

“OH, OF COURSE I’M GOING TO GO TO COLLEGE”

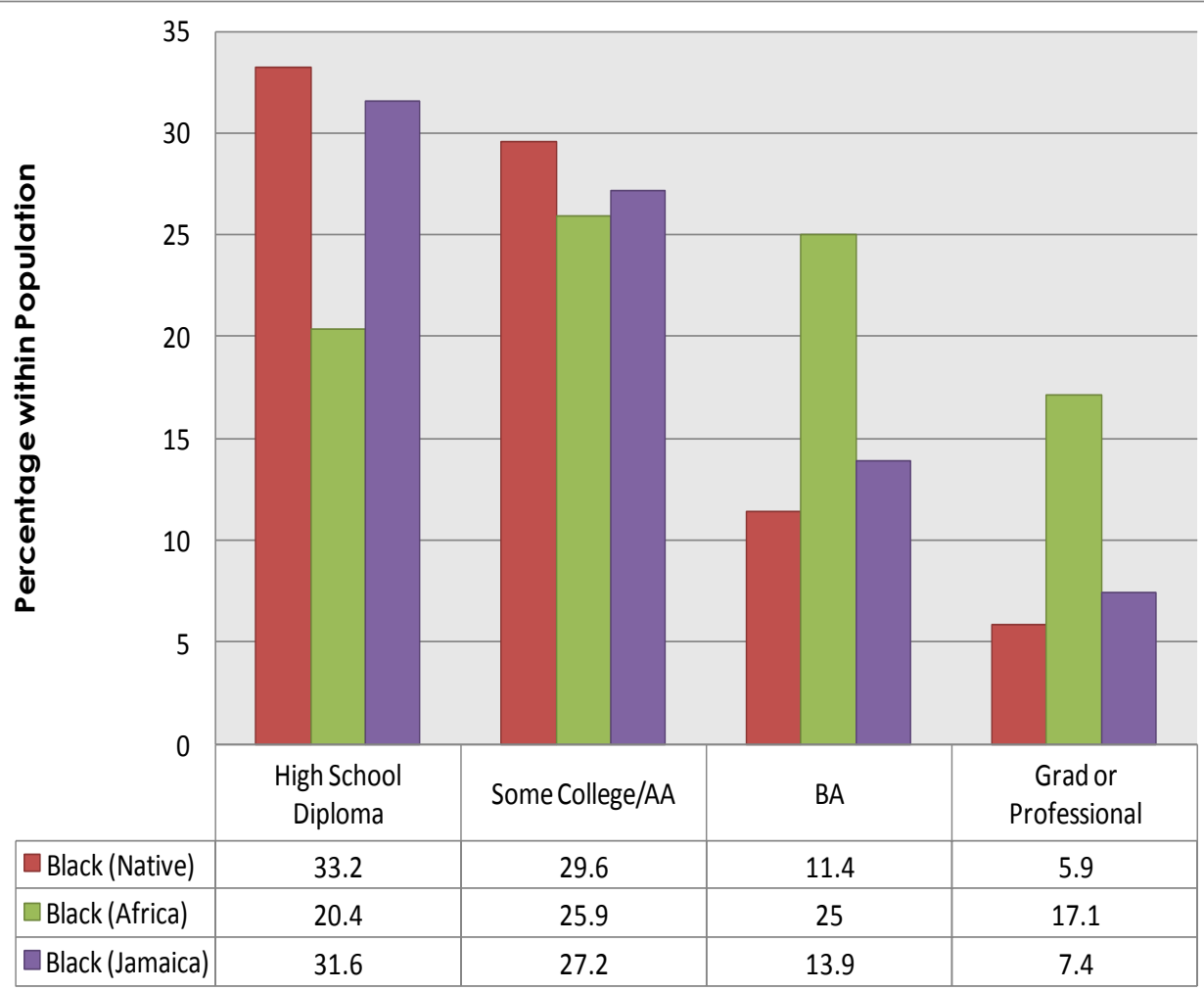
UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE AND MANIFESTATION OF *HABITUS* IN THE COLLEGE CHOICE PROCESS OF BLACK IMMIGRANT COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Black Immigrants and Educational Attainment



“We need to learn what the immigrants’ kids have so we can bottle it and sell it...”

- Henry Louis Gates

Conceptual Framework

Individual Habitus

- Demographic characteristics
- Cultural capital
- Human capital
- Social capital

Predisposition

Decision to pursue
postsecondary
education

Search

Consideration of
institutional
alternatives

Choice

File applications

Admissions

Decision to attend a
specific institution

Literature Review

- Factors
 - Human Capital/Demographic Background
 - Cultural Capital
 - Social Capital
- Black Students and the College-Choice Process
 - Socioeconomic background
 - Family influences
 - Access to information/Networks
 - Peers

Research Question

- What role does individual *habitus* play in how Black immigrant college students engage the college choice process?
 - Predisposition
 - Search
 - Choice

Methodology

Site – Central University

Full-time, four-year university

More selective (51% admit rate)

Lower transfer-in

45,000 students enrolled

3.5% Black/African American

Median SAT = 1750-1990

Median High school GPA = 3.52-3.97

Participants

Full-time undergraduates at Central University

23 students

- 18 females

- 5 males

Immigrants:

- Not born in US (1st gen = 7)

- One parent not born in US (2nd gen = 16)

Students from Chad, Haiti, Jamaica, Nigeria, St. Vincent, And Zambia

Participant Capital

All students:

- parents live in the U.S.

- at least one parent completed “some college”

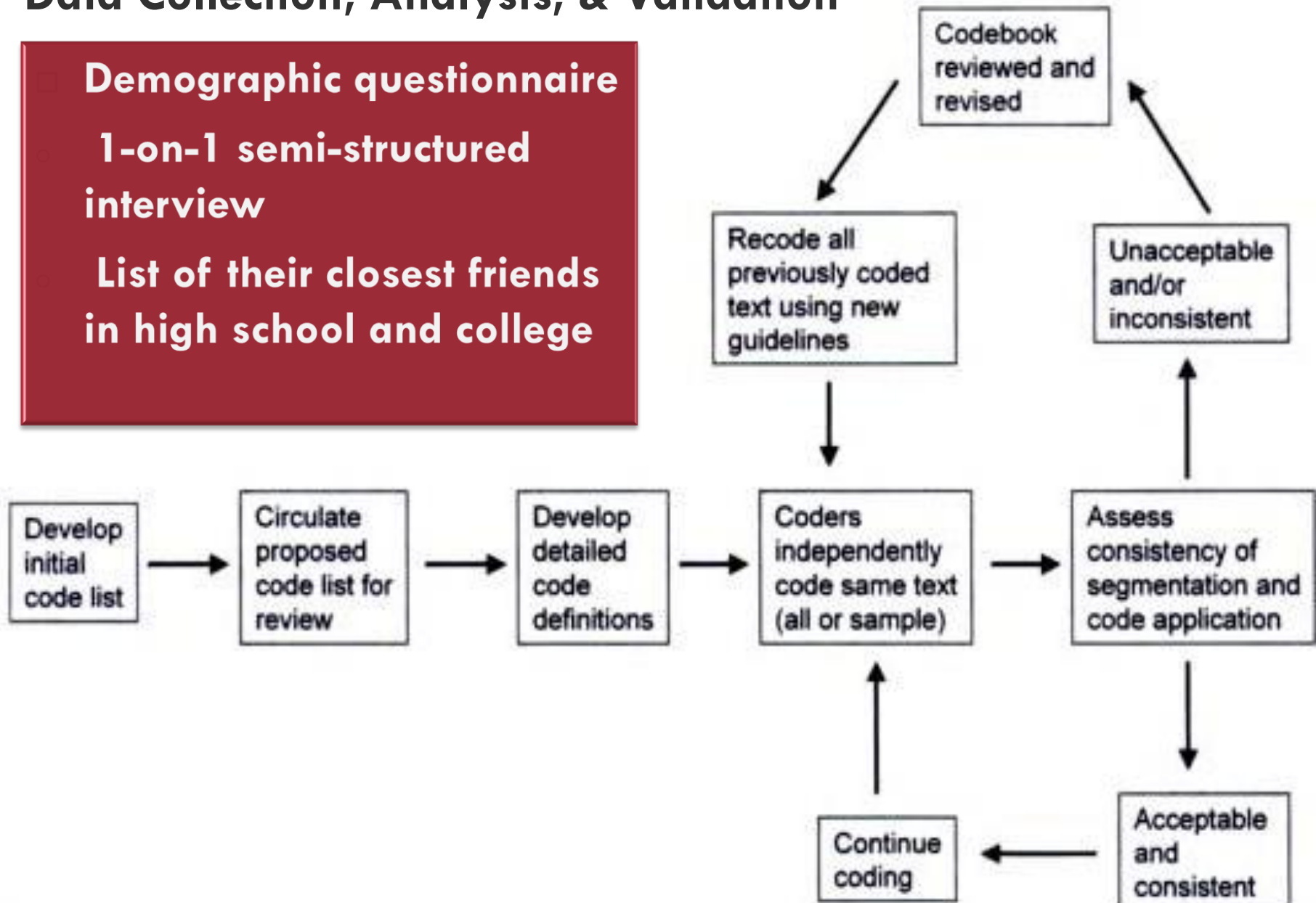
1st generation college students (n=9)

Median family income = \$50,000 – 74,999 per year

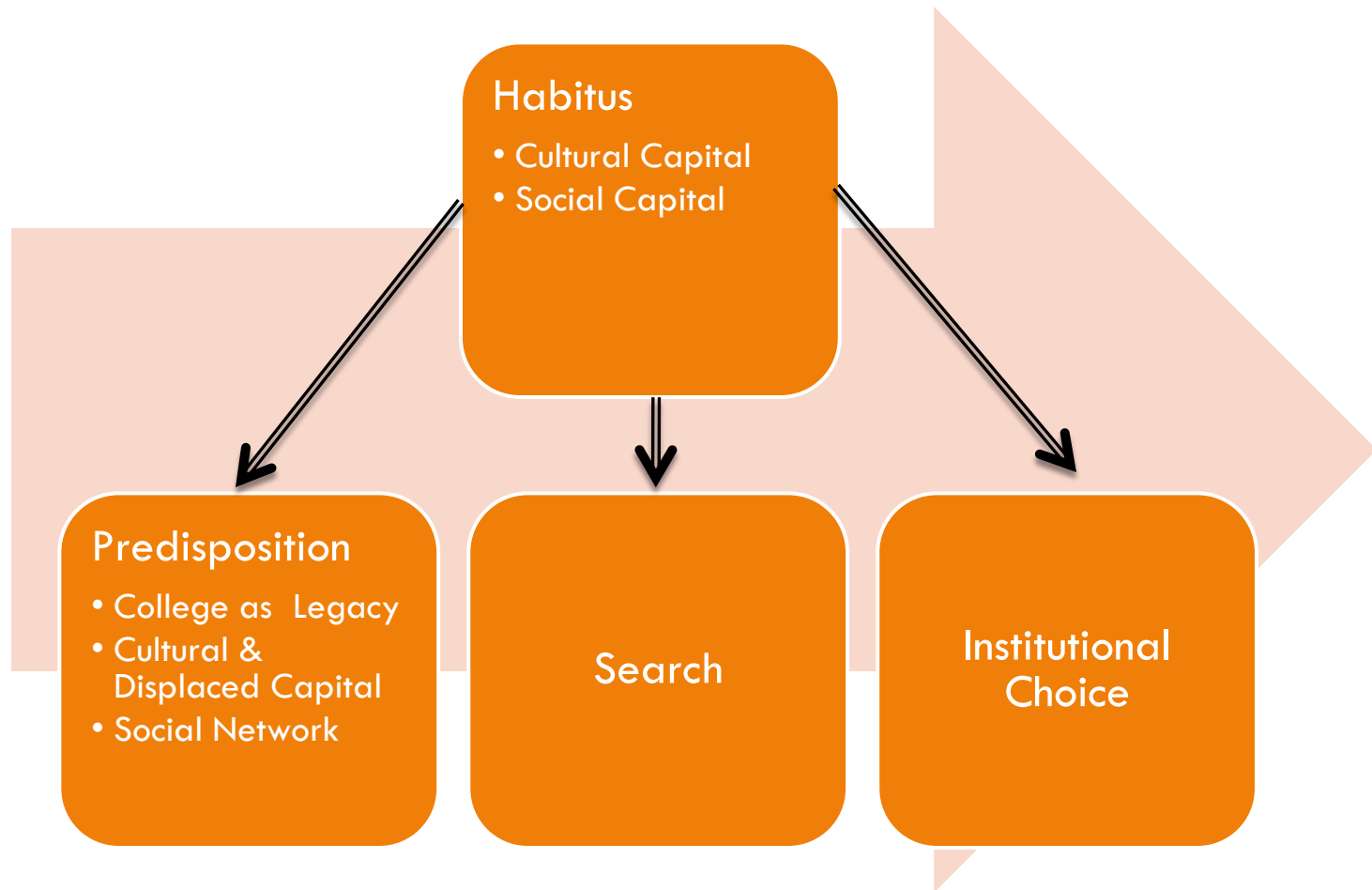
+90% (n=21) receive financial aid

Data Collection, Analysis, & Validation

Demographic questionnaire
1-on-1 semi-structured interview
List of their closest friends in high school and college

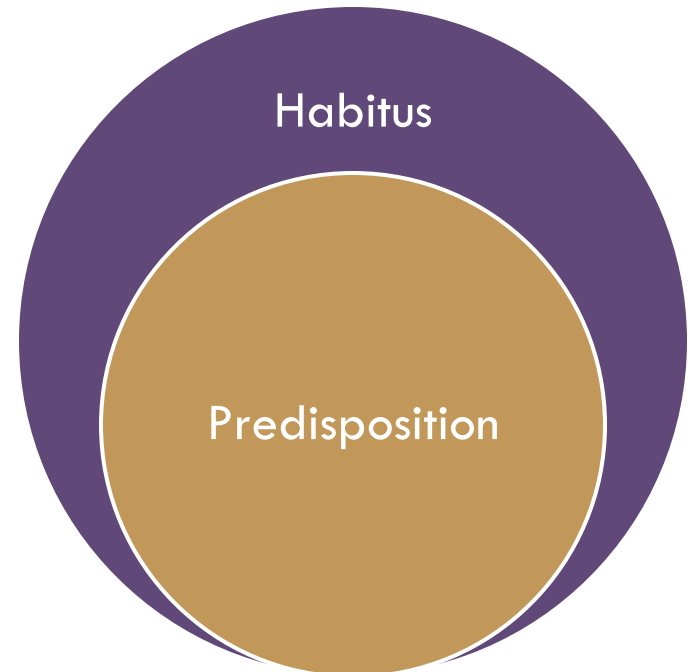


Findings



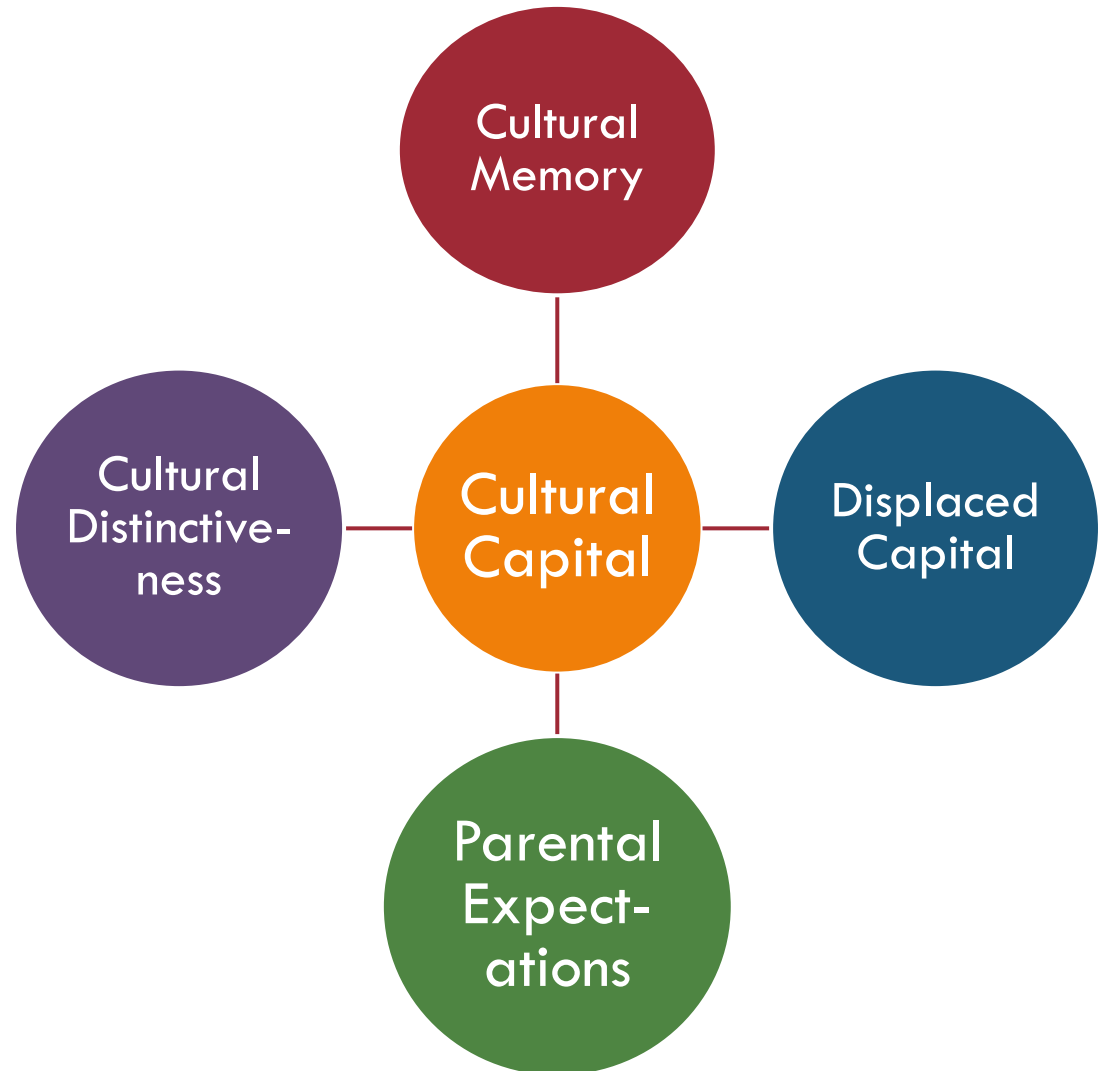
College as Legacy

- *“the rest of the family, they just kind of expect, oh well, she’s going to go to college. I guess that’s just the family, I don’t know, legacy, I guess.” Olive, Nigerian Immigrant*
- Expectations not aspirations
- Education = power
 - ▣ Place in country
 - ▣ Place in society
 - ▣ Place in the family



Cultural Capital

- Immigrant Parents
 - ▣ High Expectations
 - Educational
 - Occupational
- Displaced Capital



Displaced Capital

Human Capital, Who Benefits?

- *“Before the war my Dad was the Army Cultural Minister in Liberia, so he was pretty wealthy. And he loves education. . . . So when he came here, his degree doesn’t transfer to the United States, so he started like doing work like care-giving and stuff. Like taking care of sick people, so that’s what he’s doing now.” -Kayla*

Expectations and Support

- *“My mom had bought me a red vowel book, to teach me how to enunciate the rules of using ‘i’ and ‘c’ and all that. . . and then my Dad taught me, like, long division, cause he was a math person. He loved math, that’s why I went into business, I guess. So I knew how to like multiply fractions and long division in first grade.” - Christina*

Discussion & Moving Forward

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