MINING FOR KNOWLEDGE: IDENTIFYING ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH FOR ADOLESCENT APPALACHIAN GIRLS IN A COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM

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MINING FOR KNOWLEDGE: IDENTIFYING ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH FOR ADOLESCENT APPALACHIAN GIRLS IN A COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM (168 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to address questions around the development of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) for adolescent girls in a college readiness program. Research questions included understanding if they developed elements of cultural capital and which ones, how they believe it helped provide them access to higher education, and how participants believed the gains would help them be successful in attending and completing college. Data was collected from six participants in a regional college readiness program through semi-structured interviews and reviewing archival student records. It was analyzed through a qualitative coding method utilizing NVivo software.

Findings show that participants have experienced enhanced elements of CCW throughout their time in the program and believe the CCW will provide access to higher education because they have a strong career mindset, greater college knowledge, and refined support systems. Research question three was not clearly answered in this study, although other themes that support college attendance and completion were identified, along with a suggested new element of CCW called helping others.

The results of this study have important implications for the participants' future success in college and careers, and how they intend to give back to their community. For

higher education professionals, it provides insight into how participants view the experience in their college access program, suggestions for curriculum and structure, and ways in which Appalachia can address its gaps in college completion to support economic growth.

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CHAPTER I

Imagine growing up in part of the United States where college completion lagged the national average by more than half. In 2012, just 13% of adults in Appalachia had a bachelor's degree (Scommegna, 2012). For Americans from Appalachia, this statistic is part of everyday life. Although high school completion rates have increased in the region, college access and readiness remain issues. Despite increased efforts to fund national college access programs such as Upward Bound and TRIO, community-based college readiness programs have helped improve access to education at the community level. This is particularly important for a large region like Appalachia and especially important in rural Appalachia, where isolation can make access to education or vocational training even more challenging.

Historically, educational and vocational opportunities have been limited for Appalachian youth, with many families choosing to focus on the familial kinship and not wanting to leave their region for work (Elam, 2002). For many, this lifestyle perpetuated poverty in the Appalachian region, coupled with a lack of rigor in public school curriculum and low rural elementary school attendance rates and completion (Shaw, DeYoung, & Rademacher, 2004). According to the National Student Clearinghouse, only 59% of rural students go directly to college, as compared to 67% of urban high school graduates (Nadworny, 2018). These statistics have motivated some institutions like the University of Georgia and the University of Michigan to begin addressing the gap in support for rural students. College students from rural areas report challenges

navigating college life for things like faculty office hours, financial aid, covering the cost of program fees, and social life on campus (Nadworny, 2018). College completion rates for students from rural communities and Appalachia remain a concern.

Through programs like those offered at University of Georgia or University of Michigan, rural students can rely on their community-based college readiness programs to build upon assets already in their community that will support their success in college. For example, a business management student gets to know community entrepreneurs so that they can understand how to run a business in a specific market, a family learns how to help their student navigate the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) through using the program administrators, or students using their own aspirations and experience within the college readiness program as a form of capital to help them apply to college and enroll for their first semester. Those examples can help us view Appalachia and rural students through an asset-based community of support, rather than assuming the students lack the know-how or ability to learn the insider knowledge that can help them progress in college or careers.

This study focused on understanding the types of cultural capital adolescent girls in a college readiness program develop, based off Yosso's (2005) concept of Community Cultural Wealth, educational attainment for women in Appalachia and with prior research related to it. In addition, this chapter presents the purpose of my study, the research questions I explored, and common terms used throughout this dissertation.

Problem Statement

The Appalachian region (Appendix A) has historically lagged behind national benchmarks for educational completion and attainment. Adults with a completed bachelor's degree or higher in Appalachia is 7% less than the national average (Pollard & Jacobson, 2016). The Ohio Poverty Report (Larrick, 2018) found that in 2016, only 3.8% of Ohio's poor had completed a bachelor's degree or post graduate work, as compared with the 13.4% of Ohio's poor that are high school graduates (Larrick, 2018). Financial security through education and training is especially lacking for single women in Ohio working less than part-time, who represented 54.5% of Ohio's poor on the 2016 American Community Survey (Larrick, 2018). Single women in Ohio working full-time characterized a less staggering number, representing only 10.2% of Ohio's poor (Larrick, 2018). The knowledge acquired with educational attainment is less common and in demand, and the risk of poverty within the state is lowest for those who have completed at least a bachelor's degree (Larrick, 2018). Thus, financial security and bachelor's degree attainment are positively related.

Research solely based on Appalachian college students sheds light on the specific issues these students confront on campus. Some students believe that higher education will transform their life for the better, seeing college as a way to get a career and better paying job for a life that is different from their parents (Briggs, 2010). They also share that their Appalachian heritage shaped the way they perceive their collegiate experience. Other Appalachian students have found the transition to academic life challenging, with

language playing a significant part inside and outside of the classroom that impacts how students are perceived academically (Dunstan & Jaeger, 2016).

College Readiness and Cultural Capital

A focus on college readiness can help alleviate some of these hurdles and help students feel more prepared to navigate the world of higher education. College readiness can be defined as the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed without remediation in credit bearing general education courses at a postsecondary institution (Conley, 2007). This college knowledge can be fostered through programs such as the Kent State University Rural Scholars program or nationally known programs like Upward Bound, established through the 1965 Higher Education Act (McCants, 2003). College readiness education provides students with a chance to learn about majors and careers, opportunities to pay for college, tips on how to get connected and feel a sense of belonging once on campus, and serve as a support system for navigating obstacles that they encounter. The knowledge students gain through participation in these programs can be referred to as cultural capital, a theoretical concept made famous by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986). Cultural capital is the symbolic credit that one acquires through learning to give form to the desired signs of social standing within a field (Levinson, 2011). In this instance, the learning is understanding how to successfully navigate life as a student, and the field would be the campus or university in which the student is enrolled.

Yosso's (2005) Model of Community Cultural Wealth

Yosso's (2005) model of Community Cultural Wealth outlines forms of capital derived from Bourdieu's well-known model of cultural capital. Unlike Bourdieu's work on cultural capital, Yosso's focus on cultural capital brings value to knowledge and skills that marginalized groups use to survive oppression, and it broadens the focus on cultural capital theory. Yosso's model recognizes the different aspects of wealth inside communities of color, rejecting the idea that the communities operate at a deficit. Bourdieu's singular focus on white, middle-class culture leaves out communities of color and any historically marginalized or forgotten populations. His theoretical concept did not include acknowledgement of gender either, not considering it as a value added. Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth model includes six forms of capital and values aspects of social capital and community wealth not acknowledged by Bourdieu. The six forms of Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth are:

1. Aspirational capital: The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, despite real or perceived barriers.
2. Familial capital: Expands the concept of family to that of kinship, refers to cultural knowledge that carries a sense of community, history, memory, and culture.
3. Social capital: Networks of people and community resources.
4. Linguistic capital: The intellectual and social skills attained through experiences with one or more language or style of speaking.

5. Navigational capital: The skills of being able to navigate social institutions that are not created with communities of color in mind.
6. Resistant capital: Behavior fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality.

Yosso's (2005) work is rooted in critical race theory and has been utilized to research underrepresented populations, such as Latinx. A basic tenet of critical race theory is addressing the social construct of race through the ideology of racism. As a researcher, I must acknowledge this in the framework of the Community Cultural Wealth model, and also acknowledge that my study focuses on a predominantly white population. Yosso's forms of Community Cultural Wealth have broad application to many different populations. However, familial capital and social capital are especially noteworthy in Appalachian cultural systems, supporting my choice to use Yosso's model of Community Cultural Wealth as a construct for this study.

Applying Yosso's (2005) model to Appalachian girls. Yosso's (2005) in-depth explanation of familial capital refers to cultural knowledge among *familia* (in Latinx populations) or *kin* (in Appalachian populations), and an engaged commitment to community. The Community Cultural Wealth model expands the concept of family to include kinship and extended family such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, or friends that are considered family. Through this relationship, isolation is minimized as families become connected to each other through common issues or problems. In Appalachian culture, the family group can be made of many households that are close and added to the larger family as a whole, even if they are their own nuclear family (Keefe, 1988). In this

relationship, family plays the role of providing emotional or moral support, serving as a decision-making unit and supporting each other when challenged by outsiders (Keefe, 1988). In Appalachian communities, these relationships are fostered through social and religious gatherings, family reunions, and living in close proximity to one another (Yosso, 2005; Keefe, 1988). It is easy to see how family and kinship relationships play an important role in both populations and are utilized as a support mechanism for first-generation students seeking to begin college or develop a career.

Social capital, defined by Yosso (2005) as networks of people and community resources, is also prevalent in Appalachian communities. In the Community Cultural Wealth model, social capital is utilized as a way for groups of people to maintain contact in a way that can help support others; for example, using social contacts to help a student find a job or get a college scholarship. In Appalachia, such social networks are employed to help support families through things like gifts of food, childcare, exchanges of personal advice or even assistance farming or raising livestock (Keefe, 1988). The network of social capital is built into Appalachian culture, as it is in Latinx culture (the foundation of the Community Cultural Wealth model), but this study shows how those networks can be leveraged as a community asset to help enhance a girl's experience with learning or career development when enrolled in a college readiness program.

Poverty and economic disadvantages have the same impact on rural Appalachians as they do in other societies. Through applying these forms of capital to populations left out of college-going literature, we can expand the discussion of access and college preparation to a group that gets little attention in research. The Community Cultural

Wealth model can be used to expand the discussion on community assets in rural areas and college-going adolescent girls. From aspirational capital to resistant capital, involvement in the college readiness program can support the student's dreams for a degree or success in the future, building on Appalachian tradition of family and kinship to maintain community ties. Yosso (2005) outlines Community Cultural Wealth itself as the total extent of an individual's accumulated assets and resources, distinguishing it from income. As an asset-minded model, the theory of Community Cultural Wealth changes the framework of how students experience college readiness programs and can utilize resources to succeed. Through their involvement in a college readiness program, the program goals support helping students develop the community resources that maintain their connection to home while helping them focus on the social maturity needed to be successful on campus, and navigate a university system and structure that was not built for women from their backgrounds.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand what types of cultural capital adolescent girls in a college readiness program develop, based on Yosso's (2005) six forms of Community Cultural Wealth. Understanding how Appalachian adolescent girls view Community Cultural Wealth in their region could enhance their own experience in a college readiness program and college preparation, thus helping stop the cycle of poverty in a historically underserved area. This research also assists educators and economic stakeholders in understanding how a community-based college readiness program might change the adolescent girls' views of themselves, their beliefs about attending and

completing college, and their own role in contributing to the sustainability of an Appalachian community challenged by educational access.

Research Questions

Based upon Yosso's (2005) model of cultural capital and the need for increased access to postsecondary education in Appalachia, my study explored the following questions:

1. What type of cultural capital do adolescent girls develop in their community-based college readiness program?
2. If a type of cultural capital has been developed, how has it helped provide the girls access to higher education?
3. How do the adolescent girls believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college?

My dissertation research utilized an interpretive qualitative study methodology to understand more about what types of cultural capital is developed in relationship to Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model. An interpretive qualitative study was suitable for this dissertation because the goal was to seek a greater understanding of the elements of community cultural wealth and the cultural capital developed by girls involved in a community-based college readiness program (Merriam, 1988). This study focuses on a more specific demographic–high school-aged Appalachian girls–and it addresses a gap in understanding what types of Community Cultural Wealth can potentially improve Appalachian women's college preparation. Women in Appalachia historically have lower educational attainment rates, and 55% of adults in Appalachia

have a high school diploma but no college degree (Pollard & Jacobson, 2016). The Rural Scholars program works to combat forces that prevent women from having a say in shaping their lives, either through higher education or through access to career choices. An interpretive qualitative study provides an opportunity to explore the societal structure Appalachian women face in obtaining upward socioeconomic mobility, while the qualitative study itself can help me explore the educational practice of college readiness in a specific location.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions provide an understanding to important terms used in this study:

Appalachia

The Appalachian region of the United States totals more than 200,000 square miles (Appalachian Region, 2016a), and is a region that spans from New York to northern Mississippi, including the entire state of West Virginia (Ali and McWhirter, 2006), Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016a). Although Appalachia covers a large portion of the United States and much of it is rural, it does have pockets of mid-sized metropolitan areas which include the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Birmingham, Alabama; and Atlanta, Georgia suburbs (Pollard and Jacobson, 2012). Appalachia is also divided into sub-regions, with the southern region including northern Mississippi, Alabama, George and South Carolina; the south central region, which includes parts of southeastern Tennessee, Western North Carolina, and

southern Virginia; the central region that is northern Tennessee, Kentucky, and western Virginia; the north central region with southeastern Ohio and northern West Virginia; and the northern region which includes parts of northern Ohio, Pennsylvania, and southern New York (Subregions of Appalachia, 2009).

Historically, physical geographic definitions were used first to define Appalachia, as members of the Spanish de Soto expedition in the 1500s were the first to explore the southern part of the Appalachians (Raltz and Ulack, 1991; Williams, 2002). Taking the name Apalachee from a native tribe located in northern Florida, their expedition went north and east until they reached the Carolina Piedmont. Surviving men from the expedition complained about the heat in the foothills of the region, cold weather in the mountains, and that the geography was an impediment to progress (Williams, 2002). Other efforts to define the region were made by John Wesley Powell in 1895 to divide the United States into geographical regions and by geographer Nevin Fennemen in 1913 through examination of topography and elevation while the region began to be recognized more for its distinctive cultural elements (Raltz & Ulack, 1991).

Within the region, cultures vary due to variations in immigration patterns, social class standing, degrees of urbanization, and socioeconomic status (Obermiller & Maloney, 2010). Obermiller and Maloney (2010) write that many popular perceptions of Appalachia were based upon personal traits such as familism and fatalism and of Appalachian people possessing school phobia. These supposed personal traits lead to outsiders' generalizations about Appalachian people that have remained relatively unchanging over time. Two more recent studies support this, arguing that Appalachian

scholars themselves believe that culture has been misused to describe Appalachia and that traits and the culture of the region have led to problematic stereotypes which do not consider the regions' rich 13-state history, geography, geology, and environment (Ludke & Obermiller, 2012). In fact, little research indicates that Appalachians themselves identify as a group, even though they identify with family and local community (Philiber, 1987).

College Readiness

Defined as the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed without remediation in credit-bearing general education courses at a postsecondary institution (Conley, 2007).

Kent State University's Rural Scholars Program

A college access program located at the Kent State University regional campuses of East Liverpool and Salem, Ohio. The program began in 2012 and is designed to provide college access to Appalachian students through mentoring from currently enrolled college students, academic and career based enrichment workshops during the school year, an intensive week-long summer camp, and financial literacy and college knowledge programming to all sixth graders in participating school districts (Pfrenger, 2015). The Rural Scholars program is further explained in chapter two.

Significance of Study

While some research has provided a foundation for examining cultural capital among youth, none has explicitly focused on college-bound or high school aged girls from the Appalachian region. Exploring this gap, my study assists both institutions of

higher education and the girls aspiring to obtain an education by providing information on a population not yet included in research on college readiness programs. Although some information is available on success rates of students in federal college readiness programs such as Upward Bound, research on community-based college readiness programs is not as readily available. This study also serves as a means for kindergarten through twelfth grade educators to understand more about the needs of rural students.

Through this study, we understand more about what types of Community Cultural Wealth participants develop while participating in a community-based college readiness program, what participants experienced to aid in its development, and how they believe the developed cultural capital will help them access higher education. Educational completion rates for Appalachian women are measured through statistics, but through interviews, their student files, and understanding the program curriculum, we know more about how their perceived gains in cultural capital will help them attend and complete college. In addition to addressing the research gap regarding Appalachian women and college access, information shared by participants provides program coordinators, academic advisors, and higher education administrators with insight on how to support Appalachian women in career and college planning when entering higher education directly from secondary education. This information will also provide insight into structure and curriculum of college readiness programs.

The following chapter reviews scholarly literature recently related to Appalachian women. Chapter two also reviews women's role within the Appalachian culture, their access to college education, and the experiences of Appalachian college students.

Chapter three identifies the structure and framework of my interpretive qualitative study, presents information about participant selection and data collection, and discusses research ethics specific to my study. Chapter four shares case summaries of participants and initial findings, while chapter five shares conclusions, recommendations, and implications for further study.

Chapter II

The geographic region and history of Appalachian isolation play a central part to any study of Appalachia. As Appalachian communities were developed, some were isolated from mainstream culture. In many cases this isolation prevented women from having access to career development, educational opportunities, and the increased socioeconomic status that could potentially result from those opportunities. Although passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the development of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grew opportunities for first-generation students, high school and college completion still lag behind national averages. My literature review presents information about the Appalachian region, education in Appalachia and women's role in education, a review of college readiness research, and the experience of Appalachian students in college. I conclude with a review of critical theory and the social capital frameworks utilized in my study.

The Appalachian Region

The Appalachian region of the United States totals more than 200,000 square miles (Appalachian Region, 2016a) that spans from New York to northern Mississippi, including the entire state of West Virginia (Ali & McWhirter, 2006) and portions of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia (Appalachian Region, 2016a). Although Appalachia covers a large geographical section of rural United States, it does contain some urban areas as well.

The term “Appalachian” is used to define people born in the geographic area along the spine of the Appalachian Mountains, which includes the Great Smoky Mountains and the Cumberland Mountain range (Tang & Russ, 2007). United States Census reports from 2010 show that within this region, 83.6% of the population identified as being white and non-Hispanic. Underrepresented populations were split with 9.1% identifying as Black, 4.2% Hispanic or Latino, and 3.1% identified as Other, but not Hispanic.

Prior to the arrival of Spanish explorers in the 1500s (Williams, 2002), Appalachia was home to many indigenous nations including the Cherokee, Iroquois, Creek, Choctaw, and Shawnee. The Cherokee farmed and were tied to the land, believing it was made for them. The Cherokee in Appalachia were part of a matriarchal society, where arranged family and social connections were made according to female ancestry. In these indigenous nations women served as the heads of the households, in charge of farming, domestic economics, rearing children, and living in the clearing, while the men lived in the forest, hunted, and fought wars (Drake, 2001; Williams, 2002). The Cherokee also had no central government and each tribe often consulted with leadership from nearby towns (Williams, 2002).

By the late 1600s, southeastern Pennsylvania became a mix of European immigrants fleeing religious persecution (Drake, 2001; Williams, 2002). German immigrants began arriving in 1683 and by 1727, there were nearly 20,000 Germans in Pennsylvania. Between 1717 and 1776, it is estimated that nearly a quarter of a million Scotch-Irish migrated from Northern Ireland to Appalachia as part of a second migration

(Drake, 2001; Leyburn, 1962; Williams, 2002). Initially, these immigrants had moved from England and Lowland Scotland to pacify the Catholic Irish. Northern Ireland Presbyterians were pushed to migrate once again when laws passed after 1660 favored the Church of England (Drake, 2001). Arriving to the colonies in the late 17th century, these people found a Quaker-dominated colony in Pennsylvania and realized that they had very little in common with the German who had already settled there (Drake, 2001). Not surprisingly, these different groups often found themselves at odds with one another. While the Germans were known for strong farming and apathy towards politics, the Scotch-Irish were known for being politically active, impulsive, and fierce fighters (Drake, 2001; Webb, 2007). Through a practice referred to as chain migration, European immigrants from one village or distinctive part of Europe moved to America and clustered near one another, mostly concentrating in areas of Pennsylvania and Maryland (Williams, 2002).

Within this growing population, Whites, African Americans, and Native Americans were all represented, and frequently intermarried with Cherokee Indians, native to the area (Drake, 2001; Leyburn, 1962; Tang & Russ, 2007; Walls & Billings, 1991). Following the US Civil War, African Americans settled in Appalachia while working on railroads or in the coal mines in Kentucky and West Virginia. The arrival of Celtic immigrants in 1717 is believed to have had a major influence on Appalachian culture because of their Celtic clan social framework (Leyburn, 1962; Tang & Russ, 2007). As the Scotch-Irish settled in the Appalachian region, the neighborly practice of helping with house-raising became a valued part of the culture. Many were later

regarded as litigious people when agriculture became important as a boundary line between communities and squatting land came into play (Leyburn, 1962). As the Scotch-Irish social structure began to develop, men were chosen to represent the community in church as they pressed for civil institutions and betterment of the community. Condition and care of the family farm came to represent family social status, as women worked inside the home contributing to the domestic economy by cooking, baking, child-rearing, and weaving (Leyburn, 1962). Diversions and constant movement eroded their traditional Ulster culture, as they moved into more rural communities and let go of many of their old social systems (Leyburn, 1962).

The close-knit development of these rural communities led to social isolation from other cultures. At the same time, lack of contact with outside communities strengthened the relationships between families, close neighbors, and religious communities within the region. Many scholars suggest that due to the mistrust of outsiders (stemming from lack of familiarity with them), Appalachians still rely on a family and kinship network for support that reemphasizes closeness and dependence upon each other (Ergood, 1991; Tang & Russ, 2007). Family and relationships formed through church remain highly valued, but a higher priority is placed on loyalty to kin and members of immediate and extended families. Through kinship, a child is born into a set of nurturing relationships within a group of relatives (Beaver, 1991), thereby providing a built-in network that offers a variety of potentially useful relationship resources to the individual. Although kinship defines the basis for exchange in Appalachian relationships, it also provides social norms that serve as a guide for the way people

behave toward each other in the community. Other groups of community members may come together for seasonal work or agricultural purposes such as baling hay, canning produce, or clearing land (Beaver, 1991). According to Ergood (1991), the literature on Appalachian communities emphasizes three main traits: fatalism, traditionalism, and religious fundamentalism.

The Appalachian region's economic development has long been dependent on mining, forestry, agriculture, chemical industries, and professional services (The Appalachian Region, 2017). It is widely recognized that much of the region has lagged the nation in economic development (Ergood & Kuhre, 1991). Two explanations that have garnered traction in explaining the economic challenges in Appalachia suggest that economic exploitation by companies and business owners outside of the Appalachian region (Ergood & Kuhre, 1991), and the internal periphery model, which accounts for external manipulations and removal of wealth from the region, created a culture of dependency on those companies for employment in the region (Plaut, 1979). This model implies the existence of two cultures–the area or group of people being exploited and the capitalist system that surrounds it. In fact, the Appalachian Land Ownership Study completed in 1981 found that only 1% of the local population owns tracts larger than 250 acres (Alliance Releases, 1991; Franklin, 1981). At the time, absentee individuals and corporations owned 43% of the total land area, with government-owned land only amounting to 8% of the total (Franklin, 1981). The Appalachian Land Ownership Study concluded that land ownership patterns are important in explaining inadequate tax

revenue, lack of economic development, loss of sufficient housing, and loss of energy (Alliance Releases, 1991).

In 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act into law (Glen, 1995), which established the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) (U.S. 89th Congress). ARC was tasked with overseeing the development of programs that would help facilitate economic development in the region and construction of the Appalachian Highway Development System (U.S. 89th Congress, n.d.), and soon after community agencies such as Job Corps, Head Start, and Neighborhood Youth Corps were developed (Glen, 1995). At the time, one of every three Appalachians lived in poverty, the per capita income was 23% lower than the United States average, and high unemployment rates and poor living conditions in the 1950s forced more than 2 million Appalachians to leave their homes and seek gainful employment in other regions (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016b). Although progress has been made, current labor force participation in Appalachia is at 72.7%, with the national average at 77.4% (Data Snapshot, 2017).

Appalachia and Education

Educational and vocational opportunities have long been limited for Appalachian youth (Ali & McWhirter, 2006). Some rural Appalachian communities believed that families and churches were primary moral institutions, not government schools (Shaw, DeYoung, & Rademacher, 2004). During the mid- to late 19th century, Appalachian values for farming clashed with outsiders that worked to establish schools for the region (Ali & McWhirter, 2006). Schools were viewed as a threat to traditional familial values.

District schools were run by local trustees, and state curricular interests had yet to be developed (Shaw, DeYoung, & Rademacher, 2004). Lack of rigor and curriculum content were often criticized by educators, and many children were taught that education should be avoided as it was viewed as stripping the community of its roots and heritage (Ali & McWhirter, 2006). This attitude resulted in lower rural elementary school attendance and completion, and educational attainment beyond grade eight was exceptional until World War II (Shaw et al., 2004).

By the 1920s, employers and community leaders argued that successful entry into the world of work demanded minimum secondary schooling (Shaw et al., 2004). Close family ties prevented many from leaving the area to find work for fear of leaving the security of family and the comfort of the mountain lifestyle (Elam, 2002), perpetuating poverty for the region. Historically, little value has been placed upon degrees or honors valued outside of the culture. Parents were distrustful of career education programs that prepared children for opportunities that require them to leave the family, especially those supported by an outside educational program or formalized schooling (Oberhauser, 1995; Tang & Russ, 2007).

The Appalachian region also historically falls behind national averages for educational attainment and college completion rates. In 1960, President Lyndon Johnson's Appalachian Commission reported that only 5.2% of Appalachians completed four years or more of college, while nationwide, the college education completion rate was 2.7 percentage points higher. High school completion rates in Appalachia also revealed a gap (Appendix B). Although still lagging, college completion throughout

Appalachia has increased and is more precisely tracked by the United States Census Bureau (Appendix C). College completion for persons over the age of 25 in Appalachia is now at 22.6%, with the national average at 29.8%.

Appalachian women, work, and education. A large amount of literature on women in Appalachia centers around the writing and activism of Appalachian women (see, for example, Dowd Hall, 1986; Massey, 2007). Dowd Hall (1986) writes that there are no studies of gender in preindustrial Appalachia and that discussions have been limited to the stereotypical role that women play, asserting that there are two versions of this–mountain women who married young and aged early, burdened by pregnancies and poor relationships with their partners; and the other image–a promiscuous girl, responsible for the high rate of illegitimate children in the region.

During the first half of the twentieth century, many Appalachian women were excluded from formal sector jobs in coal mines or lumber camps, but found employment in textile mills in southern Appalachia (Dowd Hall, 1986; Oberhauser, 1995). Women assumed roles within the home but generated income through barter and exchange of goods or through utilizing skills common among rural women, like sewing. Maintenance of family responsibilities, strong community ties, and a patriarchal socialization has historically left women with a low exposure of career options and a strong family influence on career choices. Tang and Russ (2007) suggest that some Appalachians inherit a dislike of leaving the community, which restricts their career opportunities and limits exploration of careers outside of traditional gender roles. While educational attainment rates for high school completion have improved in Appalachia, educational

attainment rates by gender are not known (K. Pollard, personal communication, August 14, 2017).

Few studies have chronicled Appalachian women's experience with higher education. Egan (1993) studied 12 Appalachian women and their experiences after educational attainment. Participants were asked about who influenced their decision to attend college, what role their family members or others played in influencing them, and who or what influenced them as they were a college student. Egan (1993) characterizes Appalachian women's experiences with higher education as being inspired by a role model that supported their life dreams and ambitions, while women also felt the expectation to maintain social and family roles as mothers and caretakers. Women in Egan's (1993) study also spoke of an evolving sense of competence and of developing their knowing self as they transitioned from small colleges to large educational systems, making gains in their confidence through the experiences of taking steps to improve themselves and gaining success. Sohn (1999) examined literacy habits of three nontraditional female college graduates from Eastern Kentucky in a case study, learning that a college education transformed the women's lives. College influenced the women's post-college literacy by building their confidence in their skills that were missing from their previous schooling. Sohn (1999) also found that women in the study exhibited a stronger sense of self through using literacy as a mean of personal growth, job advancement, and social empowerment.

In phenomenological study, Welch (2013) extended this line of research by exploring the experiences of Appalachian women on campus by interviewing eight

Appalachian women attending a regional campus of a public state university. The women revealed being taught that they have certain roles to fill within the family and community, and there is a strong influence from mothers on what role a woman plays. Some of the women in the study were motivated to attend college to change that role, while others felt the pressure of filling the "second-shift" of caregiver to children and family members. Welch (2013) also found that student culture at the university had an impact on campus services, that there is a need for post-secondary outreach and resources for Appalachian communities, and that oppressive social structures still exist for this population of women. Although these studies help us understand characteristics of Appalachian women who attend college, we still know very little about their preparation to attend.

Appalachian college students. More current research on Appalachian college students focuses on the challenges of being a college student from Appalachia. Briggs (2010) studied first-generation students from southern Appalachia and their perceptions of higher education. Through interviewing 11 full-time students, he found that students believed their experience in higher education would transform their lives for the better, sharing that their Appalachian heritage shaped the way they perceived their collegiate experience, and they considered college as a means to get a good job and live a better or different life from their parents. Students also expressed that college life had changed them and their family relationships in ways they did not anticipate, feeling like they were often on the outside of higher education looking in. Low income, first-generation students characterized their experiences attending college in Appalachia (Sauvage, 2015)

as feeling as if they were academically unprepared and were challenged by trying to navigate the differences between their home life and life on campus.

For Appalachian students transitioning to academic life, language also plays an instrumental part. Dunstan and Jaeger (2015) studied the influence of stigmatized dialects on the academic experience for White and African American students from rural parts of southern Appalachia. For students with a more distinguished dialect, language influenced their participation in class and challenged their belief about how peers might perceive their intelligence. Similarly, Dunstan and Jaeger (2016) studied 26 students from rural southern Appalachia with a focus on their own speech patterns, interactions with peers, campus involvement, and sense of belonging. Study findings reveal that students use language as a way to identify other students they wish to engage with, and that students with stigmatized speech patterns feel subject to stereotyping by the campus community.

Through these studies, it is evident that Appalachian college students face a number of challenges once on campus that range from sense of belonging, feeling academically prepared, or feeling singled out due to language differences between them and their peers. Any of these issues can impact student success and could discourage a student from matriculating to graduation. None of these studies chronicle the processes or decisions Appalachian women made to attend college or help us understand the relationships or support systems that helped them make a decision to enroll.

Cultural Capital, Social Capital, and Community Cultural Wealth

Cultural capital, social capital and Community Cultural Wealth all serve as frameworks for this study. Although they are related, their use and applicability vary.

Community cultural wealth model. Community Cultural Wealth is based on the theoretical concept established by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Cultural capital is a kind of symbolic credit that one acquires through learning to act and embodying the desired signs of social standing within a field or group (Levinson, 2011). Cultural capital has a value and can be exchanged for a type of economic capital, and Bourdieu also asserted that cultural capital refers to an accumulation of cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by privileged groups of society (Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2005) critiques Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital as operating from a deficit lens–that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because students enter school without the cultural knowledge to be successful, and that parents do not value or support their child's education.

Yosso's (2005) model of Community Cultural Wealth has roots in critical race theory, a research approach established in the late 1980s. Critical race theory emerged from the field of critical legal studies, when scholars in that field began questioning the role of the traditional legal system and how it failed to listen to the lived experiences of people experiencing institutionalized racism (Yosso, 2005). With a critical race theory as a platform, Yosso established the six types of Community Cultural Wealth, including social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), aspirational capital, linguistic capital, resistant capital, familial capital, and navigational capital.

Community Cultural Wealth has been applied in several ways, but most often focusing on students of color at different levels of their education, especially students that identify as Hispanic. Early childhood educators utilized Community Cultural Wealth as a way to have third grade students write personal narratives to reflect on their cultural and linguistic lives inside and outside of the classroom (DeNicolo, Gonzalez, Morales, & Romani, 2015). This study added to research on bilingual education, and results of the study represented themes of aspirational capital, linguistic capital, and navigational capital for the students, placing value on their bilingual status.

Research utilizing the Community Cultural Wealth model focusing on college students has examined persistence of engineering students of color (Samuelson & Litzler, 2016), graduate school access and persistence for Mexican American doctoral students (Espino, 2014), and the information networks for Latina/Latino high school students with college-going aspirations (Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009). Liou (et. al, 2009) completed qualitative interviews with Latina and Latino identifying students and also observed at two racially segregated high schools to understand more about how these schools utilized their students' community-based resources for forming and keeping of college-going aspirations. Through this study, they found that information networks play an important role in cultivating a college-going culture in the urban high schools studied. They also found that students who attend underperforming high schools may utilize contacts outside of school including family friends or community networks to get information or gain resiliency. Those two actions connect their behavior to the Community Cultural Wealth model because the students utilized social capital and

familial networks as a means of navigational and resistant capital. Two other applications of the Community Cultural Wealth model were explored by Hinton (2015) and Yosso and Garcia (2007). Yosso and Garcia utilized the model to analyze a play, *Chavez Ravine*. *Chavez Ravine* accounts Los Angeles history through the perspective of displaced Mexican American families. Through this analysis, readers can begin to understand the community's resources and assets, such as aspirational capital and linguistic capital. Hinton (2015) utilized Yosso's (2005) model of Community Cultural Wealth to understand communities of color, proposing the use of resistance, trust, spirituality, and love as frameworks to interpret culture without relying on capital. The Community Cultural Wealth model has broad application within different levels of education and communities being able to identify the forms of capital as assets in many ways.

Social capital. Through specifying forms and different types of social capital, researchers can more specifically examine the context and scope of a community, group, or relationships. Researchers have distinguished specific forms of social capital, including human, cultural, and social; structural and cognitive; micro and macro; bonding, bridging, and linking; strong and weak social capital; and horizontal and vertical social capital (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Bourdieu, 1986; Grootaert & van Bastelaer, 2002; Putnam, 2001; Uphoff, 2000). Each definition carries a different approach to examination. Social capital can be examined at the individual level, the collective level, as well as at the macro, meso, and micro levels (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009).

Social capital theory has been widely used by researchers across the social sciences to explain economic growth, human capital, and personal development (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Knorringa & van Stavern, 2007). Literature on social capital has grown but the definition and measurement have not been widely agreed upon and can vary between studies (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Grootaert & van Bastelaer, 2002; Knorringa & van Stavern, 2007). Kramer (2006) posits that social capital is associated with more productive community relationships, more widely contributing to civic engagement, fostering social stability, and can bring people together for communicative action or activity that can benefit or influence each other. Social capital is widely regarded as being connected to community through a notion of trust, social norms, and informal networks that foster cooperation and collective action for mutual benefits that contribute to social and economic development (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Even the World Bank (Grootaert & van Bastelaer, 2002) explored social capital from the lens of economic development, and has defined social capital broadly as the institutions, relationships, attitudes, and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development. Coleman (1990) writes that social capital is created when the relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action. Loury's (1977) exploration into social capital was related to racial income differences, but he defined social capital as the set of resources that exist in family and community organizations useful for the cognitive or social development of a young person.

Other work has built on how working males use social ties to gain occupational mobility beyond their own position (Lin, Ensel, & Vaughn, 1981). Social capital was

introduced to academia by scholars (Bourdieu, 1985) who defined the concept as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition. Bourdieu's (1985) treatment of the theory was important because it focused on the benefits individuals accrue by participating in groups, and on the deliberate construction of sociability in creating resources (Portes, 1998). Commonalities in the definitions are that social capital involves resource development for individuals or groups within their community to advance their development, either socially, personally, or economically.

Social capital in higher education and college access. Within higher education, the concept of social capital has been utilized as a framework to study many topics, including the importance of developing trusting relationships for aspirations in higher education (Fuller, 2014), college access for urban high school students (Hill, Bregman, & Andrade, 2014), gender differences in college enrollment for high school students (Klevan, Weinberg, & Middleton, 2015), and examining the status of students in different majors through cultural, social, and economic capital (Hassani & Ghasemi, 2017).

Some studies have been completed that address college access and enrollment for rural students or African American students from rural areas. A recent qualitative case study (Means, Clayton, et. al., 2016) explored race and ethnicity in college choice for rural African American students. Through using the students' social capital related to their home and community, findings revealed that student aspirations were tied to three themes including the issue of whether to stay in their rural community or leave, feeling pushed and supported by their family and community while also feeling like they lacked

the know-how to obtain higher education, and concern over financial barriers and affordability. Researchers recommend continued study on access for rural students of different ethnic backgrounds including Latino and Native American students, while also recommending that completion of a qualitative study could bring more insight into how the rural environment shapes student aspirations, especially for students of color. Means and Pyne (2016) explored the perceived impact of college-going capital students gained during participation in a college access program. Interviews with 10 first-year college students revealed that students had a positive experience within their preparation program, developing the confidence to apply for college, how to navigate life in the residence hall, and academic skills such as note taking.

Understanding College Readiness

College readiness can be defined as the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed without remediation in credit-bearing general education courses at a postsecondary institution (Conley, 2007). Conley (2007) characterizes behaviors associated with college readiness as mastery of key cognitive strategies, contact knowledge of specific subjects, and academic behaviors that will increase the likelihood that students will succeed in college. College readiness also involves understanding skills within the context of college, including knowing how to navigate the culture of an environment or institution, an element of social capital (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005).

The 1965 Higher Education Act (McCants, 2003) created grants, loans, and federal programs to provide opportunities for lower and middle income families that needed access to higher education, program assistance for smaller and less developed

colleges, improved library resources on college campuses, and utilization of college and university resources to help address national issues like poverty and community development. Several programs developed as a result of passing the Higher Education Act, including the TRIO programs. Under TRIO are the programs Student Support Services, Upward Bound, and Talent Search. Each program was designed to foster different facets of educational opportunity and attainment (McCants, 2003; McElroy & Armesto, 1998) for college readiness. Passage of the Higher Education Act also sought to strengthen the educational resources of colleges and universities on campus and provide financial assistance for students in postsecondary and higher education (McCants, 2003). Within the United States, college readiness programs offered vary widely in scope and funding, but can be broken down into three major areas–federally funded programs like TRIO, state funded programs, university programs specific to an institution (such as Rural Scholars), and those run by community and nonprofit organizations (College Preparatory Programs, 2017).

One of the most well-known and longest running federal programs that is designed to help disadvantaged youth prepare for and succeed in college is Upward Bound. Upward Bound is designed to generate skills and motivation necessary for success in education beyond high school preparation (Myers, et al., 2004, p. xv) and targets students between the ages 13 and 19 years old that have experienced low academic success (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). The goal of the program is to increase rates at which students from these backgrounds enroll in and graduate from postsecondary institutions (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). To be eligible for the Upward

Bound program, students must be from a low-income family with parents that have not earned a bachelor's degree or be a military veteran with only a high school diploma.

Students typically enter Upward Bound in ninth or tenth grade and they remain in the program for about 21 months. Many of the Upward Bound programs are hosted at a university which provides a 5 to 8-week residential summer experience (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). Students are provided with instruction, tutoring, counseling, and take part in an instructional program that meets daily for nearly six weeks during the summer. A review of the program showed that enrollment in Upward Bound increased the likelihood of attending a four-year college for students with lower educational expectations (Myers, et al., 2004).

College readiness programs offer students the opportunity to prepare for college life, choose a major, learn how to navigate the application process, apply for financial aid, and understand more about what to expect when they arrive on campus. Ideally, knowledge of those processes helps students become familiar with the culture of college and help them learn ways to navigate the network of higher education, all while exposing students to resources that aid in their success. Even though first-generation Appalachian students are represented in current literature about the collegiate experience and challenges on campus, Appalachian girls are specifically left out of the discussion.

Kent State University Rural Scholars Program

Although Kent State University's Rural Scholars program is not identical to the Upward Bound program, it does uphold some of the basic elements established in development of the government programs, including targeting students from ages 13 to

19 and offering them opportunities to focus on educational success through programming, supplemental support, being provided with a college student mentor, and even a summer residential experience on a college campus. Although not federally funded or aimed at students in academic need, the Rural Scholars program focuses on college access that utilizes local assets to connect students with an educational intervention. The program itself is located in rural Columbiana County, Ohio, on the Salem and East Liverpool campuses of Kent State University (Pfrenger, 2015). Kent State University was founded in 1910 as a teacher training school in northeast Ohio (About Kent State, 2019). Currently, the university enrolls over 28,000 students within its eight-campus system at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Kent State is recognized by the Carnegie Foundation as a public higher-research university, with over 300 majors, minors, and certificate programs (Facts and Figures, 2019).

Within Carbon County, nearly 16% of residents live in poverty, making it one of the poorest counties in Ohio (Larrick, 2018). Students enroll in the two Kent State regional campuses (Salem and East Liverpool) to have access to education and opportunity in the region, with 81% of these students being required to take remedial math (Prefenger, 2015). With campus administration understanding that these students were at risk for not completing their degree programs, faculty and staff became increasingly concerned that students were not prepared to succeed, as they were taking remedial classes and thus accruing debt in the process of being in college while simultaneously preparing for college. The Kent State University Rural Scholars program

was created to address these concerns to support college completion and access (Pfrenger, 2015).

After completing benchmarking on other national college readiness programs, a pilot of the Rural Scholars program began in summer of 2012 with 12 seventh graders from four participating school districts. At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, the program had grown to accommodate 53 students from six school districts (Pfrenger, 2015). Structurally, the program is supported by local businesses and area donors, a full-time staff coordinator, an advisory board of community members and educators, and current college students that serve as mentors to students enrolled in the program (Pfrenger, 2015).

While the program was designed to address student needs for academic preparation, college and career information, and social support, the other goal is to have students remain in their home county and reinvest in their communities (About Rural Scholars, 2018). The program is structured around providing college bound first-generation students and their families with the knowledge that will support their success in college. Middle school students are identified by their teachers and invited to apply, while families then attend a program orientation that introduces the program and support systems offered, such as a college student mentor, week-long summer intensives, and two one-day workshops each year (Prefenger, 2015). High school students that successfully complete the program will be offered college scholarships to Kent State, as well as the opportunity to mentor younger students in the program.

The Appalachian region has a long history of being a place where White European immigrants settled when they were looking for a new opportunity and place to call home. This opportunity for development and growth was not always extended to women, the poor, or people who needed supplemental training or education. The intention of the 1965 Higher Education Act was to open up educational opportunity to new populations like women and provide colleges with the financial means to enhance offerings in rural locations. It also had the goal of supporting economic prosperity and bringing education to the area, but it is clear that educational opportunities are still limited for many, including Appalachian women with a desire to have enhanced career and economic opportunities.

The model of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) is derived from a theory of Social Capital developed by Bourdieu (1984). Bourdieu's theory did not acknowledge that communities without financial wealth could be rich in cultural or community assets, yet it assumed that some communities were operating at a deficit, also leaving out families that did not fit into the traditional middle class. Yosso's (2005) work built upon Bourdieu's framework, examining the value of cultural and community assets in a community, and using it as a way to value cultural, aspirations, and community ties. Community Cultural Wealth has been widely applied to underrepresented communities, but it has not been utilized to examine how Appalachian women in a college readiness program develop a network or support system through their own program and community, or what type of support systems they find value in.

Through understanding the connection between college readiness and Community Cultural Wealth, the theories underpinning this study, I present a framework in chapter three that lays out a plan for understanding what happens when Appalachian girls are provided with an opportunity through a regional college readiness program. Chapter three focuses on the methodological design of this study, including qualitative study design, participant selection, data collection methods, interview questions, trustworthiness, and research ethics for the study.

CHAPTER III

The purpose of this interpretive qualitative study was to understand what types of cultural capital adolescent girls in a college readiness program develop, based off the Community Cultural Wealth model (Yosso, 2005). This chapter outlines the methodology to this study, including research paradigm, participant selection, interview questions for women participating in the study, ethical considerations, and limitations. Attention to these topics aligns with Creswell's (2014) recommendations for the qualitative methods section of a dissertation. As a novice researcher, I found their recommendations helpful and consistent with the tenets of qualitative research.

Statement of Positionality

I am a white, first-generation, female-identifying doctoral student who is originally from Appalachia. The county in Ohio that I grew up in currently has the highest poverty rate in the state (Larrick, 2018). Presently, I live in an urban area of Ohio. Rather quickly, I can name college access and readiness programs targeted at urban and underrepresented students but doing that for rural parts of Appalachia is challenging.

Navigating college processes was difficult for me. The academic work offered the reading and rigor I always hoped that it would. Most of my support came from the interest my family showed in my college attendance and friends of mine that were facing the same issues. At many times, I lacked the knowledge or contacts to solve my own problems. My desire not to quit and navigate the information deluge was strong, but it is

a characteristic that should not have been a necessity to achieve a four-year degree. Now, as a higher education researcher, I recognize this lack of knowledge as a thin veil that I lacked the ability to lift or remove at times. It represents power and obstruction to me, and that obstruction can be maneuvered through college access and readiness programs if their participants want to be successful, are motivated, and obtain support to work through issues.

As a doctoral student, my reading of critical theory and career development inspired this study, and I was drawn to this research topic after reading ethnographies that focused on cultural replication for males. I began to understand that women I identified with were left out of this work. Research on Appalachian women missed that while many of us are attending college directly from high school, we know little about their preparation to get there. My hope is that this study adds to the body of literature on their experience and helps inspire women to mine for their own knowledge.

Interpretive Qualitative Study

Qualitative research is a way to explore and understand the meaning that groups attribute to social or human problems in their everyday lives (Creswell, 2014; Hatch, 2002). Characteristics of interpretive qualitative design include data collection near the study site or through interacting with participants; researcher serving as a key instrument in the data collection; utilizing multiple sources of data; inductive and deductive data analysis; a focus on learning the meaning participants make of the problem, issue, or experience; emergent design; reflexivity; and a holistic account of the problem or issue under study (Creswell, 2014; Hatch 2002). Creswell (2014) specifically characterizes

interpretive qualitative studies as studies where the researcher draws meaning from the findings of data analysis to compare with literature or personal experiences.

This interpretive qualitative study answers questions about gains in cultural capital that adolescent girls believe they make, and how they believe it helps them access higher education and graduate college. Their perspectives and voices are a key component of this research, and their voices are highlighted throughout chapter four. Multiple sources of data were used to understand their experiences, as explained later in this chapter.

As the researcher, my role has been to facilitate the study and interpret results, learning from the interviews but simultaneously examining the meaning participants place upon their experience (Stake, 1995). Through the interviews, I gained stories and antidotes from the women about their experiences within the program, how they learn, and what their aspirations are. These interviews helped me interpret and preserve the realities and meaning that participants assign to their experience in an educational program as a member of marginalized society, based upon Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model.

Research Process

Below is a description of the research process I used to conduct this study.

Participant selection. Participants for my study were selected through purposeful sampling, based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, and gain insight from participants (Merriam, 1988). To do so, criteria were established with attributes that the participant must have to participate in the study. Participants had

to be (a) between the ages of 12 and 19, (b) identify as being a girl, (c) currently enrolled in the Rural Scholars program or recently graduated from the program and currently enrolled in an accredited college or university, and (d) have a permanent address within the geographic boundaries of Appalachia. Although about 14 Rural Scholars students were eligible for the study, six opted in to participating. A vignette of each participant is provided in chapter four. Each participant and their hometown have been assigned a pseudonym.

To select students for participation and to also set up interview logistics, I worked with the Rural Scholars program coordinator. Since this staff member has regular contact with the participants, they helped share information about the study with eligible participants, invited me to meet with eligible participants for question and answer sessions about the research, and also helped introduce me to participants via electronic mail and social media. The program coordinator also shared participant files and documents that they had access to that were related to the program. Examples of these documents include participants' short-term goal sheets completed with their program mentors, presentations related to careers they were interested in, and mid-year program evaluations, if available. The participants eligible for the study received my contact information and were able to opt into the study upon our introduction or they were able to contact me and express interest in participating. Contact with the program coordinator was maintained throughout my research process to inform them of timelines and any issues with participants. This contact was maintained over a period of four years, during my research pilot, the actual study, and its completion. Despite changes in leadership,

continuity in the relationship was maintained with the program administrator throughout my study.

Data collection. Data collection for this qualitative study came from several sources, including interviews and an archival data review. Creswell (2014) recommends gathering multiple sources of data rather than relying on a single source. Multiple sources of evidence were used for this study, including archival records from Rural Scholars and targeted interviews with participants. Utilizing these different sources provided my study with multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2008), which helped strengthen findings, themes, and conclusions discovered in the study. This convergence of evidence also served as a method of triangulation. Since this study is related to the girls' experiences and their own development, having previous information about their career goals or interests as young students helped me understand more about the gains in Community Cultural Wealth that they have experienced since entering the program.

To keep memos, findings, and documents organized, I created a database that was helpful in keeping track of both paper and electronic documents. For me, this organization happened in two ways–as part of a paper system for selected documents like Consent and Assent forms, then on a password-protected computer for electronic documents like study memos stored in NVivo. For the paper system, a three-ring binder held copies of interview transcripts, consent forms, and my personal notes from interviews. A tab was kept in the binder for each phase of participant recruitment. Electronic documents were stored on a password-protected laptop and were updated as

research progressed, maintaining an electronic document with records on communication with the program coordinator, scheduled interview dates, and also helped me keep track of interview dates, timelines, and the overall organization of my work.

Documentation and archival records. Documents reviewed for this study included midterm reviews from Rural Scholars, goal sheets that were handed in to the program administrators, pictures from the girls attending different Rural Scholars events, schedules and program agendas from their participation in the program, and information about the girls and their community involvement. Having these documents provided more insight into the participants' personal and professional goals, and milestones they achieved throughout participating in the Rural Scholars.

Documents were shared digitally by the program coordinator for review but did not include documents for every single participant. Although I originally intended to have access to archival documents for each participant interviewed in my study, I only used what the program coordinator could find in the Rural Scholars records. Throughout my time piloting and completing this study, Rural Scholars leadership transitioned two different times. The change in leadership made access to the documents challenging for the new program coordinator, but they willingly shared the documents they could find to support my study.

To document and accurately maintain records of each archival record for each participant, I adapted the *Issue-Based Observation Form for Case Studies in Science Education* (Stake, 1995) into a version that I could use (Appendix E). While I did not observe specific Rural Scholars events, I did use the form to review the archival data

shared with me. Each reviewed item was recorded on this form. Once the form was complete, it was coded to match themes identified in the interviews (Appendix E).

Participant interviews. Qualitative researchers use interviews to uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds (Hatch, 2002). Interviewing allows the researcher to understand the world from the participant's experience and explore meaning that cannot be learned through observation or archival documents. Outcomes associated with interviewing are that it lets participants explain significant events, feelings, motivations or concerns, can let them share explanation of past events, and provide explanations of anticipated experiences (Hatch, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I included interviews in my study as a way for me to get to know participants and understand what and how or if they have developed characteristics of Community Cultural Wealth. Talking with the participants in person allowed me to ask in-depth questions about topics that came up and provided us a place to pursue an issue or experience in depth as they shared their meaning. Interviewing multiple girls that have been involved in the program let me use the construct of the program as a framework, but their own individual experiences brought a frame of reference for the study.

In this study, there were six total participants. Two were girls who had started the program in junior high, participated throughout high school, and were currently enrolled as a degree-seeking student in an accredited university. The remaining four participants began the program in junior high and were currently enrolled in a high school affiliated

with the program. Chapter four provides vignettes of each participant and designates the participants as high school participants or college participants (Appendix J).

Data collection took place through two half-hour interviews with six participants, with eight of the interviews happening on a college campus where participants were attending a summer program. The remaining four interviews took place on the college campus where participants are currently enrolled. The first interview served to initially get to know the participant, introduce myself, and help them to get to know me. The second interview asked more specific questions about their pathway and experiences with the program, who helps support their education, and what they hope to accomplish upon graduation from either high school or college. All interviews were recorded, transcribed using a voice-to-text transcription tool on temi.com, and then edited for clarification. Some written notes were also recorded during the interviews. Final edited transcripts were shared with participants over electronic mail for their review to ensure their responses were accurately captured. Revisions were made based off their feedback.

For this study, a semi-structured and unstructured interview style was adapted, with each participant interviewing twice (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The semi-structured interview style (Appendix D) provided the flexibility to ask follow-up questions while also covering specific topics. Rubin and Rubin's (2012) responsive interview technique focuses on the importance of building a relationship of trust between myself and the interviewee. This approach put the interviewee at the center of the interview, giving me an opportunity to respond to what they shared, letting me ask follow-up questions, and be flexible with design.

Data analysis and coding. My data analysis and coding method was adopted from Rubin and Rubin (2012). Their process (Appendix I), which includes seven steps from transcribing and summarizing each interview to combining concepts and themes, met my needs as a novice researcher and aligned with the overall structure of my qualitative study. Data analysis included participant interview transcripts, along with the information from participants' archival records and documentation, such as their midterm reviews and goals. The goal of data analysis was to identify themes of Community Cultural Wealth based upon Yosso's (2005) model, including aspirational capital, familial capital, social capital, linguistic capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital. Data analysis was ongoing throughout the interview process, and memoing took place inside of NVivo as I reflected and identified themes in the data. After interviewing six participants, I stopped recruiting for study participants. This decision was based off utilizing all eligible and interested participants, and a lack or referrals to new participants eligible and available for the study.

To begin data analysis, I transcribed data from the interviews using temi.com software, and then edited the transcripts for spelling and clarity. Copies of those interview transcripts were electronically mailed to participants for their feedback. Only two participants had revisions, one for a transcription error and one for a word change that was unclear on the original recording. Once interview transcripts were reviewed by participants, I uploaded them into NVivo 12 software, produced by QSR International, for coding.

Within each interview, I coded for answers to each research question, starting with question one and going in order until having coded for question three. Throughout this process, I followed Rubin and Rubin's (2012) steps, and began with marking excerpts from each interview related to the research question. After those excerpts were sorted into codes (for example, codes related to social capital for question one) and sorted into a file, I then pulled all the excerpts for that group to compare and contrast for themes. This allowed me to utilize Rubin and Rubin's steps three, four, and five. During coding, I utilized the NVivo memo feature to reflect on themes, make notes about ideas related to research question answers, and ultimately move to Rubin and Rubin's steps six (combine concepts and themes) and seven (generalize results to complete coding work).

Trustworthiness and reflexivity. Trustworthiness is a vitally important characteristic of strong research, ensuring that the research approach is consistent across different researchers and projects. Part of this is also determining that the strength of the research is accurate from the view of the researcher, participants, and the reader's account (Creswell, 2014). In qualitative research, the researcher adopts specific strategies, utilizing multiple approaches to assess accuracy. My approach to trustworthiness is adapted from Merriam (1988) and utilizes several different strategies to maintain rigor. Merriam suggests addressing internal validity, reliability, and external validity in producing a qualitative study. My approach for addressing these issues are outlined below:

1. Member Checking: For my dissertation, I utilized two forms of member checking to ensure that I am accurately representing and interpreting

participant experience. During the interview, I repeated back answers participants shared, ensuring that I was accurately representing and interpreting their experiences. I also asked follow-up questions for clarification. Following transcription of the audio interviews, I shared the interview transcript with participants so that they could check the content and provide any feedback points of clarification if something was incorrectly transcribed. Several participants provided feedback and edits to the transcripts for clarity.

2. Use of Peer Debriefing: Peer debriefing is recommended to enhance accuracy of the account (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1988). Throughout my dissertation research, I consulted with my Dissertation Chair and Co-Chair about any issues related to data collection, managing the study, coding and interpreting data, and reviewing findings. Many of these concerns included data storage approval through my university institutional review board and working with participants regarding interviews and timeline. This strategy has added validity to the study by including people outside of the research. I also had a peer in my doctoral program that I talked with regularly about issues in research. This was helpful because they were also working on their dissertation, and together we could troubleshoot issues or share perspectives on next steps. One of the doctoral students in my program has over 14 years of experience working with students in the college access and readiness field as a Director of Upward Bound, a college readiness government-sponsored

program by the United States government. Currently, my colleague works for a large, urban public-school district as a Career Academy liaison. The Career Academy liaison focuses on the high school to career pipeline in the region. My colleague agreed to participate in a peer review of my findings to lend a practitioner's perspective and richer insight to my work and is also knowledgeable about Yosso's (2005) model of Community Cultural Wealth.

3. Triangulation of Data: Data source triangulation is an effort to see if what we are observing and reporting carries the same meaning when found under different circumstances (Stake, 1995). Data sources utilized in this study include participant interviews and review of documents from the student experience within the Rural Scholars program. Triangulation of different data sources can support that a phenomenon or theme is consistent in other times or spaces, thus adding validity to my study.
4. Use of Rich, Thick Description: Rich descriptions of the participants' backgrounds, interests, and our interview details are used throughout the study results to convey meaning and detail about the research questions. This includes providing multiple perspectives of a theme when it is present so that the findings are more realistic.
5. Audit Trail: While qualitative research seeks to describe and explain the world as a researcher interprets it (Merriam, 1988), a researcher's process can be documented and described in detail so that other researchers could replicate a similar study if so desired. I have done this throughout my research by

maintaining memos and records about my process.

A second characteristic of qualitative research is reflexivity. In qualitative research, it is understood that the act of studying a social phenomenon influences the enactment of that phenomenon (Hatch, 2002). The practice of reflexivity lets researchers reflect upon their experience and process within the research, including considerations for their own role in the study, their background, how they are feeling about the process, and how their experience will impact the study (Creswell, 2014).

It is important for me to participate in reflexive tools for several reasons. This is my first study of this magnitude and establishing the habits of reflexivity now will help me as I progress throughout my career. Second, I am a woman that identifies as being Appalachian. My own background, gender, and heritage play a role in data interpretation, and I imagine there are elements of the participants' lives that I relate to. My perspective on the education of Appalachian women has influenced the study and due to that, readers must know how I am situated personally. Professionally, I work in higher education and much of my role is focused on helping students get to college. Suspending that role is something I have had to be conscious of throughout the interview process and data coding. I believe my inclusion of member checking, peer debriefing, triangulation of data, using rich description, and maintaining an audit trail helps provide some accountability for my research process, but I also have been mindful of my own knowledge related to college readiness, the issues I see students face in my professional role, and how it has influenced my interview style and question development. I believe the Community Cultural Wealth model (Yosso, 2005) guided me and served as another

point of structure and reference.

Throughout writing this dissertation, I was very conscious of logistics and tools that I could utilize to aid my research. I developed the habit of having one notebook where I kept track of my thoughts and feelings regarding the work, ideas for the dissertation, or information about specific resources that I needed to look up later. In developing my reflexive practice, I utilized NVivo as a place to store memos and add to my audit trail. I used memos and my researcher journal throughout the process to jot down ideas, reflect on the process, and make connections between the theory and practice.

Ethics. Since qualitative research is sustained by and connected to participants, it brings forth different personal and ethical dilemmas for those involved. As the researcher, one of my responsibilities was to complete research in an ethical manner, which included the planning and preparation for research, during the interview period, and while writing the research results.

In preparation for this study, I applied for review through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kent State University to ensure that I followed ethical recruitment of participants and that all safeguards were in place to maximize safety of participants. I also completed an online ethics training through my institution as a guideline for the IRB application. Kirsch (1999) recommends renegotiating consent in feminist research prior to publishing results if the study focus takes a different turn based upon data collection. Since qualitative research design is emergent, I wanted to implement this practice to ensure that each participant had an opportunity to participate in each interview or opt out

if they felt they needed to do so. Each girl that participated signed a consent form (Appendix E) prior to participation that outlined in detail the use of the results and what they were consenting to by participating. Participants under the age of 18 had parents sign a consent form for them, and all students were asked to sign an assent form prior to starting their second interview.

Limitations. Within this study, there are several limitations present. As a researcher, I have to acknowledge my own insight as someone who identifies as being a first-generation college student from Appalachia and working full time as a college administrator. For this study, I was interviewing participants who were considering college or careers, and also interviewing participants that were currently in college. It was challenging to move from the administrator to researcher role and not provide advice or offer suggestions on careers or life. I worked diligently to follow my interview protocol while leaving room for additional conversation so that trust could be developed between myself and my participants. Rubin and Rubin's (2012) responsive interview method pushed me to suspend my role as a higher education practitioner and work to maintain my role of a researcher, but I do believe that my years of training as a higher education practitioner greatly influenced this work.

One limitation for the study is that Yosso's (2005) model is one of many theories centered around cultural and social capital. While preparing for this study, I considered alternative theories of social capital development as the centerpiece of my work, but liked Yosso's model because it has a wide applicability and aligned well with the curriculum for the Rural Scholars program. Yosso's model is an asset-minded model for cultural

wealth, and values characteristics of communities that are often unacknowledged in other models of social capital, unlike Bourdieu's deficit-minded model or Uphoff's (2000) theory of social capital that focuses on structural and cognitive phenomena (2000), resulting in mutually beneficial collective action (MBCA). I believe the characteristics of Community Cultural Wealth best highlight the different types of gains that girls in this population developed, knowing the value Appalachian culture places on close community ties and kinship.

Selection of the Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) model itself could also be critiqued when considering the primary audience for the theory. Yosso's (2005) model is derived from critical race theory (CRT), a framework that can be used to examine ways that racism impacts our social structures and discourse. CRT has connections to other areas of study that are primarily based on ethnic studies in historically marginalized communities, including critical feminist research and research on Latinx populations. Appalachia is not an intended population for application of this theory, but it does address a gap in research on White, Appalachian college-bound girls. Through applying the theory of Community Cultural Wealth to this population, I do not wish to suggest that Appalachian girls have the same experience as people of color in marginalized communities. I do wish to suggest that Yosso's (2005) theory of Community Cultural Wealth can be more broadly applied to help expand fields of research. It can bring understanding to populations not typically included in research on college access or higher education.

An additional limitation to my study is the mixed ages of participants. Participants were limited to female-identifying members of the Rural Scholars, either those currently in it or those who had been through it and were currently enrolled in an accredited college or university, with a permanent address within Appalachia. These specific parameters limited participation, and participant selection was further limited by participant interest, scheduling availability, and access or transportation to get to an interview. Some participants were not old enough to drive, and I had to rely on openings in the Rural Scholars schedule to find time to conduct interviews. Since the eligible number of participants was already small, I interviewed any participant who expressed a desire in participating once they were made aware of the study and completed necessary consent and assent forms. Due to this, the participants ended up being split into two categories, the high school girls and the college girls. While this split was sufficient for answering the first two research questions, I believe the split contributed to my challenge in finding a conclusive answer for research question three. The high school girls and college girls are at different places developmentally, and I think quality of the study would have been enhanced by interviewing only high school girls or only college girls. Even though this divide in age groups can be perceived as a limitation, it does provide a foundation for future research on either group.

For this interpretive qualitative study, I interviewed six participants to understand more about their gains in Community Cultural Wealth while participating in a community-based college readiness program. Data collection utilized multiple sources of evidence, including interviews and archival documents. To complete the research and

stay organized, I created an electronic database to maintain records, and a paper system for participant forms. Two interviews with each participant was completed using Rubin and Rubin's model for responsive interviewing (2012). Following transcription from audio recorded interviews, data analysis and coding were completed using NVivo 12. Within NVivo, I was able to examine themes in the research questions that emerged throughout the study and memo along the way. I used member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation of data to build reflexivity and trustworthiness in completing this study. There are limitations to this study because it utilizes only one form of cultural capital within a vast field of literature that includes different forms of human, cultural, and social capital. Within participants, there was a notable spilt in age difference between the high school girls and the college girls. This split does open the possibility for further research, which is addressed in chapter five. The following chapter includes a description of each study participants and research findings.

CHAPTER IV

College completion for students in rural communities has lagged national rates and remains a concern for educators. The students from rural areas that do make it to college report challenges in navigating college life once on campus and are challenged by financial aid, building faculty relationships, and even social life on campus (Nadworny, 2018). This study focuses on college readiness for Appalachian girls, a population that has not typically had a direct pathway to college. Through studying the experience that Appalachian girls have in a long-term college access program, we can understand more about how to prepare them for success in college.

The purpose of this study was to understand what types of cultural capital adolescent girls in a college readiness program develop, based on Yosso's (2005) six forms of Community Cultural Wealth. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What type of cultural capital do adolescent girls develop in their community-based college readiness program?
2. If a type of cultural capital has been developed, how has it helped provide the student access to higher education?
3. How do the adolescent girls believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college?

This chapter presents the results of data collection and analysis including documents related to specific participants in the study and excerpts from interviews.

Participants of this study were girls who are either currently part of the Rural Scholars program, or girls that have been part of the Rural Scholars program since junior high school, have recently graduated high school, and are currently enrolled in college seeking a bachelor's degree. Participants that are currently in college also continue to be involved with the Rural Scholars program as mentors to current high school students that are in the program. Rural Scholars is a college access program located at the Kent State University regional campuses, with the goal of providing college access to Appalachian students through mentoring, academic and career-based enrichment workshops, financial literacy, and college knowledge programming (Pfrenger, 2015). All participants interviewed have a permanent address in the Appalachian region. Through purposeful sampling, six participants were selected and interviewed for the study. Each participant participated in two different interviews, either taking place at the Kent State University Kent campus or the regional campus where the program is housed. This chapter includes case summaries of each participant interviewed, and study findings.

Case Summaries

The case summaries on participants in the study include a description about each person, how they joined the program, and their career aspirations or interests during the time of the interview. Information selected for their participant profile was chosen because of themes related to the Community Cultural Wealth model, such as familial or kinship support, and social capital. A pseudonym has been provided for each participant and their hometown.

Participant Profiles

Below is a brief description of the participants who volunteered to be part of the study and their background.

Anna (high school student). Anna is a 14-year-old girl originally from out of state. She has a sister who is also in the program and has a mother and grandparents who are supportive of her participation in the program. At the time of the first interview, she was getting ready to celebrate her 15th birthday. Anna was selected for Rural Scholars while in sixth grade and started attending workshops later that year to learn about different jobs. In seventh grade, she recalled meeting her first college student mentor and thought it was fun. Anna describes Rural Scholars as a program to help kids who are the first in their family to really get a college degree figure out what they want to do after high school or help them get into college if that is what they want to do.

Before beginning the program, Anna was not sure what her future held, but she knew she wanted the experience of living on a college campus and meeting new people. She loves learning and wants to learn as much as she can but believes she has not found a career yet that suits her. Anna has an interest in the theatre and loves working backstage to move props for productions and run the curtains. She characterizes learning in the program as much more hands on, and less in your face. "You get to learn about jobs that you never knew existed," and she definitely knows she wants to go to college but is unsure where.

Elizabeth (high school student). Elizabeth is 16 years old and is homeschooled. She explains Rural Scholars as a way to see what you would like to do in the future and

what college would be like. She first started the program when the program coordinator visited her school while she was in seventh grade. Elizabeth thought the program sounded interesting, and since both of her parents did not attend college, she thought it could be good for her. She ended up getting selected for the program and has kept with it. She feels supported by her family who provides transportation for her to and from events, and they believe that her participation will lead to a college scholarship.

Before the program, she was not thinking about college too much and had what she calls "kid aspirations" of doing things like being an astronaut or a veterinarian. After the program began, she kept being interested in medical careers. She has narrowed down a career in the medical field but is unsure of what she wants to pursue. The hands-on learning in the program has helped her and she recalls one workshop where she got to see a veterinarian work on a dog. Her aspirations after the program are to attend college, be successful in what she wants to do in a job she enjoys, and not have stress.

Mary (high school student). Mary is 16 years old and was preparing to enter her junior year of high school in the fall. She explained Rural Scholars as a program that offers students experience in college and helps prepare them for life in college and after college. She began the program after her sixth-grade year and joined because the school offered it to her. She thought it would be a good opportunity for her future. She does try to help her younger sister in the program since she has experienced many of the activities that her sister will be participating.

At the beginning of the program, Mary wanted to be an attorney, but has since changed her mind. "I've learned that there is a lot more steps involved than I thought,"

she said. Currently, she is thinking about a career in the math and sciences field because that sounds interesting to her. She credits a project in seventh grade and talks with her mentor in deciding on the career change. Through the program, Mary shared that she has met friends and adults that she can talk to about her career and hopes that she will use many of the connections in the future.

Marji (college student). Marji is one of two students interviewed for this study that went through the program as a student and has returned to mentor other young people. She is 20 years old and is a full-time college student majoring in business management. Aside from carrying a full course load, she also works at a local grocery store. She commutes to campus for classes and lives at home with her family.

In the program, she currently serves as a mentor to three girls that are finishing eighth grade. Like the other participants, she started the program in seventh grade and says she can really relate to what her mentees are going through. Marji describes the program as a way for first-generation college students who may not have the same support as other students (either financial or emotional) get some guidance through the college and career process. Her family supported her application into the program and hoped that being involved at a young age and early on would provide a pathway for a college scholarship. Although talented artistically, Marji's aspirations are to get more experience through her internships and eventually own her own business. She is not sure that her family will be supportive of that venture, but she believes that she can support herself through the process. Being able to continue helping younger students in the program is very important to her because so many mentors have pushed her and believed

in her. After she graduates, she wants to use her degree to either help others in the community or have a business that is able to support employing local community members.

Emma (high school student). Emma is currently a 19-year-old early childhood major, serving as a senior mentor to 11 students in the program. Like Marji, she also went through the program. She started as a sixth grader, graduated high school, and is currently involved through mentoring and working in the program office. Emma describes the program as a way to help kids who should go to college and have the talent to get to where they need to be without assistance from home. Her parents and her grandmother supported her involvement and application in the program. "They kept me on track and made sure I never lost my scholarship, but my mom has definitely been surprised that I have been involved for nine years," she said.

When Emma initially started the program, she thought that she wanted to be a psychologist. She has always loved school and learning but thought that eight extra years of schooling seemed like too much for her. Since she loves mentoring and working with younger children, she decided that being a teacher would fit her passion more than the high salary that comes with being a psychologist. For her, graduating from the program and saying goodbye to her Rural Scholars mentees will be hard. She hopes to continue to see them grow and progress and would love to eventually work in a program like Rural Scholars someday if possible.

Sally (high school student). Sally is a 16-year-old high school student currently participating in the Rural Scholars program and has been involved since sixth grade. She

characterizes the program as workshops that, "help us figure out what we want to do after high school and which college to choose". Her support system is her sisters and the mentor she has through the program. Before Rural Scholars, she was interested in joining a branch of the military like many of her family members, but she is considering college now more than she was when the program originally started. Instead, she is currently considering majoring in aeronautics engineering then enlisting in the United States military as an officer upon graduation.

For her, the program has helped push her out of her comfort zone. Initially shy, she said that the program has helped her start talking more to her peers instead of backing away from everyone, and that it has put her in a place to meet more people. She eventually hopes to be a mentor and give back to the program. She said, "They really have helped me a lot and others. I hope to go to college and succeed."

Findings

In presenting findings for this study, I draw upon the framework of Yosso's (2005) forms of Community Cultural Wealth. The six types of Community Cultural Wealth are:

1. Aspirational capital: The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, despite real or perceived barriers.
2. Familial capital: Expands the concept of family to that of kinship and refers to cultural knowledge that carries a sense of community, history, memory, and culture.
3. Social capital: Networks of people and community resources.

4. Linguistic capital: The intellectual and social skills attained through experiences with one or more language or style of speaking.
5. Navigational capital: The skills of being able to navigate social institutions that are not created with communities of color in mind.
6. Resistant capital: Behavior fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality.

The findings in this study are addressed in three parts of research based upon the research questions posed in chapter one. Research question one summarizes findings related to the type of cultural capital adolescent girls develop in their community-based college readiness program, research question two summarizes findings related to how the cultural capital, if found, has provided the student access to higher education. Research question three summarizes how participants believe that the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college.

Research Question One

What type of cultural capital do adolescent girls develop in their community-based college readiness program? It is evident that elements of Community Cultural Wealth have either grown or changed for girls in the program throughout their time in Rural Scholars. Each element of Community Cultural Wealth and how it appears in the girls' experiences is outlined below:

Familial capital. In the Community Cultural Wealth model, familial capital is categorized as cultural knowledge nurtured among kin that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition, extending the meaning of family to kinship, while

minimizing isolation as people realize they are not alone (Yosso, 2005). All participants interviewed cited their family as their support system, with a distinction in certain family members' roles. Roles shared by participants include encouraging program participation, providing transportation, and supporting their scholarship through regular discussions about the program and interests the girls develop.

Some girls shared that their family helped encourage them to apply for the program once they were selected. Emma shared that before her grandmother passed away, she wanted to make sure that Emma was able to attend the initial meetings for the program. Her grandmother was there to take her to the program and attend the informational meeting. "She had so much faith that I would become something. It was nice to always have that feeling," Emma said. Similarly, Sally was able to share the application experience with her father. "My sixth grade English teacher, she gave me a paper [application] and I looked over with my dad and so I just thought it was going to be pretty cool and turned out to be." Sally shared that although her and her father often disagree, he is still a source of support for her while in the program.

For other participants, family members supported them by providing transportation during the duration of the program. Emma's parents provided the transportation to and from events for her:

> Parents usually don't come to the meetings or anything, like other than like dropping me off, but they always encouraged me and made sure that I was on track, so I never lost the scholarship. So, they were always just making sure I was doing what I was supposed to be doing.

Sally's older sisters have played a role in helping her attend the program. "They're older and help me get to the Rural Scholars events." Elizabeth has also been supported by her parents for transportation needs but has had a different experience. She said, "I can't drive on my own yet, they take me to either, we'll tell the Leeville school so we can be picked up for the workshops. And this past Sunday…my mom dropped me off at the Salem campus." This was in reference to being dropped off at a regional campus location so that she could catch the bus that would take her to the College Bootcamp program, a summer experience offered to students in the program.

Two girls expressed that their family saw the program also as a gateway to scholarships so that they could consider attending college. Elizabeth shared, "I think they're also really supportive too, because I believe this gives a scholarship to let me go to like my first year free with it. I think there was a scholarship associated." Anna shared, "My mom's words were that you need all the help. You keep going if you want to pay for that [in reference to college tuition]." Marji's family always hoped she would attend college, but they hoped that the program would help.

> We didn't have the money to be able to send me to college. So they were hoping if I got more involved with the program it would be able to help me more to be able to get into school. I got accepted to three colleges all within a month of each other. It was a little harder to choose out of those, but I knew if I came to the Salem campus, I would have more financial support and I would be able to utilize the scholarships a little better. So this helped me.

Emma expressed that she saw some family members as role models throughout childhood when the family member was in an occupation that she was interested in, and it influenced her current major in early childhood education:

> I have two aunts that are teachers and I always went to my Aunt's house and I would always play behind her desk. She has a teacher's desk in her living room where she grades papers. And I would always get behind that. I'd always pretend to be a teacher, pretend to do office work or something like that. So, I think I saw them as like, role models in a way.

Marji shared that she knew family members' careers and used those as a starting point for career exploration.

> Before I started the program, it's just like, okay, I know what mom does. I know what dad does. I know what my uncle does. Those are all options. I don't know what I want to do, but those are options…I joined the Rural Scholars program. It's just like everything else opened up. There's so many more options. I could be a garbage man cause I did go to a waste facility. So it's just like there's so many more things out there.

Marji, Sally, Elizabeth, and Anna shared that they have either given support to a younger sibling interested in college or they have received support from an older sibling that is already enrolled in college. For Elizabeth, an older sibling served as a source of information regarding keeping college costs down:

> Basically if I have questions like I recently asked her about CCP (college credit plus) classes and she's like, well just if you have enough credits to graduate junior

year, don't graduate, just get more credits that way you could do college for free and stuff your senior year.

Others used their role as an older sibling to give advice to younger family members. "All these summer workshops, like I'll know them a year ahead of her, so I'll be able to like advise her like this is what you might be expecting. So be prepared for this, and that," was advice that Mary has given to her younger sister. Marji's younger sibling is currently in high school considering college and believes that her sibling has benefitted from information she learned while applying to college and her being able to coach him through the college application process.

Although the girls have started with familial capital when they entered the program, it is evident that familial capital has continued throughout their time in the program but has also changed in some ways. Family members have stepped up to support the students' program participation through providing transportation, encouraging that they maintain involvement as a means to pay for college, and providing space for them to discuss aspirations. Yosso's (2005) definition of familial capital includes kin modeling lessons of care and coping, providing education to inform moral and educational consciousness, and minimizing isolation as families become connected to others around them as they realize that they are not alone in dealing with their problems. Through these examples of kinship and support from siblings, grandparents, and parents, girls in Rural Scholars are nurtured in a way that connects them to the program, but also helps them understand that caring and coping can be provided through something seemingly simple like providing transportation to the Rural Scholars events or by a

conversation with an older sibling that has experienced the college application process, for example. It is evident that elements of familial capital have either grown or changed for girls in the program throughout their time in Rural Scholars.

Aspirational capital. Aspirational capital is defined as the ability to maintain hope and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers (Yosso. 2005). For these girls, the barriers might not have always been known, but each seems to have a growing awareness of what the barriers are and how they can change that. Each of them shared personal and professional aspirations for their future, and they vary widely depending on age and interests. Through the program, they now have a better sense of what they would like to do with their life, and several feel the need to continue working with young people in the program to help support their success.

Prior to the program, many of the girls knew that they had a desire to do something career-wise but were unsure of what. Involvement in the program helped refine the aspiration. Sally had a close family member in the Marines and a family history of military services. "My brother was in the Marines and a lot of my family was, I've always thought about that path, but am kind of thinking more now about college then I was back in sixth grade," Sally said. After connecting with a veteran through the program for an informational interview, she reconsidered enlisting right after high school graduation: "I'm still thinking to go to college for aeronautics engineering and then go into the Air Force for that and be an officer." Sally has shared that she does want to graduate college. When asked what success after college might look like, she shared, "Buying my own house, buying my own house, my own car. Maybe having kids, having

a few animals, um, a good career that won't really go out of demand and having money, like enough money, to get by."

Other participants had an idea about their career aspiration, but field trips and experiences within the program helped provide a different perspective. Mary is one example of a student whose perspective changed after more exploration:

> Early middle school, before I joined the program and in the beginning of it, I wanted to be a lawyer and I do not want to do that now. I've learned that there is a lot more steps involved than I thought.

Although Mary shared that she is now considering something in the math and sciences field, she is still unsure of what, but she does have some direction for her aspirations:

> I have kind of been able to direct my interests more. Like I have more of a focus. I'm still unsure but I know what I don't want to be, and where my interests kind of lie. I'm thinking somewhere in the math and science field because I'm really good at that and some of that stuff is kind of interesting. Looks like I'll see other jobs and be more interested in those and then you get to know jobs similar. I've got to know jobs similar to it, like accounting and all that stuff and I realized how much writing went in it and I'm not good at that.

Another student, Emma, shared that she had a change in aspiration after getting to know herself and experiencing the program and options available to her.

> I wanted to be a psychologist. But then I realized I wouldn't be as happy going through eight years (of school) and then having to deal with a lot of those problems…I went through general psych and then I realized like there was a lot

> more to it…So then I thought…I really like being in the program and I really like mentoring kids.... I really like going to see these girls all the time and I really like…being a guide for them. And so I was like, I would be a lot happier if I just continued early childhood. So I think the program, they realize…it's better to do something that makes you happier…yeah, I would make a lot more money but I wouldn't be so happy doing.

For Emma, clarity on what would make her happy and understanding how long the schooling to be a psychologist would be helped her adjust her aspiration.

Yosso's (2005) definition of aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, despite real and perceived barriers, and dreaming of possibilities beyond present circumstances. Within the program, girls have been given the opportunity to investigate and learn about their dream occupations and the reality of pursuing it. They have also been able to adjust those aspirations based upon what they have learned about their own values, interests, abilities, and access to the training or schooling needed to pursue it. Some of them started out with ideas of what they hoped and dreamed for the future but did not always have an idea of how to get there. Now, with more education and knowledge, they have been able to adjust those aspirations in the face of any challenge and understand how they can get there. Aspirational capital has been developed, adjusted, and reimagined for girls in the Rural Scholars.

Social capital. Social capital is defined as networks of people and community resources (Yosso, 2005). For girls in the program, their developed social capital is evident in three ways: utilizing relationships embedded in the program, understanding

how to leverage existing resources in a new way, and building new networks that were introduced throughout the program. Since program participants are connected to a college mentor during their time in Rural Scholars, are immediately introduced to the program coordinator upon entry to the program, and begin spending time with the other students in their cohort, many aspects of the social capital developed in the program is built into the curriculum.

Participants view the relationships within the program as valuable to them and feel comfortable utilizing them, including their relationships with the program mentors and the Rural Scholars staff. The relationships utilized vary from student to student, but all shared that they feel comfortable contacting program staff if they are in need of advice or support, and that the other students in the program are people they can talk to and bounce ideas off of. For Emma, even feeling comfortable on the campus where she is currently enrolled has been a huge support:

> I know everyone here, every single worker. From the custodians to the people in those offices. I know a good bit because of like the involvement I've had. I know the Dean pretty well since sixth grade. Yeah, definitely has opened doors to meeting the people that are here.

Other study participants share this perspective. Elizabeth shared that she could go to the current coordinator and the previous program coordinator for support, despite the staffing changes that have happened over time. "I feel confident, even the support systems that I have now, they will help me reach the goal I want to reach," said Mary. Sally likened her relationship with the program staff to a family system. "They're very

kind people. And they kind of take on, like, an older sibling role in away. It's just really nice. It's like a little family."

All of the participants shared that the mentoring relationship has been very important because it helps provide some accountability and support for finishing high school and navigating the college search process, aligning with Yosso's (2005) definition of social capital. The mentors help the students with long-term and short-term goals. When asked what conversations with their mentor are like, Elizabeth shared that sometimes they just talk about what is going on in her life:

> It is kind of like meeting a friend over coffee. They meet with us like either once a week or once every like two, three weeks depending on if they're busy or anything. But basically, they have these…these charts that talk about, it's like, oh, what's your, um, short term goal, long term goal and stuff. And they make you like really think even if you don't really stick to them because honestly I forget sometimes about them.

For Anna, the mentors are a text away: "I think if I wanted to know something, I could probably text one of the mentors, find out about stuff I really wanted to know."

For the students not yet in college, leveraging existing resources to learn has been important. Marji utilized a cousin working in the legal profession as support for college applications, creating greater family and social capital:

> My cousin was kind of pushing me too because when she did my senior pictures, she said I wouldn't get the preview pictures until after I turned in five college

> applications. So I had to do four college applications because I'd already been accepted to Kent State.

Mary shared a different perspective on connections and support:

> You support yourself just as much as other people do. Like you want to, make your other support systems proud, like the other people that supported you in the past. You want to make sure that you reach their expectations and do what they hoped you reach towards.

Some of the students have used what they have learned in the program to try and build new networks for other opportunities. Marji, who aspires to own her own business, is in need of internship opportunities and understands how important that will be for her career. When asked about her internship options, she shared that there are two places she knows she could send an application to and it would get accepted due to her own network and work experience. Other students shared that guest speakers in the college boot camp program have been resources to them on things like first-year experience, campus involvement, and even learning how to meet people in a large lecture class. One specific example resonated with Elizabeth after a meeting during college boot camp with a staff member from the campus activities office. She said, “I’m thinking about this meeting we had yesterday. She was saying how it’d be good to make friends in your classes, that way they can help you out and stuff.”

Mary summed up the participants’ experience with social capital in this way, “I've met friends through here, I've met adults I can talk to through here and we have connections at the school that are hopefully going to be useful in the future.” Yosso

(2005) defines social capital as networks of people and community resources that can be used to provide instrumental and emotional support to navigate society's organizations. The girls participating in Rural Scholars were placed into a program where elements of social capital have been built into the experience, like being connected with a college student mentor and being in a group with peers from neighboring schools. While that structure lays the foundation for social capital that can help support the students, it is up to the girls to continue utilizing the community contacts and built-in relationships to continue developing their own social capital throughout the experience. By building upon the foundation of social capital, they have learned how to use the connections already present for them, while also understanding how they have the ability to connect with community members and professionals to add to their network.

Linguistic capital. Yosso (2005) describes linguistic capital as the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language or style. Although Yosso's emphasis for this was on bilingual education, she asserts that students may develop different styles to communicate with different audiences. In this study, it is evident that the participants have an increased use of language and expressed more confidence with asking questions and talking with family about career and college options.

One question posed to the participants was whether or not their communication skills had changed throughout the program, and there was a resounding yes. Each participant shared that their communication skills had changed for the better because the structure of the program encourages interaction between peers. When students first begin

the program, they are brought together from multiple school districts, not knowing one another. Emma recalled that the first week they were all "thrown in together and were able to joke and laugh together by the end of the week."

Study participants view learning in the program as more hands-on, and if students are not participating or communicating with one another, it can get awkward. Elizabeth shared that because she is home schooled, the interaction with the other students is the only time she is with other students her age. Due to the Rural Scholars program, Sally shared that she is way more social and decided to step out of her comfort zone and talk more instead of "backing away from everyone." She thinks this growth happened because the program puts you into more situations to talk with different kinds of people and interact with them. Emma described herself as being a little shy, but said that the program has helped her not be afraid of speaking up or participating in class:

> I used to just sit in the back and just never speak and never share the answer, even though I knew it. And now, like, if I know the answer, I'm going to yell. So, it's just, it's helpful. Let me talk a lot more confidently, and speak a lot louder, and know that I have a voice and that I can use it.

When asked if the participants are sharing what they learned with others, the response varied. Almost all participants shared that they communicate program events and activities with family and have more career and college conversations, and get excited to share what they learned, where they traveled, and their reflections on it. Since parents and siblings played a role in the program application process and transportation to and from events, the students feel compelled to share information about their experiences

with them. Some participants share information with their friends when prompted, while Mary shared that she valued talking with her peers inside the program:

> I feel like my friends in the program, we benefit off of each other, because we're able to see other people's life experiences because none of our parents have gone to four years in college, which even with that they're all different experiences in life.

This represents development in linguistic capital because students are learning about potential careers, understanding more about college options, and bringing that information back to households where parents have not completed a four-year degree. Where bilingual children are often called upon to translate a language for adults, these children are translating language tied to the culture of college.

Navigational capital. Navigational capital is defined as the skills of maneuvering through social institutions like schools or hospitals, but acknowledges individual agency within those constraints (Yosso, 2005). For girls in this study, it was clear that they believe they have learned skills to help them maneuver college and the systems that could prevent them from attending.

When asked if they feel like the skills they have learned in Rural Scholars have helped them navigate or understand how to get to college, all participants answered yes. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) was cited as a common example of something that could prohibit their enrollment for college, but they felt comfortable navigating. FAFSA Night, an event hosted by the program to assist students in learning about and completing their FAFSA form, was shared as helpful resource for the girls.

However, they also shared that help from the program coordinator also pushed students to have things together. Emma shared this example:

> You can do your FASFA with them if you need help. There was Karen (program coordinator), who was always on top of everything. Like, so she was like down your neck if you didn't have your application and on time, if you didn't have your FAFSA done, and she knew…the minute…anything would be…ready to be due, she would know like you don't have this in, go do that. Go put that in right now. So, she helped guide our way to knowing what to do…any preparation you would need to know how to do for anything in college, they definitely got you ready for that.

In addition to understanding financial aid more, students also felt more confident in understanding what college-level classes would look like for them through a variety of workshops and mock classes offered through the Rural Scholars. Students in the program appreciate knowing more about college life and feel comfortable using higher education jargon to speak about their experience. They know about first-year experience (FYE, as they called it), how to schedule their classes, how to withdraw from classes "responsibly and when it is appropriate to," as Mary shared, and what life is like living in the residence halls. Due to this, the experience with a mentor, and exposure to campus and financial aid, students are also able to make educated decisions about where to attend school. Several expressed that although they applied to different colleges and universities, they knew they would receive scholarship money to attend Kent State University.

Elizabeth shared that because she has spent so much time on a college campus, she feels comfortable asking for help and does not worry about feeling lost as a freshman when she finally gets to her first year in school. Emma shared that the length of time in the program and time actually spent on a college campus helped her feel confident about the transition to college, helping her develop agency over the situation:

> I've been coming to this campus since like seventh grade, so I know I've known the ins and outs of this place for a while and we always went to the Silver campus like a couple times a year…I know my way around all the buildings, but it's helped me to see ever since the program started that they kind of raised us in a way of knowing how you're supposed to think through things critically through college. So, they definitely prepared me on how to work my way through college and do things the right way.

These examples support Yosso's (2005) definition of navigational capital because it includes strategies to navigate systems not built for their community in mind, and the ability to sustain achievement despite stressful conditions that might put them at risk for dropping out or quitting. Navigational capital acknowledges individual agency, but also connects to social networks that facilitate the movement through social systems. For the girls in this program, they have acquired confidence and knowledge that helps them feel prepared to navigate the system of higher education. This includes applying for college, obtaining financial aid through the FAFSA, and attending college. Navigational capital is developed through their participation in the Rural Scholars.

Resistant capital. Of the six forms of Community Cultural Wealth, resistant capital is one the girls expressed knowing or experiencing the least. Resistant capital refers to knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (Yosso, 2005). If the girls are aware of oppositional barriers for them due to who they are or where they live, only two of them mentioned it on a very surface level.

Marji shared that her current boyfriend is supportive of her college life and working, but that has not always been the case. After having a boyfriend in college and one in high school that was unhappy with her decisions to attend a different high school and then college, she ended both relationships. Her current boyfriend is supportive, and he knows that she has her own ambitions and things to do:

> I had a boyfriend last year. He was very possessive of me, oh yeah, it's cool if you go to school but you still have to talk to me all the time. It's like, no, that's not how this works. Sorry. Bye.

Sally referenced a community center that helps people find jobs when they are from areas like hers, meaning rural areas with higher unemployment rates and not a lot of money.

Both of these represent examples of resistant capital that has been known to be obstacles for Appalachian women or girls. The first, romantic relationships with young men seeking to keep a girl from obtaining an education, while the latter provides an example of a community center in a rural area that provides access to information on employment and job applications. Access to the community center means that someone who could not previously job search due to lack of resources, like transportation or the internet, might now be able to seek out opportunities to better their life. A college-aged

girl fighting for an education breaks the stereotype of a young, Appalachian woman with no education or ability to subsist outside their local community.

Both Sally and Marji are actively engaged in resistant capital through participating in Rural Scholars and finishing high school (Sally) and enrolling in college (Marji). Even though the girls are using knowledge and their experience in a way that helps provide them access to a system that Appalachian girls have not always had access to, they do not immediately recognize that as fighting a system. They have a more personal connection to getting good grades, attending the program, applying to and completing college, fostering healthy relationships, and working hard to create a life for themselves that is different from what they have grown up in. For Sally, success looks like this, "Buying my own house, my own car. Maybe having kids, a few animals…a good career that won't really go out of demand and having money, like enough money…to get by."

Yosso's (2005) definition of resistant capital refers to knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality. Maintaining and passing on multiple dimensions of Community Cultural Wealth form the basis of building resistant capital. Although this type of capital is not the obvious form of Community Cultural Wealth developed with the girls, it serves as an underpinning of their experience, and is hard to separate from the other types of cultural capital developed through the Rural Scholars program. The girls' motivation to work towards lives different from what they know through jobs that can provide stable living or a college education that can

support their career ambitions all count as elements of resistant capital developed in the program.

Throughout their experience in Rural Scholars, it is evident that the girls are experiencing enhanced Community Cultural Wealth based on Yosso's (2005) model. The girls have enhanced familial capital through the support provided to them, have refined their aspirational capital through learning more about careers and opportunities, enhanced their social capital by working with their program mentor or mentees, have developed greater linguistic capital through learning the language of higher education, and understood more about navigational capital by learning about higher education system and roadblocks that might impede their success. All of these developed elements of Community Cultural Wealth–familial capital, aspirational capital, social capital, linguistic capital, and navigational capital–support the resistant capital that helps these girls oppose systemic poverty and low educational attainment rates prevalent in Appalachia.

Research question two advances the discussion by asking if a type of cultural capital has been developed, how has it helped provide the student with access to higher education.

Research Question Two

If a type of cultural capital has been developed, how has it helped provide the student access to higher education?

Cultural capital and characteristics of Community Cultural Wealth have developed for girls participating in the Rural Scholars program. To answer the second

research question, I have divided the ways in which the girls have viewed how elements of Community Cultural Wealth have helped them access higher education into three categories: career mindset and aspirations, college knowledge, and refining support systems. Each category is outlined below:

1. Career Mindset and Aspirations: This theme illustrates that through elements of Community Cultural Wealth gained in the program, they have refined their aspirations after learning more about how their own talents, skills, and abilities align with an occupation or field of interest.
2. College Knowledge: Elements of Community Cultural Wealth that have developed throughout participation in Rural Scholars, such as navigational and resistant capital, have helped the girls feel more confident and knowledgeable in navigating the pathway of higher education. This theme highlights examples of gains in college knowledge and its help in accessing college.
3. Refining Support Systems**:** Although support systems, such as familial support, were already present in the girls' lives when they started Rural Scholars, this theme includes examples of how those support systems have changed or grown during the girls' time in the program.

The following section provides a more detailed explanation of how the themes are present in the girls' experience.

Career mindset and aspirations. Prior to joining the program, many of the girls expressed that their ideas for careers fit into one of two categories: either childhood

musings like starting a rock band, or an idea of a career based off of their family members' jobs. During Elizabeth's interviews, she joked about childhood dreams, "Whenever you're a kid you're like, oh, I want to be an astronaut and stuff. And that's literally all I thought about." For a while, Elizabeth went back and forth about possible career ideas:

> I remember when I was little, um, I wanted to be a veterinarian…wanted to be a teacher for a tiny bit. And then there was like this long break where I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up, but then my mind kept going back to medical things after the program started and stuff.

For Elizabeth, the Rural Scholars workshops helped with exposure to careers:

> We have a variety of different workshops. I've been to two nursing ones…I've been to a veterinary one. There's one I went to that was mandatory about like the SAT testing and everything…There's one where we went to this factory where they make car parts for cars and stuff…But there's a whole bunch of different workshops that we go to, the experience, the different careers and everything to give us an insight on what it would be like… Before this I'm like, I have no freaking clue what I wanna to do after high school. Now I'm like, hmm. Medical seems pretty cool.

Although Elizabeth has this direction now, her ultimate hope is that she is successful in whatever she decides to do, and for her that means getting a job that she enjoys with less stress in life than she thinks she could have.

Prior to the Rural Scholars, early career decisions for Sally were based off of what her family does for careers, but she differentiated learning in school from learning in the program by being pushed to explore more career options:

> In school, it's not so much about like what you're going to do like career wise and after school…Rural Scholars is more like finding careers and what you want to do with life and figuring yourself out, where in high school they just leave it up to you to figure it out yourself, which is harder. They [high school] don't really guide you.

Sally utilized social capital through the program to gain insight into a possible career option:

> With each workshop we meet new people and they always give us their contact information if we're interested. And we could always talk to them about who we want to meet and like in which field of career. And then they always try to find…someone to talk to with and have a workshop. Like last year I mentioned a military workshop and this year we had one. So that was nice.

Following the workshop, Sally contacted the guest speaker and learned more about their experience working with planes and boats in the military. Now, Sally has more clear direction about what is next for her. She said, "I'm still thinking to go to college for… aeronautics engineering and then go into the Air Force for that and be an officer." For her, the priority is making money but also finding a job that will be in high demand. When asked how she was making that type of decision, she shared that she was using the workshops in the program as a guide, and that more jobs are coming to light. "I

just feel it is necessary and I would like to further my education past high school," said Sally.

Mary shared that originally, she would see jobs she was interested in, like accounting, but then learn more through the program and realize she was not suited for that career field. "I think I just had early ideas of what jobs were, before I really got into what they actually were. So, you hear this about it and it's kind of true but…you're just a kid and you don't realize." For her, involvement in Rural Scholars has changed her views on careers because she now has first-hand experience with understanding exactly what some of them are. "After workshop I'll think about the stuff that we did in that workshop and if I would be interested in that kind of a career field or if it's just not something I think I would connect with," she said. For her, the program has allowed her to direct her interests more, and she knows she is headed towards a math and science field.

Mary, Sally, and Elizabeth are examples of girls who started off in three different places regarding college majors and career interests. They have used the program's built-in social capital and guest speakers to investigate options and consider what might best fit their own values and what they hope to achieve. Through talking with them, it is easy to understand that the girls in the Rural Scholars know there are a certain amount of life circumstances to overcome, but that through what they have learned and skills they have developed through participation in the program, they have been given an opportunity to make choices and discernment about college majors and careers, thus adjusting their aspirational capital along the way.

Girls participating in the Rural Scholars have developed Community Cultural Wealth, including aspirational capital. Although some of them came into the program not knowing about certain careers or majors, they have been able to adjust the aspirational capital when they have learned more about the occupation or job they are interested in pursuing. Changing aspirations or careers aligns with Yosso's definition of aspirational capital and shows that the girls' have hope for a future. They have begun planning for it and learning about what has to happen to meet those aspirations. Knowing what is required of them in a specific career field is an aspect of college readiness and reflects self-efficacy, or the belief that one is capable of acting in ways that will achieve desired ends (Bandura, 1997), which in this case is a specific career that requires a college degree. While the aspiration alone does not guarantee enrollment in college, aspiring to attend college is a motivating factor for needing to access college and enroll in a program.

College knowledge. One theme that resonated with participants is an increase in college knowledge, or the know-how to succeed in applying to college. Arnold, Lu and Armstrong (2012) define college knowledge as an element that influences individuals' academic behavior and likelihood for attending and enrolling in college. This includes navigating financial aid processes like the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), knowing how and when to apply for college, and earning successful grades in classes as early as eighth grade. The structure of the Rural Scholars program workshops and information sessions, coupled with access to a college mentor, has helped the

participants feel confident in their abilities, thus gaining navigational and resistant capital as they learn how to navigate higher education.

One common example shared by the girls was FAFSA completion. As Emma shared, "They have a FAFSA night so that they can help you. You can do your FAFSA with them if you need help." Emma even shared that she received strong support from the program coordinator when she was completing the FAFSA for the first time and that the support from the program helped ensure that she was completing the documentation to move forward in the process. Since the FAFSA is an early indicator of college enrollment and an early predictor of enrolling in a four-year college (Arnold, Lu, & Armstrong, 2012), Rural Scholars has a strong emphasis on FAFSA know-how and completion for its students.

For other participants, the enhanced college knowledge came in the form of understanding more about the first-year experience in college. Mary shared what she had learned in the college boot camp program she was attending:

> They talk about different parts of college life, like how to get financial aid, how to schedule classes, making sure that you are not scheduling classes at the same time, and you can get to your different classes on time…When it's needed to withdrawal if you can, and how to do so responsibly and when it's appropriate to. And how it's like living in dorms and different stuff about college life.

Mary said that she now understands that the simple act of adding and dropping classes or not scheduling classes on time can have financial repercussions and that it is important to do so on time and responsibly. Elizabeth shared that she is happy that she will not be

awkward and lost when she comes to campus. "I'm more iffy on asking for help and stuff. This way, I don't have to… we've had a workshop with actual professors, and they taught us about all that they do and stuff," she said.

Rural Scholars participants believe that the Community Cultural Wealth gains from spending time on a college campus are valuable, not only through the physical spaces they have occupied but also through the workshops on student life, financial aid, and life on campus. This knowledge aligns with navigational capital as girls learn to navigate a new system, linguistic capital as they learn the language of the higher education system, and resistant capital as they fight the barrier to college access. What the girls know about college can support their access to higher education. With the enhanced Community Cultural Wealth, the girls know where to start with the college and career process, have an idea of what to expect once they are enrolled, and have additional support through their mentor and Rural Scholars staff, thus breaking down the barrier to college access.

Refining support systems. Girls in the program expressed that their families were their main source of support for joining and taking part in the program, and their families are still currently attributed to part of their success. Mothers and siblings currently enrolled in college play a large role in offering advice, support, and transportation to events for participants. It is evident that the commitment to the program and girls' success is a family commitment from application to graduation.

Many participants shared that they had dreamed of attending college and thought it was out of reach or had accepted that it would not be an option due to money very early

on. The scholarship offered with the program is a clear incentive for girls to get involved and stay involved over time. For Emma, her parents did not typically attend Rural Scholars events, but they always encouraged her and made sure she was on track for her scholarship. Mary echoed a similar sentiment:

> They've always hoped that I could go to college, but we didn't have the money to be able to send me to college. So, they were hoping if I got more involved with the program, it would be able to help me more to be able to get into school.

Participants share information learned in the program with friends inside and outside of the program but have also found support through the program mentors and program staff. Girls work on goal setting with the mentors and are able to talk through roadblocks or issues they are having, and also hear more about life in college from the mentors themselves. Mary shared her experience with her mentors:

> I know a lot of the mentors are helping, like the ones that have known me for a while, they're helping me and pushing me towards that goal too cause they know I can do it. They've watched me from seventh grade until I graduated from high school…So they know what I can do. They believe in me, they're keeping pushing me.

Participants further along in high school expressed an interest in coming back to the program once they are in college and serving as a mentor themselves. They view it as a way to give back and help other young people like themselves. Sally shared, "Mentors have helped a lot with like the whole school and college process, so I just like to give back to the program." Relationships with program administrators are also strong, and

students know that they can count on adults in the program to have questions answered and get more resources. As Sally put it, “They're very kind people. And they kind of take on like an older sibling role in a way. It's just really nice. It's like a little family.”

Although the girls all started the program with family support and involvement, relationships have evolved. Some girls are mentoring younger students in the program or providing advice for a sibling. Others are receiving mentoring from their Rural Scholars mentor and also receiving advice from an older sibling that has been to college or is currently enrolled. For Appalachia, this extension of family and kinship is common. The girls have accepted that their circle of support has grown to include family and the supports built into the program, such as Rural Scholars mentors and staff. The high school girls are using this circle to help them throughout the program, while the college girls are using the supports as continued help while they are in school. Both are examples of enhanced support systems that are built upon what was already developed, enhancing their navigational, familial, and social capital. College students who receive emotional support from family are 19% more likely to accumulate at least 24 credits their first year of college and 24% more likely to finish their second year of college (Roska & Kinsley, 2019). With strong support systems already established and strong social, navigational, and aspirational capital developed, the girls have three elements established that will be helpful for them to access college.

Through their experiences in the program, the girls have each developed a career mindset, enhanced college knowledge, and refined their own support systems. To summarize, the forms of Community Cultural Wealth that participants have developed

through Rural Scholars have helped them access higher education because they have refined their aspirations, adding to their desire to attend college; enhanced their own college knowledge through understanding the landscape and language of higher education, things that are common barriers for first-generation college students; and refined their support systems, an element needed throughout the application and college completion process.

Research question three builds upon the study by addressing how the girls believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college.

Research Question Three

How do the adolescent girls believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college?

Research question three was not clearly answered through this study, although other themes found to support college attendance and completion were identified. Themes related to college attendance and completion are briefly discussed below and elaborated on in chapter five. For this discussion, what follows is broken into two sections, high school girls and college girls, mirroring how they were listed in the Participant Profiles earlier in this chapter.

High school girls. For high school girls, the gains in cultural capital that they believe will help them be successful in completing college closely mirror gains that will help them access college, which is addressed in question two. Those themes are career mindset and aspirations, college knowledge, and refining support systems. During

interviews, the high school girls expressed no difference between how gains that would help them access higher education would help them be successful in attending and completing college.

One new theme identified in question three for the high school girls is one related to supporting college completion that I have titled communication confidence. Communication confidence addresses how the girls feel more comfortable speaking out, asking for help, and navigating higher education and social situations outside of educational settings. This theme differs from college knowledge, discussed in question two. Communication confidence and its application is not limited to having confidence and communication about college only, yet the communication skills can contribute to helping the women complete college or be successful in the workplace. Since this theme does not directly answer research question three, I elaborate on it in chapter five.

College girls. The college girls in the study did not clearly share how they believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college. Emma and Marji did share that they believe their developed social capital is an asset to their success in college for things like helping them find off-campus internships and navigate the collegiate environment. However, there was no clear distinction that they believed these elements of Community Cultural Wealth would specifically help them graduate.

One theme evident for Marji and Emma that is related to their own success is what I have titled helping others. The helping others theme represents their desire to continue working with their own mentees and stay connected to the program, even after

they have completed college. Both of them shared that their own success and aspirations are tied to being able to help their current Rural Scholars mentees and they would consider themselves successful if their mentees are able to achieve their own goals. Both themes, communication confidence and helping others, are discussed more thoroughly in chapter five.

Participants in the Rural Scholars have utilized elements of Community Cultural Wealth to enhance their familial capital; understand more about their aspirations and life goals; develop social capital through connecting with their peers, program mentor, program administrators and community members; enhance their linguistic capital through learning the language of college; and strengthened navigational capital through understanding how to apply to college and complete the FAFSA. With all of those elements of Community Cultural Wealth developed, they believe they can access higher education and have developed a career mindset and more aspirational capital, enhanced college knowledge, and refined support systems. One of the research questions this study sought to answer was how the girls believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in completing and attending college, and an answer to that question is not present in the findings. Chapter five builds upon this work but discusses the implications of findings for research and practice, study limitations, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V

The purpose of this study was to understand what types of cultural capital adolescent girls in a college readiness program develop, based Yosso's (2005) six forms of Community Cultural Wealth: aspirational capital, social capital, familial capital, linguistic capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital. Through understanding gains the girls made in Community Cultural Wealth, this study expands the discussion of access and college preparation for a group that is historically left out of research. Based upon this model of cultural capital and the need for increased access to postsecondary education in Appalachia, my study answered the following questions:

1. What type of cultural capital do adolescent girls develop in their community-based college readiness program?
2. If a type of cultural capital has been developed, how has it helped provide the student access to higher education?
3. How do the adolescent girls believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college?

The study found that girls in a long-term regional college readiness program, Rural Scholars, are making gains in cultural capital through participation in the program. In the previous chapter, I discussed that elements of Community Cultural Wealth have been developed, and that it has helped provide the girls access to higher education through their career mindset and aspirations, college knowledge, and refined support systems. It is unclear how the girls believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be

successful in attending and completing college, but themes related to college completion and student success were identified in the interviews. The remaining part of this chapter shares a summary of key findings, a discussion of findings, implications, limitations for the study, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Key Findings

Key findings from this study reveal that girls who participate in a long-term, community-based college readiness program are developing Community Cultural Wealth during their time in the program, and that they do believe that the developed Community Cultural Wealth can help them access college.

Aside from the elements of Community Cultural Wealth that are built into the program, like resistant capital, familial capital, and navigational capital, the girls are developing other elements of Community Cultural Wealth. Elements of social and linguistic capital are built through program experiences like connecting with peers in the Rural Scholars, meeting weekly with their program mentors, and developing relationships with community members. Rarely does one element of Community Cultural Wealth develop on its own, and their development is not stagnant. This finding, titled Community Cultural Wealth Throughout the Program, is outlined in the Discussion of Findings. Second, it is evident that girls who participate in a long-term college readiness program like Rural Scholars have a greater sense of confidence and self-efficacy in accessing college and making career-related decisions about their life and trajectory. This finding, Increased Self-efficacy, is also outlined below in the Discussion of Findings.

Discussion of Findings

All six elements of Community Cultural Wealth (aspirational capital, familial capital, social capital, resistant capital, linguistic capital, and navigational capital) were found when participants shared about their experiences within the program. Their development of Community Cultural Wealth has led to two major findings from this study, as outlined below. Other findings of importance not directly related to the research questions are shared here as well.

Community Cultural Wealth Throughout the Program

There are several ways the girls' Community Cultural Wealth is developed and utilized within the program.

Applying to Rural Scholars. It is evident that when participants apply to the program, they are backed by strong familial capital (Appendix K). Each of them expressed a strong amount of support from family members that wanted them to join the Rural Scholars program, and then use it to learn more about jobs or careers and obtain money for college. For the participants currently in the program, family support continues as family members attend events, provide transportation, and ensure continuity in their program participation. As Elizabeth put it, "I wouldn't be here (interviewing) without them." Use of this cultural capital helps provide a foundation for the participants to join the Rural Scholars program and maintain involvement.

Participation in Rural Scholars. The Rural Scholars program mission is to offer first-generation, college-bound students a college access program that is designed to give them and their families the knowledge, academic exposure, and social support needed to

be successful at a world class university (About Rural Scholars, 2018). Resistant capital, navigational capital, and familial capital are the foundations of the program. While the Rural Scholars provides the structure, other elements of Community Cultural Wealth are shaped by the girls through the programs they attend, peers they interact with, careers they explore, and what they choose to share with their families, siblings, and friends. Throughout the experience, girls in the program are learning about themselves, about different colleges and careers, and how to interact with their peer mentor, program administrators, and community members. All these interactions provide opportunities for linguistic capital, social capital, and aspirational capital to be developed.

Appendix K illustrates how participation in the program is an act of resistant and navigational capital, and that familial capital is essential for the students' participation in Rural Scholars. These three types of cultural capital represent a constant pairing for the high school participants in the program. The other forms of cultural capital–social capital, aspirational capital, and linguistic capital–are connected through a circle inside the program because they are closely related and feed into one another. For example, reaching out to a community member for information about a career, as Sally did, enhances linguistic capital, social capital, and aspirational capital at once because she is building a connection, developing professional communication skills, and learning about a career.

For the high school girls, aspirational capital is the most fluid and changing as evidenced by their exploration and changes in what they want to do or become after finishing high school. Mary, Elizabeth, Anna, and Sally all share that they had ideas of

careers or jobs in childhood but have refined those ideas after learning about themselves or a job. As their aspirational capital has changed, they have developed other elements of Community Cultural Wealth. For Sally, this was being pushed out of her shy comfort zone to be a stronger communicator, developing greater linguistic capital; for Mary, it is understanding that the social capital gained through the peer mentor and adults she has met will help her in the future; for Elizabeth it was understanding that she excels at hands-on learning for science or technology based jobs, furthering her navigational capital; and for Anna, it was learning that she enjoys the theatre and wants to live on campus in college, advancing her own social capital and connecting with others.

Through the program curriculum and opportunities, participants can enhance social, linguistic, and aspirational capital. It is evident that elements of Community Cultural Wealth are tied to (and often inseparable from) other elements of Community Cultural Wealth. The overlapping forms of Community Cultural Wealth corroborates Yosso's (2005) description that the forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static but rather they are dynamic, can build upon one another, and develop as the student changes.

College after Rural Scholars. For the college girls, the aspirational capital has shifted to a focus beyond college and into what they hope to accomplish once they graduate. For Marji, this means finding ways to open a business that can support and help other community members, advancing her social capital and bringing resistant capital into the community. For Emma, this means finding ways to graduate and continue

being involved with the Rural Scholars as an alumna, furthering her own resistant capital by helping others build their own.

For the two college girls, family support still serves as a strong underpinning of the cultural capital they have used to get to college. Both college participants live at home, and both shared that they have regular conversations with their family about college and the progress they are making towards their degree program. They also both identified their family as sources of support for them throughout their schooling. They do rely on the navigational, social, and resistant capital that they have learned through their experience in the Rural Scholars program, but they have more clarity on aspirational capital. Both have chosen majors and are committed to their disciplines. Although they are considering internships and life after graduation, their use of aspirational capital and where they are with it is different from the high school girls. They have moved through the exploration phase of trying to decide a major or career path, have committed to a major, and are focusing on experiences such as internships and classes that support their career aspirations.

For the college girls, Appendix K represents how they are deeply embedded in their aspirational capital through attending college and pursuing careers and navigational capital through the act of attending college. They both use their navigational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, and social capital as tools when needed. Their use of these elements of cultural wealth range from using faculty or staff to help solve scheduling issues, contacting professionals off-campus about internships, or even helping provide college advice to a sibling.

Community Cultural Wealth and Other Research

The Community Cultural Wealth pairings support other research on the model. Yosso and Garcias (2007) identify all elements of Community Cultural Wealth being present in their analysis of the play *Chavez Ravine,* a play that shares the story of how over 3,000 Mexican Americans were displaced from their neighborhoods of Chavez Ravine for the Los Angeles City Housing Authority (LACHA). Deemed poor and blighted by the LACHA, the community was built by Mexican immigrants and its rich cultural assets went largely unrecognized. Yosso and Garcia (2007) draw on the Community Cultural Wealth model to highlight how the play, *Chavez Ravine*, showcases the layers of Community Cultural Wealth built in the community as a means of resistance. This includes elements of aspirational capital, familial capital, linguistic capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital. Huber (2009) found pairings of aspirational and familial capital and navigational and resistant capital when applying the Community Cultural Wealth model to undocumented Chicana college students, but added spiritualty as an additional element of wealth that supported the students' success. Duran and Perez (2019) found pairs of navigational, aspirational, and resistant capital when applying Yosso's (2005) model to study the interconnections of queer Latino men's Community Cultural Wealth. The findings of the present study echo the findings of these prior studies, providing further evidence that elements of Community Cultural Wealth rarely stand alone when being applied to a specific population of marginalized people.

Increased Self-Efficacy

In addition to the rich development of elements of Community Cultural Wealth, participants in the program also developed strong self-efficacy that can help them navigate college preparation and readiness. Bandura (1997) describes self-efficacy as the belief that one can act in ways that will achieve desired ends. Students' beliefs of self-efficacy can be impacted through college knowledge because their belief mediates their decisions and actions about whether to attend or prepare for college, thus determining which elements of college knowledge are needed (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is important for college students because as they become more confident in learning about and preparing for college, they are more likely to believe that they can go to college and follow through on higher education. This belief aids in their success so that they can complete the tasks associated with college and know that they have the skills to do so (Hsieh, Sullivan, & Guerra, 2007). In this study, participants' self-efficacy was expressed through their assurance in knowing college expectations both inside and outside of the classroom, and the know-how that will help them complete the FAFSA.

Self-efficacy, college expectations, & sense of belonging. For study participants, it is evident that their long-term involvement with the Rural Scholars program has enhanced their self-efficacy, provided clarity for college expectations and even provided them with a sense of belonging. Self-efficacy is a product of interactions with the environment and the producer of the environment effects (Arnold, Lu, & Armstrong, 2012). For college students, positive self-efficacy is shaped by the outcomes of a students' previous coursework and influences their future coursework (Arnold, Lu, &

Armstrong, 2012). For participants, the prior coursework is the experiences provided by Rural Scholars, and thus influences their future coursework with the program or even their attitude towards college. Participants are also developing a sense of belonging, or their perceived support on campus, as they experience camps and the Rural Scholars (Strayhorn, 2019). These characteristics are closely intertwined for participants and reflect their attitudes about college going, their abilities, and their comfort on campus. Clarity on college expectations and the participants' experiences with the FAFSA and supporting workshops both represent examples of positive experiences with the environment that the students have high future hopes for.

College expectations. Elizabeth, Anna, and Mary all expressed confidence in knowing what life is like in college because of their experience in Rural Scholars and the College Bootcamp program that happens each summer. The College Bootcamp program allows the students to live in a residence hall for a week, attend scheduled classes, and listen to guest speakers from around campus. Speakers and activities for the week include information about student organizations from the student activities office, reviewing the curriculum for a first-year experience program, visiting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) Center, and spending time at the student fitness center. In workshops during the school year, Rural Scholars participants have time to interact with college faculty for tips on study skills and what to expect in a college classroom.

The time and opportunity for participants to visit campus led to development of elements of Community Cultural Wealth through positive interactions with the campus

environment and classes. Over time, participants have felt more capable about their own skills, gaining a clearer understanding of what college looks like socially and academically. The early experiences on a college campus allow girls from the Rural Scholars to develop confidence that can help them create their own sense of belonging within higher education. Strayhorn (2019) writes that sense of belonging refers to a student's perceived social support on campus, feelings of connectedness, the experience of mattering, and feeling cared about and accepted by the campus community and faculty, staff, or peers. Sense of belonging matters for rural high school graduates going to college because they can often feel disconnected from their classmates socioeconomically, culturally, and politically, not always having role models to support them (Marcus, 2018). The Rural Scholars girls feel comfortable navigating campus early, know the expectations of college life, and feel connected to key faculty, staff, and mentors to support them. Through their developed Community Cultural Wealth, they have greater confidence and understanding about higher education, thus enhancing their self-efficacy.

FAFSA confidence. The girls understand how FAFSA completion can help them access and afford to pay for college, and they express a high comfort level with navigating the process. For them, the act of completing the FAFSA alone is not self-efficacy. Knowing that they can meet a college requirement that is a roadblock has helped them believe that they are capable of engaging in complex tasks closely connected to the college process. For participants, a strong motivating factor for participating and staying in Rural Scholars is getting access to scholarships that will help them attend

college. All participants expressed a high comfort level with filling out the FAFSA and seeking other aid if needed, knowing they have social and navigational capital to help support them.

As first-generation college students, their comfort and confidence in filling out the FAFSA to seek financial aid can help them matriculate through college, and filing it during their senior year of high school is a key indicator of college enrollment the following year (Arnold, Lu, & Armstrong, 2012). The National College Access Network (Why Invest, n.d.) reports that college students not completing the FAFSA are missing out on $24 billion annually on federal Pell Grants, subsidized student loans, work study positions, and state aid programs. For study participants, the FAFSA represents a step required of them to access college, thus providing them with another opportunity to interact with the environment and take control of their higher education experience.

In addition, FAFSA completion is associated with strong college attendance. High schoolers in higher poverty districts are less likely to complete the FAFSA than students in wealthier districts, and 90% of high school seniors that complete the FAFSA attend college directly from high school, compared to 55% of students who do not complete the FAFSA (Why Invest, n.d.).

Other Findings

As noted in chapter four, there is no clear answer to research question three that centers on how the adolescent girls believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college. However, other themes in the research have been identified and include communication confidence for the high school girls, and

helping others from the college participants. I chose these two themes as being noteworthy because they are related to research question one, but do not answer research questions two or three. Communication confidence is distinctly different from the linguistic capital discussed in relationship to research question one because it centers on feeling self-assured about their interactions with others, including peers or community members. The use of linguistic capital, as discussed in chapter four, is the way girls are using language to share college knowledge and navigate different environments, rather than simply feeling confident about speaking and finding their voice. Helping others is an inherent form of resistant capital that the participants intend to use post-graduation to improve their communities.

Communication confidence. Throughout the interviews, participants shared that they have enhanced skills like making new friendships, feeling more comfortable speaking in a classroom setting, and have even connected with community members off campus. As Anna shared, "I'm more outgoing now. I never would have done this interview before." Mary also shared that she has tried to become more outgoing throughout her participation in the program: "I started doing the program, tried to become more talkative because early middle school I was like quiet a mouse most of the time." For her, developing her voice and confidence in the group has been important. She had this to say about the group interactions:

> It's like a step ladder…you worked your way up to a bigger group. Like you might have one or two friends in the group, and it's like such a small group that chances are they also are friends with most [of] the group. And then once you

> notice certain people…you're used to bigger groups and that helps you feel…comfortable with more people.

Sally referenced a time when she utilized social capital built within the program to contact someone off-campus: "I don't remember his name, but I emailed him, and…he was at the military one [workshop] and…he worked on the boats with the planes and stuff. So, I talked to him." She said that talking with him did help when she was trying to learn more about military careers.

Even though participants do not see a direct connection between these enhanced language skills and completing college, previous research on language in the classroom for college students indicates that language, especially vernacular, can play a role on campus for Appalachian college students (Dunstan & Jaeger, 2016). Participants from Dunstan and Jaeger's (2016) study indicated that the way peers and other college students speak influences who they are drawn to when making friends, finding that language serves as an auditory cue for identifying peers with whom they would like to connect with, but that language on campus can also be used to stigmatize. Although the high school girls seem to have little awareness of their own dialect, having the confidence to speak out and be themselves could help them find and connect with peers that sound similar to them to further enhance social capital and their own support systems in college.

Helping others. Many study participants expressed an interest and commitment to helping other students like themselves. The current college students that are serving as mentors, Emma and Marji, describe a strong attachment to their mentees and want to be able to see their relationship through until the mentees graduate high school. Even

though some of the mentor and mentee relationships have changed over time (for example, Emma has nearly a dozen mentees to meet with and she mentors in the program throughout the school year), she still feels like her success is connected to theirs. As Marji put it:

> I know that I'll have met my aspirations because I've given them (the mentees) something to look forward to. I've given them my knowledge, I've shared everything that I know with them, so I've helped them. I've graduated. The only thing left is to use my degree either to help somebody else in the community or to open my own business and employ more community members.

For students currently in the program, many of them also share a desire to become a Rural Scholars mentor if they enroll at Kent State. They feel supported by the mentor relationship and believe that by the time they reach college, they will be able to serve as a resource for other students in the program. They share an interest in being able to help other students like themselves navigate the systems and help support their community. Their interest in serving and helping others does not answer one of the research questions for this study, but it is a form of navigational and resistant capital that the participants plan on using in the future.

Implications

The results of this study offer important implications for the use of the Community Cultural Wealth for the students. Results from this study show that participants are closely tied to their families for support, suggest a new type of Community Cultural Wealth identified by participants, and have the potential to impact

their own sense of belonging. For faculty and staff in higher education that work with college readiness programs, program structure and curriculum must be carefully built and considered. Those in public policy need to consider how changing the structure for college readiness and access in Appalachia can better move the needle on the college completion gap for the region.

Implications for Participants

For study participants, there are implications based upon their gains in cultural capital and how they will be able to use it going forward. Program participants are utilizing family support along the way, and study findings outside of the research questions suggest a new element of Community Cultural Wealth for participants. Sense of belonging is another implication for these students as they begin their collegiate careers.

Starting with familial capital. One element of Community Cultural Wealth that all participants had in common is that each one of them began with strong family support and encouragement to join the Rural Scholars program. Participants expressed that the continued family support has helped them keep their commitment and obligations to the program, while the college participants shared that their families are still a source of support.

The close family and kinship relationships are characteristic of Appalachia. Appalachian or rural students should be aware of the built-in support system as they enroll in college, especially if they are considering living on campus. Students with strong navigational and social capital skills can develop a new support system, but they

must be mindful of the effort and time that it can take to do so. Familial support systems would need to be utilized differently, and if the student is not ready for the change, it could impact them negatively. The student's participation in Rural Scholars will help the family understand more about the transition to college and is an asset for the family's transition.

Helping others. Each participant in the study expressed an interest in returning to the Rural Scholars program or the local community to find a way to help other students like them or give back to the community. The college students are doing this through mentoring in Rural Scholars, but their commitment to the community extends beyond the program and is pushing them to find ways to help the region after college graduation. Marji expressed an interest in trying to find a way to employ community members and operate a business, while Emma is interested in the possibility of staying on with Rural Scholars in a full-time capacity upon graduation. For the high school students, the idea of helping centers on being a mentor once they are in college and understanding that they have a role in helping inspire others.

This theme indicates that an additional element of Community Cultural Wealth exists within the community. The theme helping others indicates that the will and desire to be actively involved in the community has been built. Culturally, Appalachians are known to be hard working, self-reliant, and closely connected to kin, but the confidence and enhanced communication skills that participants have could support their community engagement. For study participants, it is too soon to know whether they will be able to make a greater, long-term connection to community. This element of cultural capital

could have regional and cultural ties, but further research is needed on how this element can appear in the community, the impact it might have, and how the participants utilize it following graduation.

Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging is important for all college students to be successful but is especially important for first-generation and rural college-going students. Ardoin (2018) explored how using Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model in combination with Magolda's Theory of Self Authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2008) can help rural and working-class students bring elements of their own culture into the academy to redefine themselves and conquer self-doubt. For universities, Ardoin (2018) recommends a series of institutional strategies to help rural students address challenges of belonging and negotiating their dual identity of being a college student and being rural. Universities should set up a culture of appreciating students' language diversity or dialect, find ways to explain common terminology or jargon frequently used on campus so that students can attach meaning to it, utilize first-year experience courses and living learning communities as a way to bring students together around class or gender identity, developing class identity centers such as a first-generation center that could provide supplemental support, programming or outreach, create intergroup dialogues on class, and acknowledge faculty and staff who share the rural or first-generation identity.

Although these recommendations are intended for students once they are enrolled within the university, a number of these recommendations can be applied to experiences students have while in their college access program. Girls from Rural Scholars readily

shared how confident they are in navigating campus and understanding life in the classroom. Even though Sally, Emma, and Marji expressed awareness that sometimes people from their towns do not attend college, they did not doubt their own ability to fit in or navigate belonging. Students in college readiness programs can be introduced to the language of higher education early and be connected to faculty and staff that they identify with to help support them, both inside the program and outside of the program. The college access program itself serves as its own identity center for students seeking support for navigating college, but students need high quality learning experiences on college campuses for this to be meaningful.

These added elements can help ease the transition for students, support them in continuing to build their sense of belonging, and even help ease their challenges in straddling the divide from their first-generation or working-class background to their life as a college student. For the Rural Scholars college girls, the sense of belonging has been cultivated through the program, but also through returning to serve as a mentor and an expert in helping the younger girls. Although it is true that each first-generation or rural student will have to navigate sense of belonging, college access programs must be aware of their structure to ensure that students are supported from when they enter the program to when they fully graduate from it.

Implications for Community Cultural Wealth Model & Social Capital

Findings from this study align with Yosso's (2005) work in that the elements of Community Cultural Wealth are built in tandem together and are difficult to separate, including that of social capital. Social capital, the networks of people and community

resources that students can use for support (Yosso, 2005), has long been considered a tool that can help college students accomplish their goals. In this study, participants cited numerous examples of how they were able to utilize social capital for support, and they believe they will also be able to use it in the future. However, with social capital, participants also developed elements of Community Cultural Wealth that they plan on using. Social capital development also does not stand alone for these students, and through the process of making connections and building their own network, students have been developing other elements of Community Cultural Wealth.

An additional theoretical implication to consider is how elements of Community Cultural Wealth overlap with adolescent and college student development. This study focuses on high school and college student girls, which has a bevy of theory behind it, ranging from theory on how they self-actualize to how they grow through challenge and support. However, it is important to consider how they are also developing and maturing throughout their time in the program. Appendix K for this study shows how participants relied upon different aspects of Community Cultural Wealth at different times earlier in their program, but that once the elements are further developed, they can be utilized whenever needed.

College Readiness Program Design

Although this study focuses on the experiences of participants inside of a college readiness program, there are considerations to keep in mind while building college access programs, including the overall program structure and the curriculum delivered to

students. It is possible to design program structure and curriculum from an asset-based model, keeping Community Cultural Wealth as a thread woven throughout both.

Program structure. For Rural Scholars, the program structure focuses on an asset-based model that helps students prepare for college, but also understand what elements of their community can help them get there. Elements of Community Cultural Wealth are woven in as a structure but also manifest themselves in the curriculum, providing space for student development. My findings point towards the importance of a strongly structured program that has multiple points of contact with the students and community to reinforce messaging and elements of Community Cultural Wealth.

Program administrators must be mindful of the program structure so that they can address forces keeping the student out of college at multiple levels. While some educators might be inclined to structure a program that focuses on delivery in school only or outside of school only, it could be problematic for the student. In Rural Scholars, multiple points of contact are built into the program structure, thus providing opportunities for the high school students, college students, and community members. In practice, this is done through the program mentor at school, outside of school at Rural Scholars functions, through connecting with parents, community stakeholders, and then back to the sponsoring organization. The multiple points of contact help fully involve stakeholders at all levels for success. This alignment can help students find their way into college and careers while also helping the community address its economic needs, reinforcing asset-based messaging about everything their community has to offer.

Program curriculum. Eisner (1979) defines curriculum as a series of events intended to have educational consequences, and that subject matter is not curriculum (Eisner, 1984). For a college access program, this curriculum can be delivered either through a school system or district, through a nonprofit organization, or an institution of higher education. Topics covered can range from assessments that help students learn about themselves, informational interviews, investigating majors of interest, understanding how to prepare for college placement exams, and learning about how to apply for and navigate financial aid and scholarships. Program administrators for college access programs must keep their written and operationalized curriculum in mind, while also being intentional about how each piece will help students learn about how to access college and give them chances to practice acquired skills.

Findings from my study point to the need for keeping the curriculum interactive but also providing space for practice and adjustment depending on student interest and need. For Rural Scholars, the curriculum has been developed with a hands-on learning approach that has resonated with the participants. Participants can clearly delineate how their learning in Rural Scholars is different from learning in school, and they can apply information learned to assist in their development. Students have an opportunity to practice those skills through either attending the College Bootcamp, contacting a community member for more information on a job or career, and meeting with college faculty. In addition, when participants have asked for certain topics related to their own interest, they have been covered or added for the group.

Curriculum development should begin with knowing the students the organization serves, what their assets are, and what elements of growth or development can be supported. Letting students share their ideas for the program also values them personally, thus adding another asset to the program. There is an element of resistant capital built into each college readiness program, but that alone does not ensure that it is designed from an asset-based perspective with high quality experiences in mind.

Appalachia's Workforce Development and Education

Current connections that the Appalachian Regional Coalition has to the region are complicated and with a vast focus. In 1998, the Appalachian Regional Coalition began developing the Appalachian Higher Education Network (AHEN). Now known as the Appalachian Education and Workforce Network (AEWN), it is a group of state-based centers whose mission is to work with high schools to increase college going rates in Appalachia (Education and Training, n.d). The organization focuses on post-high school education and training attainment rates to prepare a stronger workforce for the Appalachian region (Community-driven, 2019). While the AEWN program is tied to institutions of higher education in Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, and North Carolina, there is only one university or college connected per state.

High school graduation and completion rates within Appalachia have improved, but there is work to do on college access and completion. Results from my study suggest that the region would benefit from more regional college access programs or from an Appalachian Regional Coalition structure that more closely ties together students to a

campus close to them, rather than limiting the higher education partnerships to one per state. While the focus on supporting students through high school is important, Appalachian students need more education on how to access resistant capital, navigational capital, and social capital to help support their success. To address the gap in college completion rates, the AHEN structure and program outreach should support more college going initiatives and education for students. If AHEN could connect directly with college access programs, relationships could foster the gains in Community Cultural Wealth, helping Appalachian students navigate the high school to college pipeline.

The Rural Scholars program, utilized in this study, is sponsored by a state university but is not tied to the Appalachian Regional Coalition of programs that support higher education. Findings through my study suggest that given the education and opportunity, Appalachian adolescent girls are interested in going to college and have a desire to help the community after graduation. Although more research is needed to understand the long-term impact and completion rates the program will have, my study suggests that helping students develop their own elements of Community Cultural Wealth has inspired aspirational, navigational, familial, linguistic, and resistant capital. Restructuring the AHE to focus on access to higher education and college completion could help local communities and strengthen their economies.

Recommendations for Research

This study presented findings that girls enrolled in a long-term, community-based college readiness program are developing elements of Community Cultural Wealth, and

they believe they can access higher education. Future research on college readiness and access for Appalachian and rural students is needed to understand more about their needs and experiences. While their participation did help answer the first two research questions, follow up work is needed to answer research question three, which addresses whether study participants believe their gains in cultural wealth support their graduation from college.

For this study, participants were either high school aged or college aged. While this division in age can be considered as a limitation, the difference in participant age provides an opportunity to learn more about girls newer to the Rural Scholars program versus girls that have completed the program and are currently enrolled in college. High school girls are at a different place developmentally than the college aged participants, and this attribute alone could provide insight into the student's maturation process, development, and attitudes towards careers and college. Using this research as a foundation, there is an opportunity to study each group individually. For the high school girls, this could mean keeping their career aspirations and college selection process in mind, while for the college girls, this could mean further examining their dual roles as college students, peer mentors, and rural commuter students.

In addition, long-term research on participants could also build upon previous achievement-centered ethnographic work in the field, paralleling previous studies completed by Paul Willis (1977), an ethnographic study of working class boys in England, and on Jay MacLeod's (1999) work that chronicled young boys who lived in a low-income community in America. A follow up longitudinal study could help educators

and program coordinators understand if the gains in Community Cultural Wealth build a foundation for growth and learning to help participants into adulthood, while also getting to see what life is like for Appalachian girls after college.

This dissertation also sets the stage for expanded research on rural students, including understanding more about their college access and their success in college. Rural students are receiving attention nationwide to fulfill the enrollment gap as the number of college aged students is predicted to decline within the United States (Marcus, 2017). As college and universities turn their recruitment focus towards these communities, educators will need to understand the culture of rural and Appalachian regions, assets that already exist there, and what helps rural students persist to graduation. While some quantitative studies have focused on rural student motivation for completing high school (Hardre & Reeve, 2003) and Byun, Irvin and Meece's (2012) study that used National Education Longitudinal Study to understand predictors for bachelor's degree attainment among rural youth in four-year institutions, qualitative research in this area can help us understand more about what rural students believe they need for success in college.

Lastly, this research is based upon one regional college readiness program that is affiliated with a large, public university. College readiness and access programs are popular across the United States and carry different institutional sponsorship and affiliations, including federal programs like Upward Bound or university-affiliated programs. This study sets the stage for elements and gains of Community Cultural

Wealth to be studied with different programs in different locations, considering different populations like underserved men of color, or white rural men who are college bound.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to understand more about the elements of Community Cultural Wealth that adolescent girls gain from participating in a long-term, community-based college readiness program. An interpretive qualitative study was used in this dissertation to interview six participants regarding their gains in Community Cultural Wealth. Results from this study find that elements of Community Cultural Wealth are dynamic and develop in tandem with one another, and that the girls believe their enhanced Community Cultural Wealth will help them access college, thus enhancing their self-efficacy, navigational capital, aspirational capital, linguistic capital, social capital, and familial capital. Even though they are learning how to utilize their Community Cultural Wealth while in the Rural Scholars program, its use can also be utilized once they enroll in college. Through attending college, they are engaging in navigational and resistant capital, but through committing to a major, they can focus on aspirational capital and utilize other forms of cultural capital as needed.

The results of this study have provided me with a greater understanding of how a college readiness program can help support adolescent Appalachian girls as they prepare for college. This research builds a foundation for understanding more about college-going Appalachian women and how they plan and prepare for their futures when provided with community support. Through these types of programs, higher education professionals and government officials in Appalachia can begin understanding how

strong community ties can impact college access, retention, graduation, and the region's economy for the future.

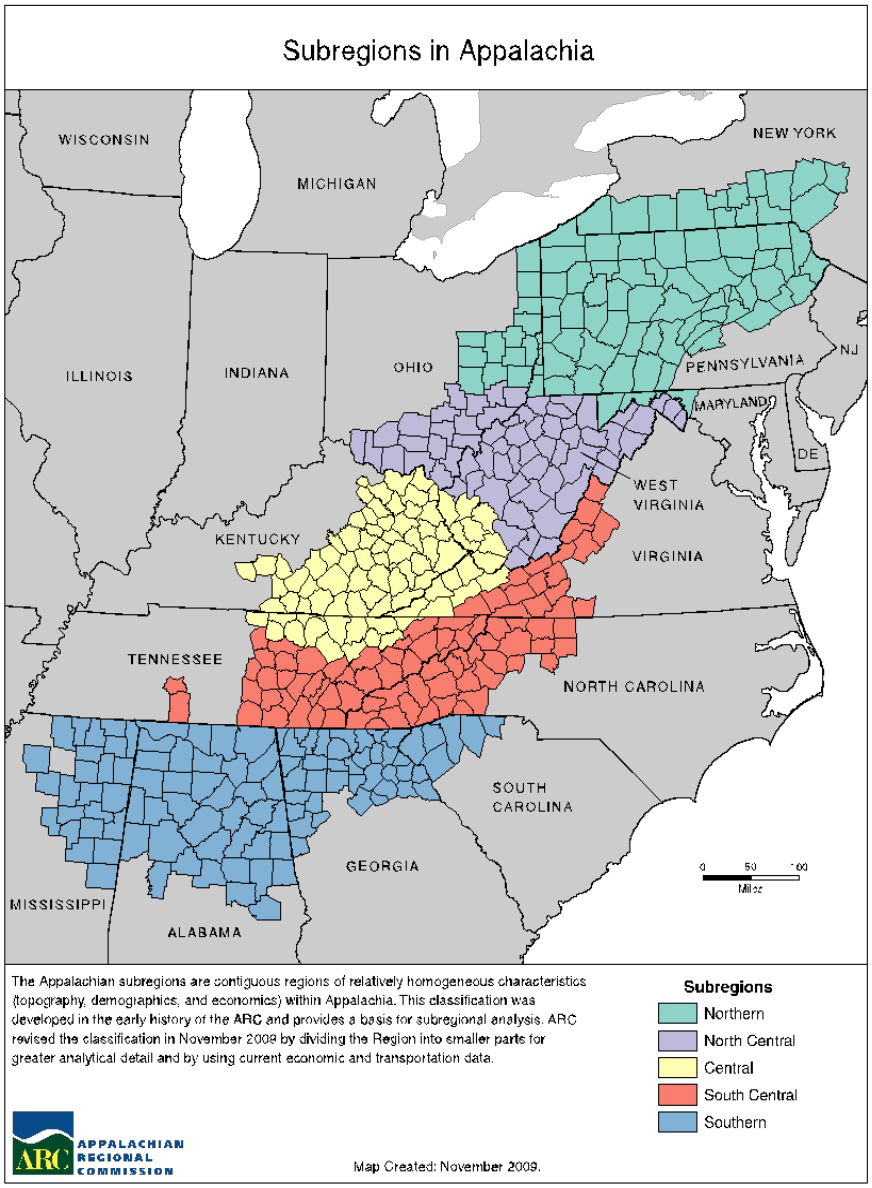
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPALACHIA, SUBREGIONS, AND COUNTY MAP

Appendix A

Appalachia, Subregions, and County Map



Appalachian Regional Commission. (2009). *Subregions in Appalachia*. Retrieved from https://www.arc.gov/research/MapsofAppalachia.asp?MAP_ID=31

APPENDIX B

APPALACHIAN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT RATES, 1960

Appendix B

Appalachian Educational Attainment Rates, 1960

	Estimated Population	High School Education (10th Grade or Better)	College Education (4 Years or More)
United States	163,997,457	41.8%	7.9%
Appalachia	15,328,214	32.3%	5.2%

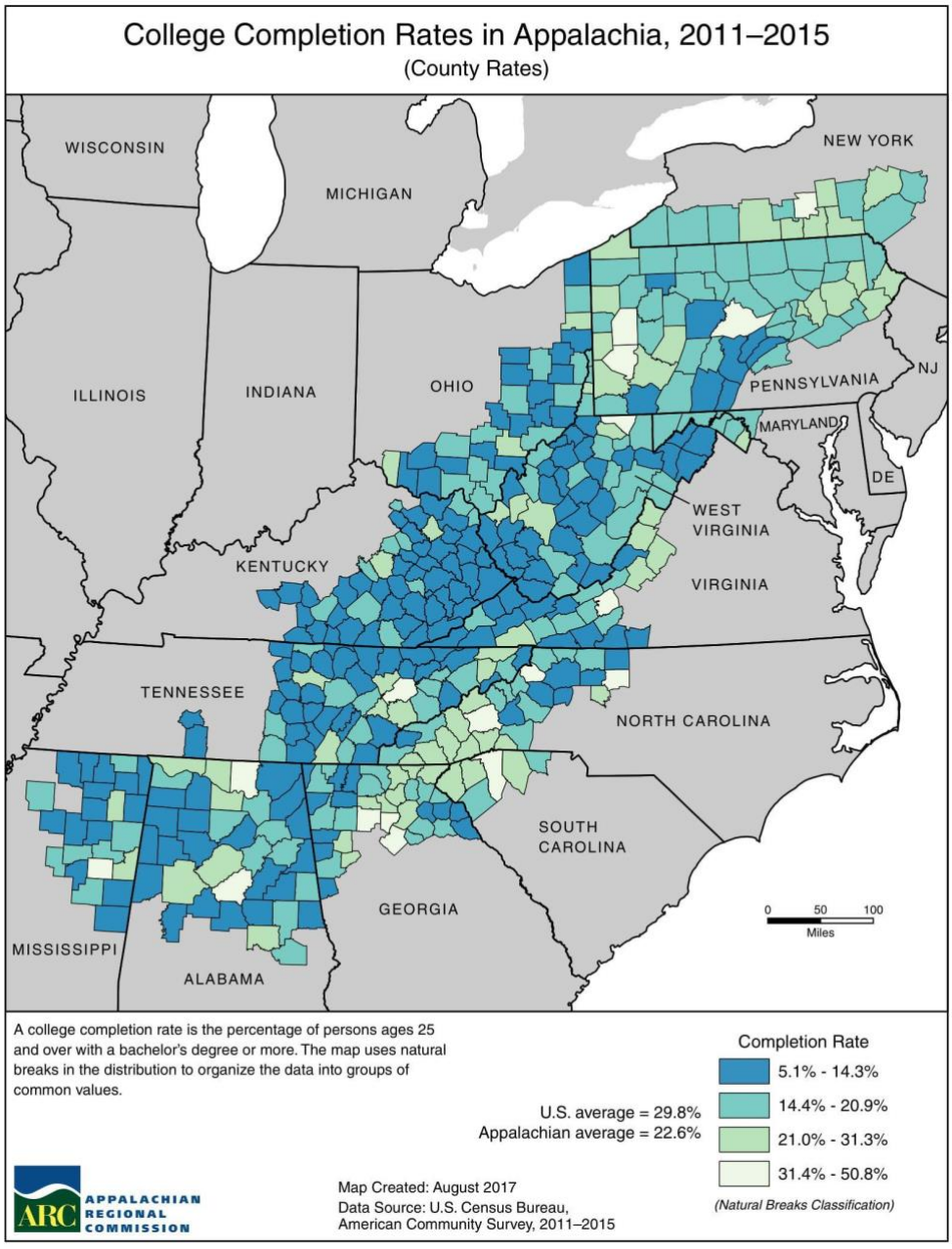
Appalachian Regional Commission. (1964). Appalachia: A report by the president's Appalachian regional commission. Retrieved from https://www.arc.gov/about/ARCAppalachiaAReportbythePresidentsAppalachianRegionalCommission1964.asp

APPENDIX C

APPALACHIA COLLEGE COMPLETION RATES OF PERSONS AGES 25 AND OVER, 2011-2015

Appendix C

Appalachia College Completion Rates of Persons Ages 25 and Over, 2011-2015



U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). *College completion rates in Appalachia, 2011-2015*. Retrieved from https://www.arc.gov/assets/maps/related/College_Education_2011-2015_Absolute_Map.pdf

APPENDIX D

INFORMATION PROPOSAL FOR PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Appendix D

Information Proposal for Program Coordinator

Dear Program Coordinator:

My name is LeAnn Starlin, and I am a current doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program at Kent State University. To complete this research degree, I have elected to study women enrolled in the Rural Scholars program through a qualitative study.

To keep you informed of my work, the nature of it, its purpose, proposed timelines and work with participants, I am providing you with the attached proposal. I anticipate being in regular contact with you regarding my work, especially to coordinate use of space for interviews and to also recruit participants. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached via email at lstarli1@kent.edu or via phone at 440-503-9147.

Dissertation Title:
Mining for Knowledge: Identifying Elements of Community Cultural Wealth for Appalachian Adolescent Girls in a College Readiness Program

Study Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand what type of cultural capital adolescent girls in a college readiness program develop, based Yosso's (2005) six forms of Community Cultural Wealth during their enrollment in the Rural Scholars program at the East Liverpool and Salem campuses of Kent State University.

Community Cultural Wealth constitutes six different resources available to a person within their community, including **resistant capital** (being resistant to processes or societal forces that may keep a student in their socioeconomic standing), **familial capital** (family support), **aspirational capital** (the desire and aspiration to do more and be motivated, regardless of real or perceived obstacles), **social capital** (relationships and connections built that can help the student), **lingual or language capital** (the intellectual and social skills attained through experiences with one or more language or style of speaking.), and **navigational capita**l (the knowledge to navigate complex systems not necessarily built for this particular audience, such as navigating a college campus policies or procedures).

Based upon this understanding of Community Cultural Wealth and the need for postsecondary education in Appalachia, I seek to answer the following questions:

1. What type of cultural capital do adolescent girls develop in their community-based college readiness program?

2. If a type of cultural capital has been developed, how has it helped provide the student access to higher education?
3. How do the women believe the gains in cultural capital will help them be successful in attending and completing college?

Study Structure: This study is a qualitative study that relies on two participant interviews (per a participant) of women in the Rural Scholars program, and a review of archival data pertaining to the student's college goals and aspirations. Participant interviews will be recorded for research purposes, and participants will have an opportunity to review interview transcripts to ensure accuracy of the interview transcript. A more detailed outline of the study structure and methodology is available upon request.

Participant Recruitment:
For participant recruitment, I will send study information out to the program director for dissemination to eligible program participants. Interested participants will be asked to contact me to set up initial interview. Ideally, this study will focus on adolescent girls within the program but may need to be adjusted depending on participant response rate.

Proposed Timeline:
My study proposes the following timeline for completion of research, but I do realize that due to scheduling participant interviews some dates might need to be adjusted. I will keep the Program Director informed of major date changes for this study:

Date:	Task:
April 2019	Dissertation proposal defense; Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval
April – May 2019	Participant recruitment and scheduling of interviews
June 2019 – July 2019	Participant interviews and review of archival data
June 2019 – August 2019	Interview transcription completed as interviews are completed; data coding
September 2019	Final results written and presented

Research Ethics for Study:
To maintain a high standard of research ethics for this study, I have incorporated the following ethical research practices:

- Institutional Review Board Approval at Kent State University: Before working with human subjects, projects must be reviewed and approved by IRB to ensure that the research protects the rights and welfare of study participants. This project has been approved. For questions on Kent State University IRB, you can contact the Office of Research Compliance.

- Consent Forms: Each participant or their parent will be given a consent form outlining the study guidelines and requirements for participation. A copy of the consent form is available for review at your request. All signed consent forms will be kept securely on file.
- CITI Ethics Training: All Kent State University researchers conducting human subject research are required to take online ethics training. My training is up to date and will be renewed as needed throughout my research. For more information specific to the training content, please visit citiprogram.org.

Report of Results:
Results from the study will be presented in my dissertation to meet the requirements for completion of the Doctor of Philosophy at Kent State University. Study results will also be sent to the Program Coordinator and campus Dean at the Kent State University Salem and East Liverpool campuses for review once final work has been completed.

References:
Yosso, T.J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91.

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT REVIEW FORM

Appendix E

Participant Information Archival Document Review Form

Participant Name: Date:

Time Beginning Review – Time Ending Review:

Synopsis of Item Under Review:	Comments on Item:
Considerations or Items for Follow Up:	Time of Write Up or Memo:

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR MINING FOR KNOWLEDGE DISSERTATION

Appendix F

Interview Protocol for *Mining for Knowledge* Dissertation

Interview questions based off Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model.

Interview 1: Introductory Interview

1. Can you share your name, age, major (if applicable), and hometown?
2. Share what your involvement is currently with the Rural Scholars program?
3. If you had to explain Rural Scholars to someone who was unfamiliar, how would you describe it?
4. How did you decide to join Rural Scholars?
5. Can you tell me about the application process?
6. Was your family involved? Has your family been involved in your Rural Scholars experience?
7. What were your college aspirations before starting the program? Have they changed since entering the program? If so, how? Example?
8. How would you compare learning in Rural Scholars to learning in school?
9. Do you feel like involvement in Rural Scholars has helped you develop a network of resources or people you can ask for help if needed with school or life?
10. Is there anything else that would be helpful for me to know about your experience with the program?

Interview 2: Follow Up Interview

1. Begin with review of what we talked about last time. Is there anything else you would like to add?
2. Do you have a people in your life that support your learning? Has your support system changed over time?
3. Who do you think benefits from your participation in Rural Scholars? Why?
4. Do you think your social skills have changed or developed more since you have been involved with the program?

   Follow Up: Do you communicate the same with peers as you do with adults or your program mentor?
5. How do you make decisions? Has that changed since being in the program?
6. How has the Rural Scholars program taught you how to navigate college? How?
7. What do you hope to achieve after the program? Why is that important to you?
8. What support system will help you achieve that goal?
9. How will you know that you have achieved it?

APPENDIX G

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Appendix G

Participant Informed Consent Form

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Study Title:
Mining for Knowledge: Identifying Elements of Community Cultural Wealth for Appalachian Adolescent Girls in a College Readiness Program

Principal Investigator and Contact Information:
LeAnn Starlin Nilsson, lstarli1@kent.edu; cell phone, 440-503-9147, Graduate Student at Kent State University

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to learn more about women participating in the Rural Scholars program and the experiences they perceive in being helpful in their own life and career planning. Results and information shared in the research will be used for a doctoral dissertation and educational purposes only.

Procedures:
Your participation will require you to complete two interviews (one initial interview and one follow up interview) with me that will help me learn about your decision to enter the program, background with the program, activities you found to be helpful in making career and educational or career plans that you may have. Participation in this program will also require you to be observed at different Rural Scholars programs or events that you are involved with.

The first interview will take approximately one hour, and the follow-up interview will also take approximately one hour. Interviews will take place at the Kent State University Salem or East Liverpool campuses, or another location agreed upon by both the researcher and the participant. Other documents related to your experience in the program will also be used as a resource in the study. This includes previous projects, reflections, writings and other materials that disclose information about your experience that were completed while you have been enrolled in the program

This study does require disclosure of personal contact information so that we may coordinate interview times but contact information will be kept secure and not shared outside of the study.

Audio and Video Recording and Photography:
This study involved the use of digital audio recording. The first interview and the follow up interviews will be recorded so that I can listen to the interview and utilize information shared by your child for research results. Digital recordings will be transcribed into text for research use and stored on a secure website, Google Documents, provided to me by Kent State University.

Text excerpts from the interviews may be used in future educational programs or publications, including (but not limited to) the final study findings and professional conference meetings for other educators so that they may also learn about the nature of the program and its structure. All names and participant information will be kept confidential.

As a participant, you will have the option of hearing the interviewing and reviewing the typed interview transcript once it is completed so you can verify that the interview has been accurately captured and recorded.

Benefits:
The potential benefits of participating in this study include providing feedback about program structure and impact to the Rural Scholars program coordinators and may also provide you with an opportunity to reflect on personal growth throughout the Rural Scholars experience.

Your participation will help us better understand program strengths, weaknesses, and gain insight into how programs of this nature impact education and the local community.

Risks and Discomforts:
Some of the questions that you will be asked are of a personal nature and may cause embarrassment or stress. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go on to the next question.

Privacy and Confidentiality:
Data collection for the study will be kept anonymous. In final findings, all student participants will be assigned a pseudonym to protect their privacy. All data collected from the study will be stored on a secured personal laptop and backed up on a secured digital storage system provided by Kent State University. Audio recordings will also be backed up in the same system.

This signed consent form will be kept separate from study data, and responses will not be linked to you. Information obtained from your interview or materials (if applicable) that are collected from you (i.e., class projects, homework assignments, journal entries, etc.) will not contain identifying information about you unless express consent is gained.

Research participants will not be identified in any publication or presentation of research results; only aggregate data will be used. Your research information may, in certain circumstances, be disclosed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research at Kent State University, or to certain federal agencies. Your confidentiality may not be maintained if there is an indication that you may harm yourself or others.

Compensation:
Compensation for this study is a $10 gift card.

Voluntary Participation:
Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to continue participation in this study. Participation in the study will not impact the Rural Scholars program or any involvement with Kent State University.

Contact Information:
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact LeAnn Starlin Nilsson at 440-503-9147 or via email at lstarli1@kent.edu. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330-672-2704.

Consent Statement and Signature:
I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

_____ _____

Participant Signature **Date**

APPENDIX H

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Appendix H

Parental Consent Form

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what your child will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your child's participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Study Title:
Mining for Knowledge: Identifying Elements of Community Cultural Wealth for Appalachian Adolescent Girls in a College Readiness Program

Principal Investigator and Contact Information:
LeAnn Starlin Nilsson, lstarli1@kent.edu; cell phone, 440-503-9147, Graduate Student at Kent State University

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to learn more about women participating in the Rural Scholars program and the experiences they perceive in being helpful in their own life and career planning. Results and information shared in the research will be used for a doctoral dissertation and educational purposes only.

Procedures:
Your child's participation will require her to complete two interviews (one initial interview and one follow up interview) with me that will help me learn about her decision to enter the program, background with the program, activities she found to be helpful in making career and educational or career plans that she may have. Participation in this program will also require the student to be observed at different Rural Scholars programs or events that the student is involved with.

The first interview with your student will take approximately one hour, and the follow-up interview will also take approximately one hour. Interviews will take place at the Kent State University Salem or East Liverpool campuses, or another location agreed upon by both the researcher and the participant. Other documents related to the student's experience in the program will also be used as a resource in the study. This includes previous projects, reflections, writings and other materials that disclose information about their experience that were completed while the student was enrolled in the program.

The student's personal contact information will be collected by me so that we may coordinate interview times but contact information will be kept secure and not shared outside of the study.

Audio and Video Recording and Photography:
This study involved the use of digital audio recording. The first interview and the follow up interviews will be recorded so that I can listen to the interview and utilize information shared by your child for research results. Digital recordings will be transcribed into text for research use and stored on a secure website, Google Documents, provided to me by Kent State University.

Text excerpts from the interviews may be used in future educational programs or publications, including (but not limited to) the final study findings and professional conference meetings for other educators so that they may also learn about the nature of the program and its structure. All student names and information will be kept confidential.

Students will have the option of hearing the interviewing and reviewing the typed interview transcript once it is completed so that they can verify that their interview has been accurately captured and recorded.

Benefits:
The potential benefits of participating in this study include providing feedback about program structure and impact to the Rural Scholars program coordinators and may also provide the participant with an opportunity to reflect on personal growth throughout their experience.

Your child's participation will help us better understand program strengths, weaknesses, and gain insight into how programs of this nature impact education and the local community.

Risks and Discomforts:
Some of the questions that your child will be asked are of a personal nature and may cause embarrassment or stress. You may ask to see the questions before deciding whether to consent your child's participation.

Privacy and Confidentiality:
Data collection for the study will be kept anonymous. In final findings, all student participants will be assigned a pseudonym to protect their privacy. All data collected from the study will be stored on a secured personal laptop and backed up on a secured digital storage system provided by Kent State University. Audio recordings will also be backed up in the same system.

This signed parental consent form will be kept separate from study data, and responses will not be linked to your child. Information obtained from your child or materials (if applicable) that are collected from your child (i.e., class projects, homework assignments, journal entries, etc.) will not contain identifying information about you or your child unless express consent is gained Research participants will not be identified in any publication or presentation of research results; only aggregate data will be used. Your research information may, in certain circumstances, be disclosed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research at Kent State University, or to certain federal agencies. Your child's confidentiality may not be maintained if there is an indication that if he/she may harm themselves or others.

Compensation:
Compensation for this study is a $10 gift card.

Voluntary Participation:
Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you and your child. You and/or your child may choose not to participate or may discontinue their participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he/she is otherwise entitled. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your child's health, welfare, or willingness to continue participation in this study. Participation in the study will not impact the Rural Scholars program or any involvement with Kent State University.

Contact Information:
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact LeAnn Starlin Nilsson at 440-503-9147 or via email at lstarli1@kent.edu. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330-672-2704.

Consent Statement and Signature:
I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to grant permission for my child to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

_____ _____

Parental Signature **Date**

APPENDIX I

CODING METHOD FOR INTERVIEWS & ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

APPENDIX I

Coding Method for Interviews & Archival Documents

1. Transcribe and summarize each interview.

2. Define, find, and mark relevant concepts, themes, events, examples, names, places or dates in the codes.

3. From across interviews, find the excerpts marked with the same code and sort them into a single data file, then summarize the contents of each file.

4. Sort and resort the material within each file, comparing the excerpts between different subgroups and then summarize the results of each sorting.

5. After weighting different versions, integrate the descriptions from different interviews to create a complete picture.

6. Combine concepts and themes to generate your own theory to explain your descriptions you have presented. While doing so, constantly test your ideas by examining them in light of the interviews.

7. See how far your results generalize beyond the individuals and beyond.

Rubin, H.J. & Rubin, I.S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

APPENDIX J

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

APPENDIX J

Participant Profiles

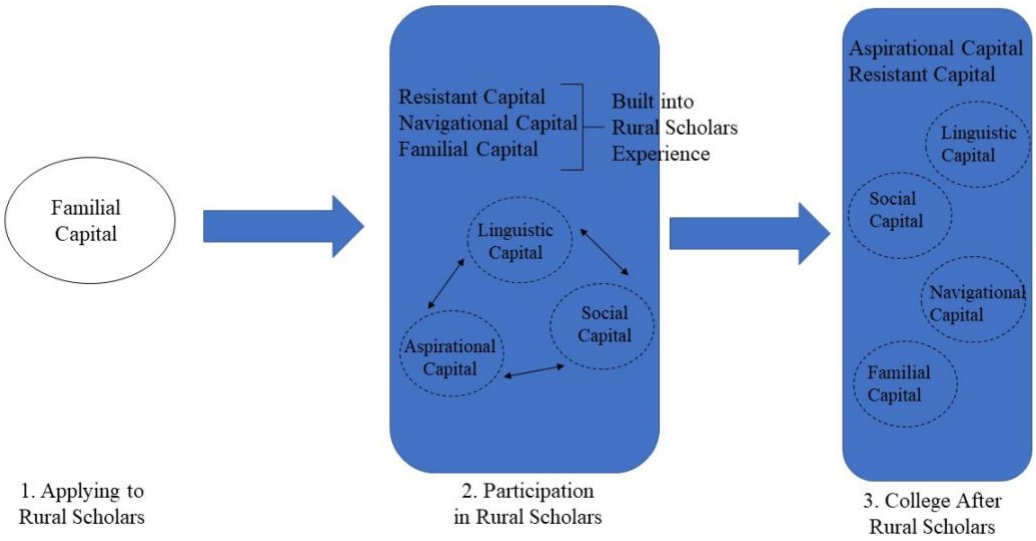
Participant Name & Age	High School or College Student	Age or Grade When Beginning Rural Scholars	Reason for Participating in Rural Scholars	Career Interest or College Major
Anna, 14	High School Student	Grade 6	Started attending workshops to learn about jobs.	Interested in theatre, wants to attend college but unsure where.
Elizabeth, 16	High School Student	Grade 7	Thought attending the program would be good for her since her parents did not attend college.	Considering medical careers but working to narrow it down.
Mary, 16	High School Student	Joined between grades 6 and 7.	Thought Rural Scholars would be a good opportunity for her future.	Started wanting to be an attorney but is considering math and science fields instead after doing career research.
Sally, 16	High School Student	Grade 6	To figure out what to do after high school and narrow down colleges.	Military or college, still unsure.
Marji, 20	College Student	Grade 7	Family hoped that her involvement in Rural Scholars would provide scholarship money.	Business Management
Emma, 19	College Student	Grade 6	Family hoped her involvement in Rural Scholars would provide scholarship money.	Early Childhood

APPENDIX K

CULTURAL CAPITAL DIAGRAM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RURAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

APPENDIX K

Cultural Capital Diagram for Participants in Rural Scholars Program



1. **Applying to Rural Scholars:** It is evident that when participants apply to the program, they are backed by strong familial capital. Each of them expressed a strong amount of support from family members that wanted them to learn more about jobs or careers, get money for college, or find a way to make a living for themselves in a career or job they desire.

2. **Participation in Rural Scholars:** Resistant capital, navigational capital, and familial capital are the foundation of the program. Program interactions and curriculum provide opportunities for the participants to develop other forms of cultural capital that are closely connected to one another, such as social capital, linguistic capital, and aspirational capital.

3. **College After Rural Scholars:** In college, the participants are embedded in aspirational capital due to their major, and navigational capital due to attending college. They now call upon forms of Community Cultural Wealth as needed to progress through their education.

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