past certain things (Samuelson & Litzler, 2016, p. 102).

Future research on CCW and career development should continue to pursue this level of nuance—being careful not to homogenize underrepresented students, to consider their own understanding of the system in which they are operating, and to respect their intersecting identities, which may be more or less salient at different times.

Patchwork Capital

As other scholars have pointed out, CCW is often pitted against dominant cultural capital in a kind of false opposition (Tichavankunda, 2019). However, there is value in helping students recognize and cultivate both, just as there is danger in pursuing one to the exclusion of the other. For example, students may gain aspirational capital through their schools and families, but remain without the resources needed to actually pursue their goals. All of the Mexican American families Kiyama (2010) interviewed in her research expressed a desire for their children to go to college, regularly conveyed supportive messages about higher education to their children, and shared excitement over their college interests. However, some parents did not have a good understanding of the financial assistance available to college students, nor did they have much knowledge of colleges beyond Ivy League universities and their local institution. Lagenkamp (2019) also found that low-income immigrant parents maintained very high aspirations for their children’s education, but their optimism about the quality of education their children were receiving meant that they did not always intervene on their children’s behalf. While these parents believed in their children as much as higher income parents, they did not possess the same informational resources—including an understanding of differences between various institutional types (e.g., four-year and community colleges).

The challenge is working in the middle ground between “subtractive schooling” (Valenzuela, 1999)—which communicates to underrepresented students that they are inherently deficient—and promoting an unrealistic optimism about CCW’s capacity to open doors in our existing system (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). As Kiyama

(2010) notes: “It is naive to assume that there are no limiting factors present in families. It is equally naive to assume that various educational actors do not play a role in perpetuating those limitations and deficits” (p. 350). It is imperative that educators celebrate the creativity, motivation, resourcefulness, and intelligence of underrepresented students. However, as previous research shows, when schools develop students’ aspirations to go to college, without also providing them with preparatory coursework, knowledge of applications processes, and a clear path for meeting college benchmarks, they can inadvertently hold students back (Cipollone & Stich, 2017; Jayakumar et al., 2013). Services for underrepresented students navigating the college-to-career transition must also avoid the trap of increasing students’ aspirational capital without providing them with other forms of support.

Highly successful students tend to use a combination of dominant capital and CCW—for example, borrowing effective study skills from peers, while also drawing from cultural pride as a motivator (Crisp et al., 2020). While this “patchwork capital” (Kolluri, 2020) is very effective, it also requires a lot of energy to piece together. Students facing significant financial, emotional, or familial challenges may not have the time to do this effectively. Accessing and using one’s non-dominant cultural capital in a way that is appealing to White gatekeepers requires time, money, and specific knowledge. For example, Wallace (2017) interviewed a middle class Black Caribbean student who was able to connect with his White music teacher over their shared interest in Black jazz musicians, but was disheartened by the fact that his peers were judged harshly for lacking this knowledge:

Mr. Brown [the music teacher] will give me nuff respect when I can read music, play the guitar and know Thelonious Monk...I just get upset when he acts like he wants to take the mic of my mates because they can’t read music or never heard of Bach. I’m like, that’s not on...Not because they don’t have money and parents with that kind of knowledge don’t mean you can compare them to me and treat them that way (p. 918).

As previously mentioned, college faculty and staff play an important role in helping students activate their existing community cultural wealth, convert their CCW into dominant cultural capital (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011), and describe their varied skills in a way that is compelling to gatekeepers. College leaders can also change the discourse around education and work by communicating the added value of CCW to institutional decision makers, employers, and policymakers. Unfortunately, we have little research on best practices for mixing these forms of capital in a career services context.

Career Development Research

A limitation of the literature on CCW among college students is the minimal attention paid to career development and satisfaction, to the role of faculty and staff, and to institutional context (Denton et al., 2020). Most of the literature cited here is concerned with matriculation, persistence, well-being, and support during college. These are not unrelated to career choice: for example, greater social support in college is associated with higher levels of work volition and more occupational engagement (Kim et al., 2018). However, it seems misguided to assume that transitioning into a career is the same as transitioning into college, and that the same theories and findings will apply in each case. With a handful of exceptions, CCW researchers collect data directly from students and/or parents (Kiyama, 2010; Lu, 2013). Very little research is concerned with faculty, staff, employers, and other gatekeepers (López et al., 2020; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Yamamura et al., 2010) or

on other features of the institution—including minority-serving status. We do not know whether or not these gatekeepers recognize students' CCW or, if they do, how they help students' use and transform it. Given the important role faculty play in students' career development, this is an unfortunate oversight (Maietta, 2016). Since the separation of career services from other student services tends to negatively impact students of color (Sansone et al., 2019), it may be useful to involve multiple student support services in CCW-inspired career programming.

Where to Next?

At present, many campuses offer workbooks, talks, and workshops on Community Cultural Wealth with the idea that mere exposure to this framework can help students, faculty, and staff develop a new language for talking about students' strengths (e.g., Da Graca & Dougherty, 2015; Loyola University Chicago, 2020). In short, simply learning more about CCW and sharing it with students is a great first step. Existing gaps in the literature also point to future opportunities for career services staff and scholars to partner in designing evidence-based services. I am a higher education researcher, not a career services professional, so I would be remiss to tell these individuals how they should incorporate CCW into their daily work—especially given the particularities of their institutions. Instead, I offer some questions that student services staff can ask themselves when working with underrepresented students or designing programming aimed at these student populations. The literature also inspires new research projects on CCW—especially mixed methods work that can uncover relationships between CCW and positive career outcomes.

Questions for career services professionals

The following are questions for career services professionals inspired by CCW. Underrepresented students are a varied group and we should not assume that all this literature is relevant for every student. As such, these questions are phrased to keep the student as an individual in mind:

Questions on Student Strengths and Challenges:

- What resources are available to this student in their family and community (on and off campus) that can help connect them to employment?
- What skills has this student developed in their family and community that employers will value? How can I help the student communicate these strengths?
- To what degree is this student's career interest being driven by a commitment to community service or social justice? What is their definition of "service"?
- Is this student aware of their community cultural wealth? In other words, are they able to describe their varied resources, even if these do not look like the resources other students might have? Would they benefit from language that helps them see and talk about these strengths?
- Is this student providing peer career advising and support for which they are uncompensated? Is there an opportunity to employ this student in a formal capacity?

- Would this student benefit from access to counterspaces that provide bi-directional socialization—supporting their development as a scholar while recognizing their background and cultural heritage? Can these counterspaces also provide students with a jumping off point to form connections to people from different backgrounds? Are such counterspaces readily available on our campus?
- How broad is this student's social network? Do they have a mix of strong and weak ties? How did they form their connections on and off campus? Can we identify opportunities for them to expand and diversify their network?
- Is this student balancing family obligations or expectations that are influencing their career choices? Could they benefit from additional social or emotional support in navigating these commitments?

Questions on Gatekeepers:

- Which students are not coming in regularly to access career services? Are there ways to meet these students in campus counterspaces? Are there ways to build counterspaces within career services?
- Which students are coming in regularly to access career services? What do they value about this experience? Is there a way to partner with these students to design targeted programming or to encourage their peers to visit the career center?
- Do faculty and staff recognize and value our students' Community Cultural Wealth? If not, is there a way to educate them on this subject? Are there opportunities to partner with other student service providers on campus to offer this training?
- Do the major employers of our students recognize and value their CCW? If not, is there a way to communicate these assets to employers in a compelling way?
- Are the strengths of our underrepresented alumni being used to their fullest extent? If not, are there ways to connect alumni with current underrepresented students (e.g., Harvard University, 2020)?

Questions for career development researchers

Keeping in mind some of the methodological and topical gaps in the literature on CCW, the following is a list of questions scholars might consider in their future research. Here, I have divided the questions into those most suited to qualitative and quantitative research. In some instances, however, it would be useful to apply a variety of methods to one question or pair two related questions in the study of the same population.

Questions for Qualitative Work:

- How do students' families and communities (both on campus and at home) shape their career interests and commitment?
- What kinds of counterspaces are most effective in helping students cultivate their CCW and other forms of capital? Which effective features of counterspaces can be incorporated across different campus types?
- How do students balance their individual interests and familial obligations in choosing careers and searching for jobs?

- How do faculty and staff assess students' career potential? How do employers evaluate applicants' skills? Do these gatekeepers recognize students' Community Cultural Wealth?
- How do underrepresented alumni describe finding their jobs? Which relationships (e.g., personal, familial, institutional) provided them with the most support in the college-to-career transition? What other forms of CCW did they mobilize in this process?

Questions for Quantitative Work:

- Are students who score high on quantitative measures of familial, resistant, or spiritual capital more likely to choose certain occupations over others?
- Does resistant capital protect students' work hope? Similarly, does resistant capital increase students' perceived social status and thus, their work hope?
- What is the relationship between the different forms of Community Cultural Wealth and career satisfaction?
- Do the social networks of underrepresented students look different (e.g., strength of ties, origin of tie, racial or socioeconomic diversity) than those of non-underrepresented students in the same field and the same year of school? Does greater network diversity in college result in greater career satisfaction after graduation?
- Do students attending different types of institutions—for example, community colleges versus four-year universities, or predominantly White versus minority serving institutions—score differently on quantitative measures of CCW?

In addition to these questions, scholars and career services professionals might consider how to involve students directly in research on CCW in the college-to-career transition. There are excellent examples of participatory action research using CCW as a central framework—including Lee et al's (2020) student-led research project on the importance of ethnic studies to HMoob American college students and Lopez et al's (2020) *Las Comadres* research collective. Student-led research on career development not only exposes students to the research process and the CCW framework, it may also give them the opportunity to reflect on their own career trajectories and share valuable knowledge with others.

As previously mentioned, this literature review is not exhaustive—for example, it does not include work that takes non-deficit perspectives unrelated to CCW. Future research might also consider the intersection of these non-deficit approaches and CCW as they relate to the college-to-career transition. Even with these limitations, however, my hope is that this review can provide a jumping off point for those who wish to apply this useful theoretical framework to their work. Faculty, career services professionals, and other student service professionals have an important role to play in helping students identify the strengths they already possess, grow these assets and develop new skills, and communicate their talents on the job market. They are also key to lasting institutional change that reduces burdens on underrepresented students.

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The mission of The Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) is to conduct and support research, critical policy analysis, and public dialogue on student experiences with the transition from college to the workforce in order to inform policies, programs, and practices that promote academic and career success for all learners.

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