Interdisciplinary Journal of Education and Humanities
ISSN: 2994-3183| Impact Factor : 6.00
Volume. 9, Number 1; January-March, 2022;
Published By: Scientific and Academic Development Institute (SADI)
8933 Willis Ave Los Angeles, California
https://sadijournals.org/index.php/ijeh|editorial@sadijournals.org

CULTURAL CAPITAL EFFICACY IN PARENTAL AND STUDENT ALIGNED EXPECTATIONS FOR POSTSECONDARY MATRICULATION

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Abstract: This exploratory study uses a cultural capital framework to examine the critical issue of goal alignment between parent and student expectations in predicting postsecondary matriculation. Addressing cultural capital in terms of functional specificity, the research expands and contributes to the related literature by focusing particularly on aligned ambitions and by delving deeper into the documented "action steps" taken by students to reach their stated postsecondary goals. Also, by separating two- and four-year college enrollment outcomes, clear differences are revealed among student expectations and action steps relative to overall college matriculation and educational attainment goals.

1. Introduction

Educational attainment at the postsecondary level holds considerable weight in determining the future social and occupational success of youth in today's world. Moreover, at every level of educational attainment, a higher degree generally equates with higher earnings. Higher levels of educational attainment are known correlates with increased earnings over the life course, and college graduates in the United States (U.S.) earn 84 percent (about $2.8 million) more than high school graduates over a life time (Carnevaleet al., 2011). Accordingly, scholarly work on the importance of postsecondary education spans the social and behavioral science literature, with particular attention to related effects of socio-economic factors such as household assets, as well as a variety of mediating factors, such as parental expectations, that can be placed under the rubric of "cultural capital" (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Zhan & Sherraden, 2011; Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Conley, 2001; Maxwell, 2013). Cultural capital in particular reflects the attitudes, understanding, and knowledge that people draw upon as they navigate and participate in social life. More to the point, it includes both implicit and explicit ideas that people have about the value and role of education in society. However, while such factors often are considered relative to cultural styles and status, far less is known about cultural capital influences more specifically on U.S. high school students' matriculation to postsecondary education. Yet, cultural capital has long been recognized as a critical determinant of school and occupational advantage and disadvantage (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; DiMaggio, 2001). Accordingly, looking especially to attitudinal and value expression as reflected in parental and student educational expectations and their interrelationship, cultural capital is investigated here as a fundamental consideration in postsecondary educational matriculation.

Research points to a few clear indicators leading to postsecondary matriculation for high school students. Financial assets, for example, are the principal predictor invoked in the literature in regard to U.S. college

enrollment and graduation (Huang et al., 2010). Parental education too has long been recognized as a primary contributor, with variables such as mother's education repeatedly linked to college enrollment and graduation for students (Davis-Kean, 2005; Maxwell, 2013).

Moreover, along the same lines, parental attitudes and expectations play an important *mediating role* regarding educational plans for their children. In addition, the expectations of the students themselves, which are in turn affected by parental attitudes, are central to postsecondary enrollment and attendance plans. In effect, the transmission and sharing of attitudes, aspirations, and expectations point to a deep socialization and to the building of cultural capital which ultimately affects views on education in both instrumental and intrinsic terms.

However, the critical point is that related effects do not occur in a vacuum. Parental education, household assets, expectations, and the like are determined in reference to the broader societal context, thus demanding attention to cultural dynamics and values. This point is especially important since associated plans and actions do not just happen; they are systemically internalized and expressed in aspirations, values, and expectations. Therefore, extending the more narrowly framed family assets perspective to include additional cultural factors, which are malleable by teachers, students, and parents, will provide greater currency for developing a fuller and more nuanced analysis of related processes. Accordingly, we extend and contribute to the literature by presenting an "aligned expectations and college-related goals approach," offering a cultural capital platform from which analysts, educators, and policymakers can understand and engage crucial issues and underlying dynamics affecting educational aspirations and postsecondary matriculation.

1.1. Invoking a Cultural Capital Frame

The salient point here is that, even while recognizing the fundamental role played by financial assets, their effective meaning is understood only within the cultural context and that they can be derived from cultural sources. As such, cultural capital operates as a foil for explaining selected outcomes and examining the relationships and processes that attend them. Cultural capital can be convertible to economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications (Bourdieu 1986). While those with more education tend to have continued potential for higher earnings relative to those with less education (Taylor et al., 2010), assets play a complicated role in cultural capital, and vice versa. Yet, attention typically has been limited to assets alone, offering a relatively circumscribed perspective on affective factors. Looking beyond earnings or wealth, higher education contributes to a variety of additional social paybacks, preparing children for the future and their roles in society in a number of ways. In terms of education itself, parents with higher degree attainment, for example, are more likely to read to their children and tend to have children who begin school better prepared (e.g., knowing the alphabet, able to write, with counting facility, etc.). Other correlates include overall improved health and a much greater reduction in smoking among college than high school graduates (Egerter et al., 2011). Thus, while assets in and of themselves may not always equate directly to cultural capital efficacy, it clearly links them to societal value and benefits.

Higher education matriculation and the steps taken to attain that goal are tangible elements in policy considerations. Analysts and policy makers in the U.S. have considered various forms of asset development (e.g., Child Development Accounts), but policies often fail to address related expectations and implementation, leaving a variety of interrelated questions that must be considered to more fully understand crucial underlying processes. For example, to what extent does cultural capital affect the college matriculation goal? To what extent are student expectations to attend college dependent upon their parents' expectations? To what extent are college matriculation aspirations of parents and students defined by financial assets? To what extent is cultural capital regarding educational expectations determined by financial capacity, and vice versa? To what extent are expectations tied to practical actions to realize them?

Education benefits, where one benefit begets another, affect educational outcomes for the next generation. Cultural deprivation, in which inequality manifests and is defined through family circumstances, employment, and education, requires more than financial assets (Lindsey, 2003, p.89); assets alone are not the sole determinants for success (Zhan & Sherraden, 2011; Kim & Sherraden, 2011). While studies have tended to focus somewhat exclusively on income, assets, and parental education, some recent research has offered insights into mediating

or confounding elements and conditions, such as family-related expectations, that are meaningful in leveling the educational playing field (Hickman, Mathwig, & Heinrich, 2008; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Zhan & Sherraden 2011; Kim & Sherraden 2011; Huang et al., 2010). This point is made even while recognizing that income and assets are highly correlated with other affective factors, such as parental and child expectations.

Indeed, although limited, some research has presented such interrelated factors — such as parent and student expectations along with parental education, and direct and indirect communication between parents and students about cultural assumptions regarding the value of a college degree — as dominant factors in postsecondary enrollment, actually overshadowing income and assets (Finnie, 2012). It is in this sense that we note the salience of cultural capital effects.

Success in the educational system is dictated largely by the related cultural capital that individuals (and groups) have. That is, cultural capital has been shown to have significant effects on educational outcomes (Bourdieu, 1990; DeGraaf et al., 2000; DiMaggio, 2001). Understanding parent and student expectations as levers for action, cultural capital has both internal and external effects, influencing merit and ascriptive perceptions. Related outcomes are reflected in the extent to which individuals adopt and internalize assumptions, values, and attitudes constituting cultural capital in relation to education as a social institution, especially as regards its socialization, certification, and sorting and selection functions. Expectations are a defining characteristic of educational cultural capital. Accordingly, the aspirations and expectations encompassed in cultural capital are operationalized in models of success (and failure) dependent on educational attainment and outcomes. Related arguments suggest that marginalized groups often show poor school performance due at least in part to a lack of cultural capital required by the broader mainstream or dominant society. Lack of cultural capital, or cultural deprivation, can lead to an undervaluation and lower attainment of formal education and related attitudes and assumptions. In general, cultural capital can be viewed as a critical convertible factor in human capital development and relies on perspectives touting belief in the advantages of human capital.

Adding to the policy importance of cultural capital is the increasing costs of a college education, which are known barriers to college attendance (Carnevale et al., 2011). College access continues to be an important topic on the public policy agenda. More recently, the role of community colleges has been increasingly emphasized as a cost saving tactic and as a stepping stone or bridge to four-year institutions. However, despite growing analytical interest, little research exists to date that disaggregates aspects of aligned parent-student expectations and actions in terms of community college and transition to four-year institutional enrollment goals.

To explore related issues and to contribute to existing scholarship on family assets and parental expectations in determining college enrollment, this study expands previous income and asset research with a new emphasis on both parental and student expectations and their inter relationship in affecting post secondary goal attainment. However, although important, lone aspiration expression — "I want to go to college" or "we expect you to go to college" — is not sufficient by itself for goal attainment. Demonstrating action is required and is considered here through parental and student goal alignment. Parental and student goal alignment looks to the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital through *functional specificity*, or goal-directed action taken toward stated expectations (cf. Kim &Schneider, 2005). As affective mediating factors, not only are expectations important, but demonstrating expectations through concrete actions — such as parents providing incentives to students(e.g., through monetary or non-monetary rewards) and student responses in kind — are clear indicators that both parent and student do indeed expect the student to enroll in a two or four year institution.

The postsecondary matriculation process presents a complex maze of admissions testing, school performance, and an understanding of the process itself. We employ a comprehensive study of intergenerational culture, linking parent and student expectations, family assets, and steps taken toward postsecondary goal attainment in general. Also, applying a cultural capital understanding to the transmission of expectations and goal-setting, this study offers an initial analysis of community college matriculation relative to four year institutions, a comparison that is largely absent in the literature. Furthermore, by actively engaging cultural capital dynamics and effects as an analytical lens, this study offers a better contextualized exploration of educational expectations and attainment.

2. Background

2.1. Assets, Expectations, and College Attainment

In the U.S., family economic assets — e.g., home ownership, savings, and liquidity — and income imply financial stability and are of practical importance in determining college attendance and completion (Zhan & Sherraden, 2011; Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Huang et al., 2010).

Yet, assets and goals do not always align, especially for low-income students (Elliot, 2009). Income and assets provide students access to college preparatory resources such as textbooks, extracurricular activities, tutoring, and social experiences that enhance the postsecondary application process. Low-income students whose end goal is college matriculation may fall into an "expectations gap," where aspirations fail to align with access capability. Student expectations are more determinant than aspirations in leading to matriculation goals(Elliot, 2009; Cook et. al., 1996; Reynolds & Pemberton, 2001), indicating the importance of cultural capital as reflected in early expectations, regardless of assets. Expectations or the amount of education the student *realistically* expects to attain (Elliot, 2009), become increasingly important in reducing matriculation disparities between students with fewer family assets and those with more.

The long-term effects of economic resources within families are known to contribute to child development and academic preparation (Huang et al., 2010). Recent research focuses on assets as an independent predictor of educational attainment, as income typically is invoked in reference to consumption, while assets connote future planning (Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Paxton, 2001; Sherraden, 1991). In any case, income and assets are found to have long-term links with post secondary enrollment (Huang et. al, 2010; Haveman & Wolfe, 1995). Also, factors such as home equity and savings allow for additional borrowing to finance higher education (Huang et. al, 2010).

Of course, economic assets affect parental and student educational expectations in the first place (Cheatham et al., 2013), and income and assets are associated with parental and child academic expectations as well as associated with attitudes toward future planning (Oliver & Shapiro, 1995; Zhan & Sherraden, 2011). As opposed to income alone, assets receive considerable attention in policy and research not only in regard to long-term college funding plans (e.g., 529 savings funds), but also for increasing parent and student expectations in regard to college attendance plans (Huang et al., 2010; Zhan & Sherraden, 2003; Orr, 2003). Note that, although the family typically is considered a private domain, assets remain in the public domain as policymakers propose means for meeting the cost of college through, for example, tax-deferred savings plans and individual development accounts, among other strategies.

2.2. Cultural Capital in Educational Expectations, Goals, and Attainment

Family economic assets signal to students early the association of savings with access to higher education in terms of capabilities and opportunities (Elliott et al., 2010). Rising college costs are often associated with disparities in college enrollments and have led to estimates as high as two million qualified students in the U.S. over the next decade who will not be able to attend college as a result of those costs (Elliot, 2009). However, research also has suggested that the gap can be addressed, at least to some extent, through non-asset means. Students who lack opportunities for realizing college attainment goals due to insufficient family income can develop expectations and strategies through cultural capital. While higher education aspirations begin earlier, it is in high school that students typically initiate formative notions toward reaching related goals (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000). Consistent with literature on educational attainment, evidence shows that setting and proceeding toward goals lead to higher levels of postsecondary attendance (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000). Studies in this area especially link savings with goal-seeking actions on the part of parents and students, such that analysts and policymakers alike advocate asset development programs aimed at ameliorating educational inequality (Elliott, 2009; Huang et al., 2010). However, they also show that asset development programs alone cannot provide solutions to the complex educational inequality problem that is part and parcel of broader social reproduction processes. Such issues demand recognition of the salience of cultural capital as a critical factor even in explaining assets and goal attainment.

Noting the relationship between cultural capital and wealth or assets, issues of functional specificity are raised in consideration of application and efficacy. While heretofore functional specificity has been conceptualized primarily in reference to the effects of social capital in terms of social network relations (Kim and Schneider,

2005), we adapt and engage it here as a means for delineating the practical effects of cultural capital. The functional specificity of cultural capital encompasses various areas of potential achievement and motivation for parents and students to further conceive and adopt expectations and goals for college attendance.

Indeed, positive parental attitudes and involvement in schooling, whether setting high expectations or volunteering, for example, are associated with higher college matriculation rates (Parr & Bonitz, 2015; Carboni, McNeely, & Maxwell, 2015; Maxwell, 2013; Perna &Titus, 2005;Cabrera & LaNasa, 2001). In fact, expectations both of parents and of students are strong indicators of postsecondary enrollment (Kim & Schneider, 2005; Zhan & Sherraden, 2011; Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Beal & Crockets, 2010; Ou & Reynolds, 2008).

More to the point, the transmission of expectations leads to "aligned ambitions" of parents and students (Schenider and Stevenson, 1999; Kim and Schneider, 2005), and parental and student alignment of expectations can be understood relative to a view of cultural capital as playing a functional role in educational attainment.

Although both parents and students may express expectations regarding college, the alignment of their goals increases the likelihood of the student attending college (Kim & Schneider, 2005). Unrealistic ambitions, in which students underestimate the amount of education and steps needed to reach their goals, indicate that expectations must be contextualized and considered in relation to other factors. In fact, negative long-term consequences for adolescents with unrealistic ambitions include not only lower educational attainment, but also lower occupational attainment. Those who underestimate the value or role of education in meeting their occupational goals typically do not end up meeting those goals (Sabates et al., 2011). Actions toward the goal, such as parents engaging in frequent discussions with their children about college plans or academic endeavors, reflect the functional nature of intergenerational cultural capital (Kim & Schneider, 2005). The transmission of parent expectations is converted into student expectations and into functionally specific action on the part of the student.

Furthermore, especially in reference to those with fewer family assets and other educational goals, two-year community college attendance has been posited as a means for advancement, as the cost and admissions criteria are lower than four-year institutions (Baum et al., 2011). Students may have "modified" educational aspirations and expectations in light of differing life circumstances. However, does cultural capital in this sense play the same kind of role as it does for students planning immediate four-year college attendance? Do expectations for possible transition from two to four-year institutions reflect similar matriculation patterns, or do they indicate a different kind of cultural capital alignment in terms of functional specificity? Community colleges provide a net gain to taxpayers, but, on an individual level, a baccalaureate degree still is generally associated with increased earnings potential over an associate degree (Klor de Alva & Schneider 2013). However, few studies disaggregate outcomes along these lines; they typically elect to combine associate and baccalaureate degree enrollment or completion as one dependent variable. We suggest that considering them separately will provide a more nuanced assessment of expectations as a mediating factor in matriculation outcomes.

Accordingly, goal-setting, operationalized as making plans and progressing towards stated expectations, is further indication that the student is not only dreaming about college, but taking steps to make college matriculation a reality. Although variables such as parental education are not adequate alone as markers for predicting college enrollment, expectation alignment of educated parents, as well as of less educated parents, with their children arguably is predictive of related outcomes (Kim and Schneider 2005; Huang et al., 2010). Thus, for a more comprehensive and contextualized understanding, we investigate cultural capital efficacy in terms of expectations and goal alignment for postsecondary enrollment. That is, we consider family assets and other characteristics in relation to mediating variables such as parental and student expectations and their alignment and directed functional specificity in the form of action and goal attainment along the path to college matriculation.

3. Data and Methods

This study uses data from the Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project (THEOP) (Office of Population Research 2002). The THEOP survey is a longitudinal survey measured at two points in time. The sample is comprised of 5,228 students who were surveyed as seniors at Texas public high schools in 2002 and then again in 2003 after their senior year. Students were selected through stratified random sampling. All Texas public high

schools were included in the sampling frame except special education schools, charter schools, and schools with less than 10 seniors. Excluding cases with missing data, the sample size for this study is 3,492 students.

We performed a logistic regression for each dependent variable to determine which factors predicted matriculation into two-year and four-year college degree programs. The THEOP data set provides a unique opportunity to examine choices, attitudes, and behaviors during high school that reflect aspects of cultural capital that influence college matriculation. Dependent variables are taken from the second wave of data (2003), while independent variables are taken from the first wave of data (2002).

Specifically, the selected variables from THEOP provide an opportunity to address aligned expectations between students and parents, as well as functional specificity through actions taken in pursuit of the stated goals.

3.1. Dependent Variables

This study includes three dependent variables: enrollment in a two-year college degree program (associate), enrollment in a four-year college degree program (baccalaureate), and combined enrollment in a two-year or four-year college degree program after high school. Both two-year and four-year program enrollment variables are measured in the second wave of the survey after students have completed high school. Enrollment variables are dichotomous with a value of one (1) indicating enrollment and a value of zero (0) indicating non-enrollment. About 12% of the sample enrolled in two-year College degree programs. About 56% of students in the sample enrolled in four-year College degree programs. Descriptive statistics for all variables are included in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
All Enrollment	3562	.670	0.470	0	1
Enrolled in 4-year degree	3562	0.556	0.49	0	1
Enrolled in 2-year degree	3562	0.114	0.318	0	1
Home ownership	3562	0.847	0.360	0	1
Student expects to finish college	3562	0.832	0.374	0	1
First college thoughts: during middle school	3562	0.124	0.330	0	1
First college thoughts: during elementary school	3562	0.059	0.235	0	1
First college thoughts: always	3562	0.647	0.478	0	1
Parents encourage college	3562	0.966	0.180	0	1
Agreement on college plans	3562	0.847	0.360	0	1
AP course	3562	0.516	0.500	0	1
Grade privilege: sometimes	3562	0.291	0.454	0	1
Grade privilege: often	3562	0.200	0.400	0	1
Grade privilege: almost all the time	3562	0.183	0.387	0	1
Father highest education: 2 year college degree/community college d	3562	0.074	0.262	0	1
Father highest education: 4 year college degree	3562	0.200	0.400	0	1
Father highest education: graduate or professional degree	3562	0.156	0.363	0	1
Mother highest education: 2 year college degree/community college	d3562	0.095	0.293	0	1
Mother highest education: 4 year college degree	3562	0.214	0.410	0	1

Mother highest education: graduate or professional degree	3562	0.106	0.308	0	1
Black	3562	0.163	0.369	0	1
Asian	3562	0.076	0.265	0	1
Native American	3562	0.004	0.063	0	1
Hispanic	3562	0.306	0.461	0	1
Other	3562	0.029	0.169	0	1
Male	3562	0.452	0.498	0	1

3.2. Independent Variables

This study includes eight independent variables, as described below. All independent variables are used in models for the three dependent variables. All independent variables are drawn from wave 1 of the survey. Again, descriptive statistics for all variables are included in Table 1.

•*Home ownership*. This is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the student's family owns the home they live in. It is the principal asset variable and also represents a value and attitudinal position. A value of one (1) indicates ownership and a value of zero (0) indicates non-ownership.

•*Student expects to finish college*. This is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the student expects to finish a college degree. A value of one (1) indicates the student expects to finish college. A value of zero (0) indicates the student does not expect to finish college.

•*First think about college*. This is an ordinal variable indicating when the student first thought about college. The scale includes the following values: (1) first thought about attending college during high school; (2) first thought about attending college during middle school; (3) first thought about attending college during elementary school; and (4) always wanted to go to college. The reference category in the model is (1) first thought about attending college during high school.

•*Parents encourage college*. This is a dichotomous variable indicating whether parents encouraged students to go to college. A value of one (1) indicates the student's parents encouraged them to go to college. A value of zero (0) indicates the student's parents did not encourage them to go to college.

•*Agreement on college plans*. This is a dichotomous variable indicating whether students and their parents agreed on plans for college. A value of one (1) indicates the student and parent agreed the student would go or not go to college. A value of zero (0) indicates the student and parent disagreed on whether the student would go to college.

•*AP course*. This is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the student took at least oneadvanced placement (AP) course during high school. AP courses are defined as college preparatory, and student participation implies an expectation and intent to attend a 4-year college. A value of one (1) indicates the student took an AP course. A value of zero (0) indicates the student did not take an AP course.

•*Grade privilege*. This is an ordinal variable indicating how often the student's parents rewarded good grades. The scale includes the following values: (1) very rarely; (2) sometimes; (3) often; (4) almost all of the time. The reference category in the model is (1) very rarely.

•*Parental education achievement* variables are a set of dichotomous variables indicating the highest education level for the student's mother and father. Categories for each parent include completion of a two-year college degree, a four-year college degree, or a graduate or professional degree.

3.3. Control Variables

Control variables include race/ethnicity and gender. Race/ethnicity categories include white (Caucasian), Black (African American), Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and Other; white is the reference category. The gender variable encompasses female and male categories; male is the reference category.

4. Analysis and Discussion

We performed a logistic regression with errors clustered on the primary sampling unit as established by researchers who collected the THEOP data. Models predicted all enrollment in a two or four-year college degree programs, and separate enrollments in a two-year college degree program and in a four-year college degree program. Goodness of fit tests for the model with all enrollment indicated the model was a good fit and 72.43% of cases were correctly classified. Goodness of fit tests for the model for the two-year college degree program enrollment indicated the model was a good fit and 88.60% of cases were correctly classified. Goodness of fit tests for the model for the four-year college degree program enrollment indicated the model was a good fit and 70.86% of cases were correctly classified. In general, findings suggest that affective cultural capital is more likely to be associated with enrollment in four-year college degree programs than in two-year college degree programs. Results for each model, as shown in Table 2, are discussed below.

Table 2: Logistic Regression Results

	Model 1: All Enrollment	Model 2: Enrolled in 2-yr college	Model 3: Enrolled in 4yr college
Home ownership	0.204*	-0.0328	0.224**
	(0.114)	(0.162)	(0.0940)
Student expects to finish college	1.064***	-0.586***	1.631***
	(0.146)	(0.164)	(0.174)
First college thoughts: during middle school	0.200	0.0936	0.224*
	(0.131)	(0.171)	(0.131)
First college thoughts: during elementary school	0.536***	-0.267	0.701***
	(0.147)	(0.234)	(0.126)
First college thoughts: always	0.574***	0.104	0.568***
	(0.141)	(0.135)	(0.150)
Parents encourage college	0.299	0.366	-0.0389
	(0.204)	(0.334)	(0.204)
Agreement on college plans	0.165	-0.180	0.431***
	(0.136)	(0.162)	(0.132)
AP course	0.690***	-0.337***	0.785***
	(0.0897)	(0.116)	(0.0762)
Grade privilege: sometimes	0.195	0.228	0.0729
	(0.121)	(0.178)	(0.113)
Grade privilege: often	-0.00814	0.214	-0.103
	(0.118)	(0.175)	(0.109)
Grade privilege: almost all the time	0.0728	0.232	-0.0432
	(0.0971)	(0.179)	(0.104)
Father highest education: 2 year college degree/community college degree	0.133	0.318*	-0.0591
	(0.142)	(0.169)	(0.152)
Father highest education: 4 year college degree	0.366***	-0.482***	0.534***
	(0.131)	(0.187)	(0.114)

Father highest education: graduate or professional degree	0.177	-0.746***	0.447***
	(0.149)	(0.202)	(0.140)
Mother highest education: 2 year college degree/community college degree	0.193	0.225	0.0685
	(0.184)	(0.211)	(0.160)
Mother highest education: 4 year college degree	0.274**	0.0177	0.206*
	(0.126)	(0.198)	(0.114)
Mother highest education: graduate or professional degree	0.394***	0.373*	0.153
	(0.138)	(0.223)	(0.133)
Black	0.104	0.386***	-0.0921
	(0.130)	(0.138)	(0.137)
Asian	0.178	-0.346	0.244***
	(0.111)	(0.312)	(0.0853)
Native American	0.192	0.326	0.00353
	(0.688)	(0.828)	(0.752)
Hispanic	-0.182*	0.129	-0.234*
	(0.107)	(0.141)	(0.132)
Other	0.256	0.554**	-0.0655
	(0.190)	(0.281)	(0.180)
Male	-0.0920	-0.109	-0.0346
	(0.0845)	(0.116)	(0.0794)
Constant	-1.708***	-1.829***	-2.659***
	(0.291)	(0.412)	(0.287)

n= 3,562

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

In Model 1, home ownership, student expectation to finish college, taking an AP course in high school, father's education, and mother's education were significant positive predictors of college enrollment in general. Thinking about college earlier also had a positive impact on matriculation. In this model, Hispanic students were significantly less likely to matriculate when compared to white students (the reference group in the model). While these relationships are supportive of some of our hypothesized findings, there were important differences in predictors of enrollment in two-year and four-year colleges, as discussed below. In Model 2, we tested the effects of cultural capital variables on matriculation in two-year college degree programs. Three variables were statistically significant negative predictors of matriculation in two-year programs. Student expectation to finish college was a strong, negative predictor of matriculation in two-year college degree programs. Taking an AP course during high school was also a strong, negative predictor of matriculation in two-year college degree programs.

These results indicate that expectations to finish college and taking AP courses during high school were not associated with enrollment in two-year college degree programs. Rather, as expected, they are indicators more of intention to enroll in a four-year degree program, as discussed below. In the same sense, father's completion

of a four year college degree or graduate school was also a significant negative predictor of enrollment in two-year college degree programs. However, there also were several significant positive predictors of enrollment in two-year programs. For example, father's completion of a two-year degree as highest level of degree completion was positively associated with student matriculation in two-year programs. Mother's completion of a graduate or professional degree was also a significant positive predictor of enrollment in two-year programs. Also, Black students and those who listed "other" as their race/ethnicity category were significantly more likely to enroll in two-year programs than their white peers.

In Model 3, there were multiple statistically significant positive predictors of matriculation to four-year college degree programs. Home ownership in the family was a strongly positive predictor of enrollment as was student expectation to finish college. Students who reported thinking about college in middle school, elementary school, or always (i.e., over the life course) were significantly more likely to enroll in four- year degree programs than students who began thinking about going to college while in high school. Effects were strongest for students who thought about college during elementary school or always wanted to go to college. That is, as expected, thinking about college earlier in life is positively associated with actual enrollment in a four-year college degree program. Student-parent agreement on college goals also had a strong positive effect on four-year program enrollment, indicating the importance of student-parent agreement on college plans. Taking an AP course in high school had a similar effect; if students took an AP course in high school they were significantly more likely to enroll in a four-year college degree program. The fact that the student took an AP course in the first place indicates an intention to pursue the baccalaureate. Parental education achievement also influenced enrollment in four-year college degree programs. Students whose father's highest education was a four-year college degree or graduate or professional school were significantly more likely to enroll in a four-year college degree program. Students whose mother's highest education was a four-year college degree also were significantly more likely to enroll in four-year college degree programs. These results confirm the importance of parental educational achievement as a predictor student enrollment in a four-year college. In terms of race/ethnicity, Hispanic students were significantly less likely to enroll in four-year college degree programs than their white counterparts, whereas Asian students were significantly more likely to enroll in four-year college degree programs than their white counterparts.

5. Conclusion

"Aspirations are desired outcomes, but desired outcomes should be distinguished from desired illusions" (Kim and Schneider, 2005, p. 1183). For policy makers, postsecondary matriculation and educational attainment have been tied to questions of building human capital. However, converting cultural capital into human capital in keeping with parent and student expectations means entering the family domain, which, for policymakers, represents a delicate playing field (Park & Holloway, 2013). A more in-depth understanding of the relevant relationships and dynamics as argued here will offer policy analysts and decision makers a chance to reflect on the complex externalities that affect "what works" or, perhaps, on "what could work."

Our findings indicate that cultural capital development with student and parental goal-alignment more readily results in matriculation to four-year colleges. The exploratory analysis demonstrates that goal-directed action towards expressed expectations, or functional specificity, via intergenerational transmission of cultural capital warrants continued and more detailed study, especially when considering tendencies to attend college at all, and whether to enroll in two-year or four-year degree programs. This study demonstrates the utility of considering an aligned ambitions and expectations framework understood in terms of cultural capital, offering a view into stated goals, as well as directed activity toward goal attainment.

Moreover, this research points especially to the need for further study on early parent and student goal alignment. Additionally, for policy makers and secondary schools, early education programming for instilling college readiness and encouragement is also emphasized. Specifically, attention should be paid to cultural capital and functional specificity beyond a mere focus on family or household assets alone, as is often the case in related debates.

These results support the idea that family assets must be understood in context and engaged relative to cultural capital effects. Thus, instilling college expectations and encouraging practical action steps, such as participation in AP classes, ultimately may be equally as important as family finances to enrollment decisions. Interestingly, many high schools have adopted practices offering tutorials before selection tests to increase AP course enrollments. However, such actions are highly dependent on resource availability, making acceptance disparities likely. In general, information and data demonstrating encouragement to take AP by either school or parent are lacking.

President Obama's recent call for universally free community college, while focused on economic inequality as a critical determinant of college attendance, also speaks to the intuitive understanding that cultural capital matters. Some commentators have argued that the plan might mean that community colleges would begin enticing more middle class and affluent students, whose goals were originally four-year college enrollment, into the two-year pipeline (Weissman, 2015; Kahlenberg, 2015). Although it is not clear that such a program would result in that kind of trend, it does raise important questions. Would students (and parents) change their expectations and goals to favor community college matriculation? Would those students transfer to and, thus, complete their intended four-year degree plans? Existing societal stratification is clearly reflected in U.S. higher education. Two-year community colleges tend to educate more "disadvantaged" students, while four-year institutions, especially elite institutions, see a considerably higher ratio of wealthy to non-affluent students (Kahlenberg, 2015). However, will attitudes and expectations, encompassing the cultural capital that is brought to bear on related plans, change accordingly? Such a shift is not immediately apparent, but a more focused re-examination of functional specificity attached to cultural capital might be in order over time.

This study as presented here is exploratory and, as noted, important issues remain for further research. For example, while we have a large and diverse sample, data are drawn from a single U.S. state. Students included in the sample may or may not be reflective of a national sample. In fact, more data are needed to assess both broader and more specific conditions and to better inform public policy and educators relative to contextual variations. Additionally, this study has focused on how cultural capital influences college matriculation. Further study is necessary to understand the complexity and influence of cultural capital on college graduation and, further, on occupational placement rates and types.

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