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The 'Land of Opportunity' or the Land that Makes Us the Opportunity: An Examination of Latinx For-Profit Choice within the Central San Joaquin Valley

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THE ‘LAND OF OPPORTUNITY’ OR THE LAND THAT MAKES *US* THE OPPORTUNITY: AN EXAMINATION OF LATINX FOR-PROFIT CHOICE WITHIN THE CENTRAL SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
Dissertation Abstract

The Land of Opportunity or the Land that Makes Us the Opportunity: An Examination of Latinx For-Profit Choice within the Central San Joaquin Valley

The San Joaquin Valley in Central California is known as an abundant agricultural epicenter with an extensive history of farming, migration, and political movements. Though this geography holds a rich representation of agricultural economy, it is also the site of major inequalities and underrepresentation, especially with regard to post-secondary education within its overrepresented Latinx population. Further amplifying the inequalities around post-secondary education and Latinx's is the increasing occurrence of post-secondary enrollment into for-profit institutions by this population. Inequities associated with for-profit enrollment, such as high student loan debt and lack of career attainment, further stratify this geography classified as being in a state of poverty and having low post-secondary education (United States Census Bureau, 2018), when compared with surrounding areas. This qualitative study sought to examine the factors that that led Latinx students to enroll into for-profit institutions, as well as understand how differentiating inequities from their experiences affected their decision-making processes. Furthermore, the study sought to examine what these institutions offered or promised these individuals that subsequently led them to their enrollment choice. Utilizing a phenomenological methodology, the findings of this research demonstrated several key areas including: an overarching parental focus on labor; a limit of public-sphere secondary and post-secondary counseling support; a competitive market of for-profit institutions within the geography; and a disillusionment by for-profit institutions.

I conclude that existential inequities found within this geography act as malignant spaces for predatory propriety institutions to thrive within. As a result, these institutions thrive on the circumstances of underserved populations, subsequently stratifying and increasing these inequities via financial debt and career shortfalls. Areas for continued needed research and recommendations for practice are discussed.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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DEDICATION

To my loving wife Coco, you are the true fruition of Christ's love for me. None of this would have been possible without you. To my kids: Marc, Jessica, Nicolas, and "Guy" Joe, I'm sorry for how tough this was on all of you, and I thank you for your unconditional love and patience. To my family at Anthem Church in San Rafael California, you all helped me in one way or another, I love all of you.

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A problematic narrative

"José" was a young 18-year-old, energetic, optimistic first-generation college-bound Latinx[1] student from Madera, California. Though José had encountered academic setbacks in high-school, he had managed to find himself as a first-year freshman at a major four-year college institution in Fresno, California. José felt proud of finding himself admitted into this institution, given his high school experiences with staff. José remembers being told by his high school counselor that he might be best served pursuing a vocational institution, perhaps considering electrician certification or another "good job" option post-high school; that is, one that would have high likelihood of placement into a lucrative career and short training period. José's counselor even once told him: "Just to prove college might not be the best fit for you, you should try the city college for a semester or two, you'll see." At the time, what further confused José was that his parents absolutely agreed with his counselor, as they would say: "*Sí, mijo, que pasa si no terminas, ay que terminar con la secundaria y garar buen trabajo, no*?" (Translated: "That's right son, what happens if you don't finish college, it's better to finish high school and find a good job, right?"). José felt accomplished and on top of the world, until the end of his first year when his father's health took a turn for the worse. José was

[1] Latinx is a gender-neutral term that is often used in lieu of the term Latino or Latina, typically referencing Latin American racial identity.

forced to withdraw since he could not maintain the full-time class schedule, with work in the evenings and help with his father at the same time.

Several years later, José found himself unhappy amidst a public-serving city career. He felt he had no choice but to take the job for financial reasons. One day, José saw a television advertisement, where the actor, played by a young Latinx male, was explaining his "testimony" to viewers about how this college institution changed his life. He described how he was now able to take care of his family and "give-back" to his parents and "take care of them." Jose had no idea that this institution was a for-profit college, moreover, Jose really didn't know the difference between a for-profit college and not-for-profit college for that matter. All Jose knew, at the time, was that he wanted to go back to school, and *become* the actor he saw on the screen.

Feeling a spark of encouragement, and having nobody to tell him otherwise, José drove down to the large for-profit institution and inquired. What José experienced once he walked in the door was all but a structured, fine-tuned, well-oiled "process" that transformed his inquiry into an enrollment. All of José's concerns were addressed immediately, as though rehearsed, playing out as such between himself and the intake counselor:

> Jose: How long will this program take?
> Counselor: You can be done in anywhere from 3 years to 18 months; it's up to how hard you want to work.
> Jose: How much will this cost?
> Counselor: It's pricey, but don't worry we will help you apply for financial aid and loans if need be.
> Jose: How often do I need to be on campus? I work long shifts a few days a week.

> Counselor: Totally up to you, you can either come to campus 2-3 days a week in the evenings, or attend completely online. This program is tailored for hard-working people like yourself.

Unfortunately, experiences such as José's are all too common, especially within Latinx populations where sibling, communal, and parental collegiate experience is lacking. What Jose would later learn, is that the ease of the onboarding process would quickly redirect into mountains of tuition monies spent, along with the encountered difficulties of finding a job that would consider his education *real*.

As you may or may have not guessed by now, I am José (Joe). At the summation of my for-profit college experience, I felt short-handed and somewhat embarrassed over where I currently found myself. I felt embarrassed primarily due to my job-seeking encounters, where I was regularly met with closed doors once the prospective employer would find out that I was a graduate of a large for-profit institution. Simultaneously, at this point in my life, I was reuniting with former colleagues from high school who were graduating from public and private institutions, both in-state and abroad. I recall being met with the common iterance of "oh" when I would address their question of where I recently graduated from. Based on their facial expressions, tone, and body posture, I concluded that they disapproved or thought less of this particular institution. Ironically, the only job I was able to secure, even after endless interviews, was at a for-profit institution in San Francisco, California. I can say that this shame followed me to my new profession, given that I did not believe in, nor trust, the education I was selling to prospective students, but I had a family to take care of.

After tireless searches and networking, I was able to gain a professional mentor who worked for a local private-not-for-profit institution, and, I held aspirations to work

for this institution for quite some time. Through careful mentorship and with his guidance, I was able to gain employment at this institution, subsequently escaping the for-profit machine, but not without its costs. Specifically, I had a hard time adapting to my new position, as this new institution operated as one of higher learning, that is student focused, not a business machine that held me to meet sales quotas. My supervisor would continuously find the need to tell me to "calm down, you don't have to try to talk the student into applying; we're here to answer questions for them, not close them." Simultaneously, and also with my mentor's guidance, I decided to pursue another Master's degree, and subsequent doctoral degree at the University of San Francisco. Both programs, I felt, played pivotal roles in my new-found passion for post-secondary student service, as the programs focused on equity and social justice. Still, were my experiences a lost cause? Were these experiences for nothing? No! I intend to utilize them as a catalyst.

Depending on where an individual is from, they may consider it concerning that this place, the Central San Joaquin Valley (CSJV) located across several counties in central California, holds: high for-profit education presence; low post-secondary education attainment and completion; high rates of poverty, and abnormally high geographical inequities with accessibility to public four-year colleges. Likewise, that same individual may find my story (above) concerning, that is, they may ask: why did his high school counselor tell him that; why would his mom only encourage him to graduate high school and find a job; how could this young man 'fall' for the trickery of that for-profit commercial; wasn't there anyone to tell him not to go to that school; etc. What I can tell you is that stories like mine, are overrepresented within the CSJV. These types of inequities and hard life realities exist, and they exist in plentiful amounts. This same

individual may be more shocked to learn that there are nearly four times (15) as many state prisons in the eight counties that make up the CSJV, then there are public four-year institutions (4) (Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation, 2018; California State University, 2018). How can it be, this individual may ask, that Fresno, California, a populous of nearly three-quarters of a million people (USCB, 2018), only have one state four-year public institution, that by the way is impacted[2]? But, by the same measure, Fresno, California has three major for-profit institutions, one of which is the largest chain in the world, and dozens upon dozens of vocational schools? Needless to say, I can continue listing these abnormally critical facts, but, similarly to the final line from the movie *A Bronx Tale*, spoken by the character '*C*', which was: "but you can ask anybody from my neighborhood, and they'll just tell you this is just another Bronx tale" (author, 1993), you can ask anyone from the Central Valley, and they'll just tell you: this is just life in the Valley.

As the above narrative shows, a myriad of critical issues exists within the geographic region of the CSJV. However, my critical issue focuses around the realm of for-profit colleges and the Latinx populations who chose to attend them. You may see the word problem in the chapter title of this section, but to be clear, the problem was not their (students') choice, but the social and geographical circumstances of these students that led them to that choice; that is my issue. The best method of comprehending the following sections of this issue is through a political geography lens. A practical or even historical assumption of the word *political geography* might lead you to the conclusion that this has to do with politics; however, this definition has changed its dominant

[2] California State University term for a college that is continuously at capacity enrollment, or overenrolled.

meaning over time. For the purposes of this research and the description of this issue, political geography can be defined as the social and economic differences between places, without necessarily ascribing these to physical differences (Agnew & Muscara, 2012). In line with political geographies, the review of this problem attempts to unpack the understanding of power and place along with the systematic issues at play within this geography of people.

In an effort to understand the systematic issues shaping for-profit college choice within the CSJV by Latinx students, we need to examine several realms of the problem, including: the presence of for-profit institutions in the CSJV, the overrepresentation of Latinxs in the CSJV, the Latinx gap in college enrollment and completion within the CSJV, Latinx college choice, and the integrations of inequities by geography within the CSJV.

For-profit colleges in California's San Joaquin Valley

A for-profit institution can be defined as an institution that is privately funded and aims to generate profit by offering post-secondary degrees and credentials (Iloh, 2014). For-profit students, statistically speaking, tend to be older, female, students of color, and come from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds and undereducated familial backgrounds as compared to students in not-for-profit institutions (Iloh & Terney, 2013). Nearly 96% of for-profit students acquire student loans (Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee [HELP], 2012). In comparison, just 13% of students at community colleges, 48% at four-year public and 57% at four-year private nonprofits acquire student loans (HELP, 2012). Furthermore, while the average for-profit graduate owes nearly $30,000 *more* than those in other institution types, interestingly, this same figure is the

median *total* amount borrowed for 25% of students who graduated from a private non-profit, and 12% of the students who graduated from the public sector (HELP, 2012).

For-profit institutions can cause inequity amongst Latinx populations within the CSJV, given that they can lead to severe financial indebtedness amongst its alumni, or to those who do not finish at all. According to a 2017 *U.S. News and World Report*, the five universities that produced the greatest number of dropouts with debt in 2016 were all for-profit institutions, including University of Phoenix (avg. debt: $7,843), ITT Technical Institute (avg. debt: $9,500), Ashford University (avg. debt: $4,750), Kaplan University (avg. debt: $6,837), and DeVry University ($13,843). Regarding gainful employment after program completion, findings show that nearly six years after enrollment, for-profit students have higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than their peers who attended non-profit and public institutions (*Harvard Law Review*, 2015). Likewise, findings also show that employers find graduates of for-profit, or online, degrees least desirable to hire (*Chronicle of Higher Education.*, 2012).

When compared to public California community college availability (n=7), as well as public four-year institution availability (n=4), there are far more for-profit institutions within the CSJV than any other institution type (n=40) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018) (See Appendix A). Of the 40 NCES *registered* for-profit institutions located within the CSJV, nearly 38% (n=15) are registered as Medical/Clinical Assisting schools and nearly 35% (n=14) are registered as Cosmetology schools (See Appendix A). This reality is even more concerning when we consider the fact that these NCES registration indicators are misleading, since these institutions are only registered as institutions that qualify for the use of federal financial aid. In fact, the

CSJV is populated with a plethora of small *mom-and-pop* vocational schools that offer private third-party loans, often at higher interest rates than that of federal funding (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). In addition to these 40-registered for-profit institutions, along with the numerous unregistered ones, are for-profit super-systems that are registered in states outside of California but with locations represented within the CSJV, including: DeVry University, University of Phoenix, and Kaplan University (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2018).

Previous findings indicate that for-profit super-systems, like these, tend to focus on industry-specific programs, based on the regions job-market demand (Mannapperuma, 2015). These vocational intensive for-profit institutions deprive Latinxs of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and liberal arts specializations, as embodied by public and non-profit institutions (Iloh, 2014), subsequently affecting their career trajectories and possibilities. Given the issue of overrepresented for-profit institutions within the CSJV and the ability of these institutions to cause inequity amongst Latinxs, an appendable issue of noteworthiness is the overrepresentation of Latinx populations within this region.

The Latinx presence in the CSJV

California's San Joaquin Central Valley is known as an agriculturally abundant epicenter, located within a central 250-mile stretch of the state's inner valley. Holding a population of nearly three million residents, the valley is comprised of eight counties, including: San Joaquin; Kings; Fresno; Kern; Merced; Stanislaus; Madera; and Tulare (San Joaquin Valley Fact Sheet, 2016). Latinxs are overrepresented in the region as compared to the rest of the state. The California Senate Office of Research (2016)

contends that as of 2016, Latinxs comprised approximately 38% of the California population set, with a projected growth upwards of 41% by the year 2020. A majority of the surrounding counties of the CSJV (Image A) hold noticeably lower rates of *Hispanic or Latinx* populations, including: Sacramento 23.0%, Amador 13.6%, Calaveras 11.6%, Tuolumne 12.2%, Mariposa 11.0%, Mono 27.7%, Inyo 21.4%, San Luis Obispo 22.3%, Santa Clara 25.9%, Alameda 22.5%, and Contra Costa 25.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016, County Quick fact sheet) (See Appendix B). However, as of 2016, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the following *Hispanic or Latinx* population characteristics held true by Central San Joaquin county: San Joaquin 41.20%; Kings 54.20%; Fresno 52.80%; Kern 52.80%; Merced 58.90%; Stanislaus 45.60 %; Madera 57.40 %; and Tulare 64.10%. Seemingly, the CSJV is densely comprised of *Latinx* populations and as discussed previously, of for-profit institutions. Given the overrepresentation of for-profit institutions and the overrepresentation of Latinx's within the CSJV, an additional issue comes to fruition; that is, the systematic educational gaps that lead to these types of institutions, including high school-to-college enrollment, four-year institution completion, and California community college transfer rates.

The Latinx gap in college enrollment in the CSJV

According to the *Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU),* as of 2017, the CSJV holds eight recognized public Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), including: CSU Bakersfield, CSU Fresno, CSU Stanislaus, Bakersfield College, Kern Community College, West Hills College-Coalinga, West Hills College-Lemoore, and UC Merced. Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI's) can be defined as colleges and universities, wherein the total Latinx enrollment constitutes a minimum of 25% of the total enrollment

(HACU, 2018). Though these HSI's would be best suited for meeting the cultural, sociological, psychological, and academic needs of Latinx populations (Fryar, 2015) as well as providing an affordable vessel towards a college degree (Fryar, 2015), an entry gap exists (CPEC,2015). Adding to the fact that Latinxs are overrepresented within the CSJV when compared to the rest of the state counties is that Latinxs are underrepresented with regard to secondary-to-post-secondary transition, especially with regard to California's public institutions like CSUs, UCs, and California's Community Colleges (CPEC, 2015). According to the *College Postsecondary Education Commission* (CPEC), of the 2010 Latinx high school graduating pool in California, only 39% transitioned into a public university setting, including California Community Colleges (CCCs), California State Universities (CSUs), or Universities of California (UCs) (CPEC, 2015). Furthermore, of the 39%, 25% transitioned into CCC's, 10% transitioned into CSU's, and only 3.8% transitioned to a UC (CPEC, 2015).

These findings leave an imminent gap; wherein a majority of Latinxs are not entering the California public post-secondary system immediately after high school and instead either: (a) attempt to return to school later as a non-traditional student, (b) enter a private non-profit university, (c) enter a private for-profit university, or (d) do not return to or start college at all. These types of systematic gaps not only affect Latinxs who are in high school but relatedly even affect Latinxs who enter a public post-secondary institution.

Gaps in Latinx post-secondary completion

Even when Latinxs actually enroll into a public four-year institution within the CSJV, they are severely underrepresented with regard to college completion (Contreras &

Contreras, 2015). Graduation rates are significantly impacted for California State University Latinx students, for instance, with six-year graduation rates of: 46% at CSU Bakersfield, 38% at CSU Fresno, and 40% at CSU Stanislaus (CSU, 2017). Troubling statistics also arise when we examine the Latinx completion rates within CCCs. Latinxs are severely underrepresented with regard to college transfer or completion within this realm as well. In 2015, The *California Community College Data Mart* (2015) tracked a 2005 cohort's *completion/SPAR* rate (that is, whether the student completed their two-year program or transferred to another institution) and found that on average, six years after enrolling, nearly 80% of Latinx students failed to complete their respective program or to transfer to a university (Moore & Shulock, 2010).

Latinxs within the CSJV are underrepresented with regards to college entry from secondary schooling and are underrepresented with regards to college completion within four and two-year institutions alike. These gaps are often the product of systematic failures that do not know how to support underrepresented populations of color, such as Latinxs. However, pathways into for-profit institutions are not always the fruition of the aforementioned educational gaps, as increasing numbers of Latinxs are transferring into these institutions from California community colleges.

Community college transfer pathways into for-profit institutions

An increasing number of Latinxs are transferring into for-profit institutions from California community colleges (Moore & Shulock, 2010). In fact, Latinxs hold the second highest population percentage, by race/ethnicity, with regard to California

community college-to-for profit transfer rates (Moore & Shulock, 2010). These rates are significantly concerning when compared to other race/ethnicity populations transferring into for profit institutions from California community colleges, with example rates of: Black transfer students (19%); Latinx transfer students (16%); White transfer students (8%); and API Transfer students (7%).

A probable cause of the increasing growth in transfers to for-profit colleges may include several systematic failures, including: capacity constraints within CSU and UC campuses due to budgetary restrictions; complex transfer requirements into CSU and UC systems; and even recruitment efforts led by for-profit institutions (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). Still, the necessity of understanding Latinx for-profit college choice calls for the understanding of Latinx choice influences, including, familial, social, and external.

Latinx for-profit choice

A theme develops within previous research as to why Latinxs *might* decide to enroll or transition into a for-profit, which *may* include the influence of the following aspects of their experience, to be explained more in-depth in this section, including: (a) parental school involvement; (b) parental education attainment; (c) familial influence; (d) communal influence; and (e) for-profit institutional recruitment (Iloh, 2014). Latinx parental support and aspirations of their children going to college have long been identified as being key factors to initiating the urgency of going to college for Latinx students (Carolan-Silva & Reyes, 2013). However, those students identified as *less likely* to have parental support or engagement were found to be *more* likely to enroll into a for-profit institution. Parental school engagement also has been correlated to Latinx

collegiate pursuit and enrollment (Carolan-Silva & Reyes, 2013; Oseguera & Malagon 2011). Similarly, Latinx students who had parent(s) who *were not* engaged in schooling were found to be *more* likely to enroll into a for-profit institution (Perez & Ceja, 2015). Thus, parental involvement plays a seminal role with regard to understanding Latinx college choice; however, other spheres of social influence come into play as well.

In the instance that a parent has no college experience, Latinxs are more likely to turn to siblings and peers for collegiate advice (Perez & Ceja, 2015). Relatedly, Latinxs are more likely to enroll into a for-profit institution if they have a sibling or peer currently attending that institution (Munoz & Rincon, 2015). Parental, sibling, and peer networks aside, one of the biggest influences of Latinxs' decision to enroll into for-profit institutions is the institutions themselves, via recruitment and outreach (Iloh, 2014). Findings show that a Latinx's chances of enrolling into a for-profit institution increase if they visit the institution's website by 27%, but increase significantly by 359% if they actually meet with an institution representative (Oseguera & Malagon 2011). When a Latinx meets with a campus representative, having no other form of college information, he or she is susceptible to the manipulations of the institution and make their choice based on the limited information at their disposal. As the aforementioned identifies, a multitude of parental, social, and institutional influences may affect Latinx choice processing; however, a related issue that comes into fruition, especially in the CSJV, is inequality by geography.

Where Latinxs live matters

Though previous studies have examined the geographical effects of inequality (Briggs & Wilson, 2005; Rothwell & Massey, 2015; Stewart, Stewart, & Simons, 2007), Nicholas Hillman and Taylor Wichman (2016) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison have coined and expanded on the realm of the "*education desert*" (p. 5). The fundamental ideology behind the concept of the *educational desert* is that *place* and *proximity* matter with specific regard to collegiate opportunity. Viewing collegiate opportunity through the traditional lens of *process* versus *geography* can perpetuate malignant spaces for continued inequities to occur when considering higher education policy (Hillman & Wichman, 2016).

Students who work full-time, have families, are older, or are members of racial/ethnic minority groups tend to be more affected by geography and proximity to collegiate opportunities (Hillman & Wichman, 2016). Additionally, systematic patterns exist along lines of race and class, wherein counties with "larger Hispanic populations, and lower educational attainment levels, tend to have more two-year colleges, but fewer four-year colleges nearby" (Hillman & Wichman, 2016, p. 43). Similarly, Turley (2009) highlights that students who enroll into a two-year college on average live closer to a two-year college than a four-year college; students who enroll into a four-year college on average live closer to a four-year college than a two-year college; and students who do not enroll into any college on average live the farthest away from either college group. In many places across the country, there are no colleges whatsoever or college options are severely scarce. In fact, not all communities have equal chances of having a college

nearby. Hillman (2016) has labeled these education-desolate zones as ‘‘*education deserts*,” which are “disproportionately located in the nation’s poorest and most racially minoritized communities” (p. 988).” An example of the aforementioned community groups, or region for that matter, is the CSJV.

Given that merely three CSU campuses are serving the CSJV, which include CSU Bakersfield, CSU Fresno, and CSU Stanislaus (CSU Department of Analytic Studies, 2014), one UC campus (UC Merced), and a handful of community colleges, it *may* be safe to classify the CSJV as an *educational desert*. With regard to Hillman’s (2016) contention on the correlation of these *educational deserts* centrally located within the nation’s poorest and racially minoritized communities, it is important to note that as of 2016, the eight counties within the CSJV hold an average *Median Household Income* (2012-2016) of $47,819.50 USD (San Joaquin: 55,045, Stanislaus: 51,591, Merced: 44,397, Madera: 45,742, Fresno: 45,963, Kings 47,241, Tulare: 42,789, and Kern: 49,788) (U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts by county table, 2016) (See Appendix C). Similarly, as of 2016 the eight counties within the CSJV hold an average *Persons in poverty* percent of 19.98% (San Joaquin: 41.60%, Stanislaus: 14.50%, Merced: 20.30%, Madera: 20.40%, Fresno: 25.50%, Kings 17.40%, Tulare: 24.70%, and Kern: 22.40% (U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts by county table, 2016) (See Appendix C).

Geographic distance inequities exist within the CSJV with regards to access to the nearest four-year university. Specifically, of the 71 cities (See Appendix D) located within the CSJV, the following percentages hold true to having a commuting distance of *over 50 miles* to the nearest four-year public institution within the CSJV: distance to CSU Fresno 77% of cities; distance to CSU Bakersfield 86% of cities; distance to CSU

Stanislaus 69% of cities; and distance to UC Merced 75% of cities (Google MAPS, 2018) (See Appendix D). As the aforementioned identifies, the CSJV can be classified as an inequitable geography, with scarce educational resources in its proximities, thereby classifying it as an educational desert.

The aforementioned sections have identified several problems within the CSJV, which can create continued inequities towards its Latinx populations of college-bound students. First, the issue of the overrepresentation of for-profit institutions in the CSJV is eminent, and growing (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). These types of institutions cause academic and financial barriers on Latinx populations, as well as their prospectus for career opportunities (Iloh, 2014). Similarly, the fact that Latinxs are overrepresented within the CSJV is problematic, given the systematic failures that are related to educational gaps into college for this population, in higher numbers, when compared with other populations (Moore & Shulock, 2010; Contreras & Contreras, 2015). These systematic failures can, similarly, be supplemented by not only a lack of legacy college experience and social influence, but by institutional influencers as well (Oseguera & Malagon 2011; Iloh, 2014). Likewise, these institutional influencers hold more opportunity, given the scare availability of public four-year education in the valley, due not only to capacity and budgetary issues, but proximity issues as well.

The above-referenced issues cause a perfect storm of inequitable constraints that negatively affect prospective college-bound Latinx populations, within the CSJV. Similarly, these identified systematic gaps in supporting Latinx students are amplified given the integrated inequalities by geography, within the Central San Joaquin Valley.

What the perfect storm means for Latinxs in the CSJV

What we've identified in the above sections mark the opportunity, or the living conditions, for opportunistic actors like for-profit institutions to prey on and subjugate Latinx populations within this geography, that is, a *The Perfect Storm*[3]. Why? As Professor Tressie Cottom explains in her work *Lower Ed-The Troubling Rise of For-profit Colleges in the New Economy*: "Lower Ed [for-profit institutions] is, first and foremost, a set of institutions organized to commodify social inequalities and make no social contributions beyond the assumed indirect effect of greater individual human capital (pg. 13)." What can this mean to Latinxs living in the CSJV? Well, a lot, considering that: nearly 20% of the Valley lives in poverty; there is an overrepresentation of Latinxs; an underrepresentation of public four-year institutions; and an overrepresentation of for-profit institutions.

A partial hazard of the *storm* includes financial implications on Latinxs, given the extreme indebtedness, from high tuition rates, that these institutions cause on their students, even with a large majority of them not completing their programs (*Chronicle of Higher Education.*, 2012). For-profit institutions, specifically, are the institutions whose tuition rates appear to be "pegged to maximum student loan limits, arguably to extract as much profit from students who can borrow the most because they have the least amount of assets and the fewest college choices (Cottom, 2017, pg. 13)." Let us unpack that last quote: "the least amount of assets." To reiterate, the median *household* income (between 2012-2016) in the CSJV was $47,819.50 USD, and nearly 20% live in poverty (USCB, 2018). Now, let us unpack the next portion of the quote: "the fewest college choices."

[3] A particularly bad or critical state of affairs, arising from a number of negative factors (non-meteorological)

Given the fact that the CSJV can be considered and *Educational Desert* (See Chapter 2), with regards to accessible public four-year institutions within commuting distance, options become a malignant space for these businesses (for-profits) to flourish. Within *educational desserts*, for-profit colleges and vocational programs, quite simply, "become a way of life (Cottom, 2017, pg. 92)." Still, let's say there are some cases (much like myself) wherein some students finish their program, what then? Experimental studies have found that students with for-profit credentials listed on their resume, or job application, are as likely to receive a call-back from an employer as someone with only a high school diploma (Cottom, 2017). This notion of employability becomes problematic as it creates a recursive funnel back to: (a) high tuition debt; (b) the inability to pay that debt; (c) the continuous temporal growth of that debt via interest; and (d) the possible seizure of assets for defaulting on that debt (e.g. levies, check garnishment). Therefore, this maximum financial extraction guarantees the continued financial slavery of Latinxs attending these institutions within the Valley, should they fail to graduate, or not find a job, which most do not (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2015)

To separate from the above financial implications, partially, is the critical consequence on wellbeing and way-of-life. Implications of carrying high debt not only can have practical financial implications, but also health and mental implications. Furthermore, the inability to obtain a career in a field one has invested substantially in: temporally, monetarily, and especially within a familial realm, may hold strong mental implications including: stress; depression, as well an unknown array of medical conditions. Additionally, integrated stressors and adversities such as these can have long term effects on not only the individual, but also their families (e.g. divorce, broken child

relationships). Note: I purposely do not cite any research in the above claims on purpose, given that I, first-hand, have witnessed these occurrences within personal networks of close colleagues and friends who have encountered these effects, post for-profit life. This portion is a tribute to you, I hear your struggles, I've seen what you have gone through, and I will never leave your side, friends (For: M, L, A, M, B, V).

Background and Need for the Study

Latinxs are the fastest growing racial minority population within the United States (Perez & Ceja, 2016). As of 2012 Latinxs, ages 18-24, for the first time, surpassed white counterparts as the largest racial/ethnic group enrolled within a post-secondary institution (Perez & Ceja, 2016). However, of the Latinx population that enrolled into college, only 56% enrolled into a four-year institution, versus 72% of their white peers. These findings agree with previous research, that a majority of Latinx's begin their college career at community colleges (Fry & Taylor, 2014). Though Latinx's tend to begin their post-secondary career at a community college, for a majority, that is where it ends, that is, they do not finish or transfer out (Nunez & Elizondo, 2013). In the instance that Latinxs transfer out of a community college, specifically a CCC, an increasing percentage (16%) is enrolling into for-profit institutions (California Community College Data Mart, 2015), which are overrepresented within the CSJV while public four-year institutions are underrepresented. Findings indicate that Latinx students are more likely to enroll into a for-profit institution after visiting their website, or especially, when meeting with an institutional representative (Iloh, 2014; Oseguera & Malagon 2011). For-profit institutions have long indebted their underrepresented student populations, and muddled their career pathways simultaneously (*Harvard Law Review*, 2015; *Chronicle of Higher*

Ed., 2012). Simultaneously, geographic inequities exist within the CSJV that stratify college access to Latinx populations via long commuting distances to their nearest four-year public institution. These geographic inequities incubate opportunistic regimes, like for-profit institutions, that thrive on the business opportunity of need and demand via the provision of *education for sell*. Therefore, research is needed to further extract why and how Latinxs within the Central San Joaquin Valle, are coming to their for-profit enrollment decision and how these decisions are shaped by inequities within their region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to develop a better understanding around the effects of geographies of inopportunity on Latinx students' college choices within the CSJV, as well as how recruitment practices at for-profit institutions intersect with the broader [in]opportunistic structures within this region. Along with the concept of geographies of [in]opportunity, this study will integrate a neoliberal lens in an effort to identity how these experiences have shaped the college-choice process for CSJV Latinx students, specifically, into for-profit institutions.

Additionally, I hope to capture and amplify the intersections of geographies of inopportunity with other forces of inequity within this region that are further amplifying the adversities this population faces with regards to college choice. Lastly, I hope to understand what for-profit institutions are offering, or promising (in person or via

advertisement) Latinx students, in an effort to recruit them to their institutions, as well as how these practices intersect with broader [in] opportunistic structures within the CSJV. By identifying and understanding the aforementioned attributes and choice-processes that lead CSJV Latinx students into for-profit institutions, I hope to challenge the policies and conditions that shape these choices in an effort to mitigate these inequities for Latinx students within the CSJV.

Research Questions

Following the phenomenological approach, this study situates the research through the eyes of its participants and answers its questions through that lens. Thus, the following research questions will guide the inquiry of this study:

1) What factors play into for-profit college enrollment for Latinxs in the CSJV?
2) How do inequities from different experiences and opportunities shape these decisions?
3) What do the *narratives* of Latinx alumni from for-profit institutions reveal about attributes that for-profit institutions offered or promised them that led them to their choice?

Theoretical Framework

The framework of this research exists in two parts. First, I utilize neoliberalism as a theoretical framework for viewing the experiences and findings within this study's qualitative data. This theoretical underpinning serves as an appropriate means of understanding larger systemic occurrences and inequities, as they relate to this research. Secondly, I utilize the concept of political geography as a conceptual lens to ascribe the dispersion of power as well as occurrence of inequities, as they relate to geographical spaces. This conceptual underpinning serves as a means of understanding these findings through their specific existences within given geographies of examination, in this case, specifically within the CSJV.

Neoliberalism

The formation and existence of capitalistic regimes at the expense of prospective Latinx student populations, deriving from intersectional geographic inequalities, provides a prolific environment for the emergence of neoliberalism and its actors. Lipman (2011) contends that neoliberalism has not only defined the social paradigm for the past several decades, but also in effect holds historically-generated state strategies to manage structural crises of capitalism and the provision of new accumulation-centered

opportunities for capital (p. 6). Lipman (2011) describes a neoliberal regime as an ensemble of economic, social, governmental, actors paired with ideologies that promote individual self-interest, unrestricted capital, reduced labor-cost, and sharp "cut-back" of the public sphere (p. 17).

Lippman (2011) further argues that neoliberalism "champions the privatization of social goods and withdrawal of government from provision of social welfare on the premise that competitive markets are more effective and efficient" (p. 7). Taylor (2003) ascribes the conceptualization of the neoliberal lens as an imaginary "social image," wherein we as ordinary societal actors "imagine" our world, meaning the common understandings (myths or stories), that we share and subsequently believe for the overall legitimization of the particular social order. In essence, the overarching power schema of neoliberalism lies within the saturation of social ideologies and social consciousness, making it difficult for societal actors to reimagine otherwise. Relatedly, with regard to the saturation of social ideologies, neoliberalism platforms construct people of color as the "undeserving poor"), lazy, pathological, and welfare dependent) and feeds key governmental policy makers with agenda rationale to retrench or altogether eliminate government-funded social programs, subsequently eliminating state responsibility for social welfare (Katz, 1989).

Funneling-down the neoliberal agenda towards an educational realm, Lipman (2011) argues: "the neoliberal agenda is to bring education, along with other public sectors, in line with the goals of capital accumulation and managerial governance and administration" (p. 15). According to the neoliberal regime, education is a form of human capital development, and as such, it is a private good that an individual can chose to

invest towards one's child or oneself in an effort to “add value” and increase an individual's worth within the labor sphere, not for personal growth or social good (p. 15). Ong (2007) coined the term “self-mastery” with specific regard to neoliberalism, wherein the actors of the regime promise freedom through self-governance and “requires people to be free and self-managing in different spheres of everyday life—health, education, bureaucracy, the professions, etc.” (p. 4).

Goldberg (2009) adds that neoliberalism manages the purported problem of race via the promissory dream of increased freedom and opportunity via a market driven by “choice and efficiency rather than racial ideology or allegiance (pg.14).” Melamed (2011) contends that neoliberalism’s “multicultural racialization” has made the aforementioned types of disparity appear “fair” by integrating racialized privilege as a causation to neoliberalism’s beneficial actors and purporting a racialized stigma to its deprived actors. Specifically, neoliberalism has labeled its beneficial actors as multicultural, reasonable, law-abiding, and “good” global citizens however, it has also labeled its deprived actors as devalued, monocultural, backward, weak, irrational, and unfit global citizens, specifically due to their lack of neoliberal subjectivity (Melamed, 2011).

Neoliberalism in higher education

Relatable to Lipman’s (2011) notion of new accumulation-centered opportunities for capital within neoliberalism, Giroux (2014) argues that these realms exist within higher education as well. As an example, Giroux (2014) contends that even pragmatic

traditions like standardized testing and skill-based instruction are leading to the destruction of education, as the format has shifted from a critical to a conformity model which negatively affects students. Seemingly, these conformities ascribe to what's best for capital accumulation and institutional standing, versus the higher education and social welfare of the student. Furthermore, Giroux argues that "higher education matters only to the extent that is promotes natural prosperity and drives economic growth, innovation, and transformation" (Giroux, 2014, pg. 58). Inevitably, the mere existence of politics surrounding education and funding subsequently eliminate opportunities for growth in higher education, for the field and the student (Giroux, 2014). Giroux's (2012) contentions are especially relatable to for-profit institutions given that he considers academics as "public intellectuals responsible for protecting the purpose and meaning of education in a society becoming increasingly focused on labor" (pg. 36).

The realm of economic growth and production, with higher education as a vessel, is also similarly contended by Slaughter and Rhoades (2009), who hold that the neoliberal state "focuses not on social welfare for the citizenry as a whole but on enabling individuals as economic actors" (pg. 38). Moreover, Slaughter and Rhoades (2009), are directly concerned with the fact that academia research, at large, is now steered with capitalistic undertones that are more concerned with the University's economic return (e.g. patents, funding, ranking) than the academic values of knowledge at large. The subsequent result, as the researchers have coined, is an "academic capitalist regime" (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009, p. 87). Though the work Slaughter and Rhoades (2009) have contributed may not necessarily relate to for-profit institutions at large, given their lack of research undertaking (Iloh, 0214), their capitalistic contentions of academia

provide a beneficial lens to view these institutions through, given the specific focus of for-profits around capital accumulation and labor.

The work of Saunders (2007) directly integrates as a viable framework within which to view for-profit institutions. Saunders (2007) contends that from a neoliberal lens, education is increasingly dominated by individualistic goals and benefits wherein students become consumers of an educational product. Furthermore, education is no longer seen as a social good with intrinsic value, but is instead seen as a commodity that a student purchases, for his or her own good (Saunders, 2007). This very capital, that is purchased by the student (their education), is believed to increase their human capital, thus enabling them to pursue a better job, salary, and life.

Political geography

As previously mentioned, the term *political geography* might imply that the content in question is related to politics; however, this definition has changed its dominant meaning over time. For the purposes of this research and the description of this issue, political geography can be defined as the social and economic differences between places, without necessarily ascribing these to physical differences (Agnew & Muscara, 2012). Furthermore, political geography has moved from attempting to explain politics (which it can still be used for) toward being a tool for understanding the distribution and organization of power across geographical scales through the geographical imaginations, groups, affiliations, and agency of people engaged in everyday struggles and conflicts (Agnew & Muscara, 2012). For the purposes of this research, political geography is utilized to understand the organization and power of for-profit institutions, as they relate to their marketable influences within the CSJV region specifically. Moreover, this

framework is used to understand the effects of these markets as they relate to a specific group of people within the region, Latinxs.

Limitations and Delimitations

The underlying catalyst for this research encompasses the examinations of Latinx for-profit alumni's decision-making processes with regard to choosing for-profit institutions within the CSJV (California). The study focuses on for-profit Latinx alumni that reside within the eight CSJV counties, which include: San Joaquin; Kings; Fresno; Kern; Merced; Stanislaus; Madera; and Tulare (San Joaquin Valley Fact Sheet, 2016). The study also solely focuses on alumni of for-profit institutions and exclude alumni of non-profit institutions. However, future research is urgently needed within the examination of non-profit institutions, as many have been found to operate like for-profit degree mills (Iloh, 2014) (Oseguera & Malagon 2011) (*Harvard Law Review*, 2015). A second area of noteworthiness is the possibility of author bias, in that I am an alumnus of the largest private for-profit university in the United States, where I received both undergraduate (BS) and graduate (MBA) degrees. I attempt to account for author bias via the utilization of peer review when analyzing and compounding my thematic narrative findings.

Educational Significance

This study aims to meet the additional need for research regarding Latinx for-profit institution choice. Though previous literature resides around Latinx for-profit choice (Iloh, 2014) (Hillman & Wichman, 2016), few examine thematic narratives derived from qualitative study, using extant quantitative data (Hillman & Wichman, 2016) or survey methods (Iloh, 2014) (Oseguera & Malagon 2011). Likewise, this study

aims to focus on the Latinx experiences of alumni located within the CSJV, wherein, few for-profit Latinx choice inquiries have occurred. Similarly, the study aims to add to the existing literature regarding the manifestation of for-profit institutions by geography, within this underrepresented region, as well as adding to the existing literature regarding Latinx college choice in general. Additionally, this study intends to inform and address public policy regarding the need for more accessible public four-year education institutions, within the CSJV via the provision of branch campuses or online expansions. Lastly, this research strives to inform secondary counselors and post-secondary counselors alike, with regard to the support of college-bound, or potential college-bound Latinx populations.

Definition of Terms

Latinx: gender-neutral term that is often used in lieu of the term Latino or Latina, typically referencing Latin American racial identity (Princeton University Latinx Perspective Organization

,2016).

San Joaquin Central Valley: California's CSJV is comprised of eight counties, including: San Joaquin, Kings, Fresno, Kern, Merced, Stanislaus, Madera, and Tulare county. The Valley is comprised of the inner 250-mile stretch of California, extending its southern point in Bakersfield, California to its most northern point near Stanislaus, California. The CSJV holds 71 incorporated cities within its counties, with a combined populous of three million people (U.S. Census Bureaus, 2016).

For-profit Institution: A post-secondary for-profit institution is defined as a privately funded taxpaying institutional entity that generates profit by providing post-secondary degrees and or credentials and reports to stockholders (Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2012).

College Choice: The hierarchal collection of events that come to the fruition of the choice (applying, admission, and enrollment) of a post-secondary institution by a prospective student (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature employs a claim of concept (Machi & McEvoy, 2012), that is, a proposition, idea, or phenomenon that is defined and justified by expert testimony. This review of the literature identifies a justification for the need of capturing how geography of inopportunity shapes for-profit college enrollments by Latinx students, by identifying emergent gaps surrounding existing research related to Latinx for-profit choice, including: Latinx college choice, Latinx transitions into for-profit institutions from high schools and community colleges, the operation of for-profit institutions, and geographic inequalities by proximity.

Latinx College Choice

Traditional models of college choice, such as Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) model, have held previous influence over college choice research. Notably, Hossler and Gallagher's model has played a seminal role in shaping college choice research. The three-stage model includes the phases of: predisposition, which is when students make the decision to attend a postsecondary institution; search, which is when students proceed to investigate institutions and their characteristics; and ultimately choice, which is when students complete their post-secondary applications and select a particular institution. This model, and others derived from it (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; McDonough, 1997), do not adequately capture the experiences of underrepresented populations, such as Latinxs (Bergerson, 2009).

Expanded works have captured key Latinx characteristics and their effects on the college choice process, including: race and ethnicity (McDonough, Nunez, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2004); social class (Kurlaender, 2006); gender (Zarate & Gallimore, 2005),

immigration status (Perez, 2010), and Social Capital Networks (Martinez & Cervera, 2012). Conclusively, these works suggest that Latinx students often have no means of legacy information regarding college (Santos & Saenz, 2013), and often count on external resources, including high school counselors (Motel, 2012), social circle community members (Perez, 2010), and institutional actors (Perez, 2010). Though a majority of the underlying research focuses on personal characteristics and not population location, these findings do contribute to this study via key considerations when examining the Latinx populations within the Central Valley. The following sections analyze key contributions of research within the areas centering around Latinx college choice. Each section derives from thematic findings via a multitude of research. Discussed themes include: familial background, school counselors, financial, immigration, and social capital.

Familial background

Holistically, a major influencer on any individual student's college choice is their habitus, that is, their viewpoint, as to whether they see college as a realistic option, or not (Perna, 2006). An individual's habitus accounts for an individual's background characteristics, including: race, gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural and social capital (Perna, 2006). Seemingly, socioeconomic status (SES) holds major influence over a student's habitus, as SES is correlated to multiple forms of capital, which in turn, help facilitate college choice and enrollment (Nunez & Kim, 2012). Capital, with regard to the aforementioned use, can be defined as a means of assets (social, financial) that an individual can use in reciprocity, for the beneficial use of that individual (Perna, 2006). Given the association of income to education, students from higher SES backgrounds tend to have parents with a college education. Decidedly, students from higher SES

backgrounds are more likely to hold parental support with regards to finances and making decisions for college as they are more familiar with the college-going process (Santos & Saenz, 2013).

However, Latinxs are less likely to have this type of parental support, given that Latinxs, on average, tend to come from a household where neither parent holds a college degree (Santos & Saenz, 2013). Still, parental support plays a seminal role in Latinx college choice. Findings indicate that Latinx parents hold high aspirations for their children and play a crucial role of support (Perez & McDonough, 2008). In fact, parents' expectations and support of their children during the college application stage has been identified as a major indicator for college enrollment for first-generation Latinx students (Ceja, 2006). For Latinas, in particular, parents are often found to be the most important source of influence during the predisposition phase, and were who they most spoke to during the planning process.

Though previous misconceptions hold that less formally-educated households are often from backgrounds that do not value education, due to non-traditional support (e.g. savings, college planning), this is more a systematic failure than negligence (Kiyama,2010). Systematic failures occur, especially within Latinx families, given that a majority of college information disbursed is limited to local institutions, with much of the provided information stemming from individuals within their social networks (e.g. siblings, friends, social circles). Likewise, this bridge of unfamiliarity allows for the entrance of institutional actors, like college representatives, to become sole influencers on the college choice process for Latinxs (De La Rosa, 2006). Unfortunately, this reliance on limited information creates spaces for misjudging the navigation and available means of a

college education for the Latinx population, thus creating a major accessibility limitation for college-bound Latinxs.

School counselors

Though some institutional actors are meant to support underrepresented populations within secondary school (e.g. counselors), this may not always be the case. Given that most Latinxs are the first in their family to pursue a college degree, school counselors are seen as major sources of information for Latinx students (Motel, 2012). The fact that Latinx students may hold a heavy reliance on school counselors for college information is troubling, given that Latinx students tend to be concentrated within large, poor, urban, under-resourced schools where counselors are overwhelmed and tend to focus on their interpretation of the few college-bound students in their queue (Kimura-Walsh, Yamamura, Griffin, & Allen, 2009). In an effort to offload some of their workload, studies have found that school counselors have even been known to steer Latinx students towards two-year institutions immediately, or more troubling, towards for-profit institutions (Oseguera & Malagon, 2011). The iterance of inadequately pointing Latinx students towards two-year institutions and for-profit college, creates a space for inequality, given that this action deprives the Latinx student of the opportunity of choice, since these barriers enact limited college opportunities. Still, other variables exist that may cause similar inequalities with regard to Latinx college choice.

Financial Aid considerations

Finances also come into play with regard to Latinx college choice and process. Seemingly, rising tuition costs have been found to increase reliance on financial aid, thus creating an influence on specific college choice (Santos & Saenz, 2013). Financial considerations have been found to play a critical role in determining a first-generation Latinx's college choice (McDonough & Calderone, 2006). However, even with the integration of financial assistance, Latinx students often face substantial unmet need and are often not able to pay for college (Heller, 2005). In the cases where a Latinx student is unable to come up with the unmet need funding, they are found to either find a more affordable alternative or not enroll into an institution at all (Heller, 2005). Another common finding with regards to Latinxs and finances is the existence of misinformation. Purported findings indicate that all too often only a small amount of Latinx high school students know anything about any type of financial aid (e.g. FAFSA, grants), their parents included (Zarate & Fabienke, 2007). Given this inaccessibility to adequate financial resources and misinformation, another inequality develops for Latinx students and college choice, since these barriers create limited spaces for college choice.

Immigration status

A major segment of the Latinx population, often at the forefront of political debate over immigration policy, is composed of undocumented students. Previous studies have identified key adversities that negatively affect undocumented Latinx college pursuits. Limitations in outreach and counseling due to fears around undocumented status have created major barriers between Undocumented Latinxs and the resources and information they require to commence the college choice process (Nienhusser, 2014). Amplifying the adversities faced by this population of Latinxs is the added financial

inequality via higher out of state tuition rates due to their status (Nienhusser, 2014). Integrated and appended onto the aforementioned inequalities are the realities of the negative psychological and emotional effects on these Latinx students, created by the fear of an uncertain future within the college and job environment (Nienhusser, 2014). Though undocumented Latinxs may face similar inequalities with regard to college choice as their U.S. born counterparts, the unimaginable fear centered around access to information, added financial costs, and emotional wear create specific barriers and limitations for these students around college choice (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010).

Social capital networks

Social capital refers to networks of people and community resources who can provide support to students and communities of color as they navigate social institutions (Yosso, 2005). Social capital is a major influence on Latinx college choice, given that Latinxs, as previously stated, tend to have limited parental legacy information to depend on in regard to college. Latinxs tend to follow the patterns of chain migration for immigration via chain enrollment for college (Perez & McDonough, 2008). Chain migration, or immigration, can be defined as the process by which a group of migrants follow another group with which they are familiar (e.g., family, peers, relatives) to a new geographical destination (Perez and McDonough, 2008). Chain migration for Latinxs are shaped by their community social networks, including older siblings, friends, and peers, who tend to serve as mentors for younger Latinx students as they attempt to navigate the college-selection process (Perez, 2010). Familiarity and pre-existing college networks are also major contributors to Latinx college choice, given that most Latinx students show more interest in a college if they know someone currently at the institution (e.g. staff

members, professors, students) (Perez, 2010). These findings can create spaces for inequality toward Latinx students, since they are limiting their college selection to pools of institutions where they currently hold social capital circles.

The literature on this issue indicates that Latinx populations are seemingly dependent on social capital networks, given that in most cases their parents have no college legacy experience to contribute. Latinx students, following chain enrollment attributes, are also more likely to pursue a specific institution if they hold current social networks there, such as staff, professors, or peers. In the instances when Latinx students turn to school support, that is, school counselors, they (counselors) are often overburdened with heavy caseloads and point Latinx students towards two-year institutions or even in some cases, for-profit institutions, since Latinx students are often located within large, poor, under-resourced school settings. Based upon the aforementioned findings, eminent gaps exist in the understanding of implications on Latinx college choice and the integrational effects of geographies. Specifically, the need to understand how the aforementioned findings are impacted when rurality and inequitable geographies are integrated presents a pressing issue for Latinx communities with scarce collegiate resources nearby.

Latinx Transitions into For-Profit Institutions

An important extension to Latinx college choice, and the primary goal of this research, is understanding the choice of for-profit institutions by Latinx students. Though for-profit institutions have existed since the 1800s, the development of research to understand these institutions is tumultuous, given their limited reporting requirements (Chung, 2009). In fact, not until the Title-IV Act in 1996 were for-profit institutions held

to U.S. Department of Education reporting guidelines (Chung, 2009). This reporting deficit, scholars argue, is why most research attempts to develop findings by incorporating investigative comparisons with community colleges (Iloh, 2014). Though limited research exists within the area of Latinx for-profit choice, we will focus on findings around transitions into for-profit institutions by Latinxs at both the high school level and the community college level.

Latinx transitions into for-profit institutions from high schools

Though limited findings exist for the transition of Latinxs' into for-profit institutions from high school, several important characteristic findings exist. With regard to parental influence, Latinx students were found to be more likely to enroll into a for-profit institution if they had parents with lower educational attainment. Similarly, Latinx students were more likely to enroll into a for-profit institution if they had parents who were not engaged in their school activities. Immigration also plays a pivotal role as to whether a Latinx high school student enrolls into a for-profit institution, in that their chances of enrollment increase significantly if they entered the U.S. schooling system within middle school or later (Moore & Shulock, 2010).

Social influence also comes into play with Latinx enrollment into for-profits from high school. First, a Latinx's likelihood of enrolling into a for-profit institution increases significantly if they report having a teacher in high school that perceived them as not caring about college. From an institutional actor standpoint, a Latinx's chances of enrolling into a for-profit institution increase slightly if they visit the institutions website (27%), but increase dramatically if they visit with a college representative (359%) (Moore & Shulock, 2010). These findings coincide with research examining for-profit

choice at large, which holds that the probability of a student choosing a for-profit college is heavily influenced by socioeconomic background and parental involvement in child schooling (Chung, 2012). This literature identifies a theme of parental and social influence with regard to Latinx college choice; furthermore, it also identifies the development of malignant spaces for institutional actor influence to take advantage of Latinx students' lack of information.

Latinx transitions into for-profit institutions from community colleges

Of the total Latinx population in the United States, nearly 27.8% (14 million) live in California (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Though as of 2012 Latinxs represent the largest racial/ethnic group enrolled in college, of the totality, only 56% begin their career within a four-year institution. This fact is troubling, given that nearly 72% of their white peers begin their career within a four-year institution (Fry & Taylor, 2014). This finding contends that Latinxs are underrepresented within high school to four-year institution enrollment at large. Moreover, further deficiencies exist given that of the Latinx populations that enter community colleges, only a small percentage end up earning a bachelor's degree or are still enrolled within their four-year institution six years later. A 2010 study found that a mere 14% of Latinxs entering community colleges nationally were earning a bachelor's degree or were still enrolled within their original four-year institution six years later, when compared to their white counterparts, which showed 34% (Radford, Berkner, Wheeless, and Shepard, 2010). These figures are especially disturbing, given that within community colleges at large, a majority of Latinx's declare an intent to transfer (Gandara, Alvarado, Driscoll, & Orfield, 2012).

The California post-secondary system with the largest representation of Latinxs is the California community college system (California Community Colleges Chancellors Office, 2013). Latinxs make up nearly 35.9% of the total enrollment across the entire system (California Community Colleges Chancellors Office, 2013). Seemingly, Latinxs are not only overrepresented within California community colleges, but nationally within community college systems at large (Kurlaender, 2006). Previous findings indicate that Latinx populations attend community colleges for several reasons, including: cost, proximity to home and family, schedule flexibility, open admission, and transferable coursework to four-year institutions (Flores & Park, 2013).

In comparison with first-time university students, community college students are three times more likely to possess risk factors that negatively impact their college persistence, including: delayed start of enrollment, part-time enrollment, and working full-time (Katsinas & Tollefson, 2009). These risk factors can lead to the subsequent occurrence of Latinx students not transferring to a four-year institution and eventually dropping out altogether. In fact, when we examine Latinx *SPAR*[4] completion rates within the eight CSJV counties by community college district, we find an underrepresentation of transfer/completion by Latinxs: Kern 35.58%, Merced 33.87%, San Joaquin Delta 40.40%, Sequoias 38.61%, State Center 35.61%; West Hills 42.89%, and West Kern 25.38% (California Community College Data Mart, 2015. These dormant spaces of not completing or transferring from a community college program may provide spaces for opportunistic organizations to step in, including for-profit institutions.

[4] The SPAR rate is a California Community College indication as to whether a student has either completed their intended program, or transfer to a four-year institution.

In the instances when Latinx students transfer out of California community colleges, 50% are transferring to California State Universities, 9% are transferring to Universities of California, 10% are transferring to in-state private institutions, 10% transfer to out-of-state public institutions, 5% transfer to out-of-state private institutions, and 16% transfer to a for-profit institution (California Community College Data Mart, 2015). Aside from California State Universities, Latinx transfer populations from California community colleges are overrepresented within for-profit institutions when compared to all other categories. This portion of the literature identifies a theme of both underrepresentation with regard to community college completion by Latinxs, as well as an overrepresentation of Latinxs transferring into for-profit institutions within the CSJV. Eminent gaps exist with regard to understanding Latinx for-profit choice and the effects of integrated inequitable geographies that hold few post-secondary resources, especially public four-year institutions. Given that Latinxs are increasingly choosing to transfer to for-profit institutions, it is imperative we understand the institutions method of operation and existence.

Transition implications

Though some of the above sections focus on Latinx college completion, others concentrate on direct high-school to for-profit transitions as well as community college to for-profit transfer. Though these sections do not directly align with the population of this study, given that my participants will fall under the criteria of non-traditional [5] students,

[5] Student who falls under one or many of the categories of: over 25, delays enrollment, works part-time, financially independent, has dependents, as well as other characteristics as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018).

this literature may provide scope in understanding the holistic realms of Latinx college choice. Furthermore, specific research is needed within this area which directly examines the choice processes of both these high school and transfer populations.

The Operation of For-Profit Institutions

A post-secondary for-profit institution is defined as a privately funded taxpaying institutional entity that generates profit by providing post-secondary degrees and or credentials and reports to stockholders (Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2012). This differs from private, non-profit institutions that similarly do not receive tax-payer funding from their states, but are not tax-paying entities and report to a board, typically comprised of trustees (Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2012). For-profit institutions have been found to develop their primary program offerings in line with the college's local industries, in response to labor needs of specified trades and professions (Gilpin, Saunders, & Stoddard, 2015). Regarding the sector's heterogeneity, the 15 largest for-profit institutions account for nearly 60% of the sector's total enrollments (Bennett, Lucchesi, & Vedder, 2010). Though a majority of the sector can be comprised within these large institutions, the remainder are classified as mostly smaller career colleges that focus on shorter degree programs and specializations.

Operations

Within an operational standpoint, for-profit institutions are formed via a business model versus a student-service model. Where public institutions and large non-profit universities are often held to committee vetting, regulatory approval, tenure, and student bodies, for-profit institutions hold an ease of freedom when implementing changes (Cellini, 2009). Likewise, for-profit institutions mostly employ industry experts and

adjunct faculty, versus holding tenure pools, thereby allowing for greater financial control over academic resources and expansions (Bennett, Lucchesi, & Vedder, 2010). For-profit institutions also hold major control over site expansions (e.g. branch campuses), given that a majority of these businesses lease commercial spaces, versus building on permanent locations.

Another key differentiation between for-profit institutions and other types of institutions (e.g. public, non-profit), is that on average, they invest the least amount per student ($9,758) when compared to the rest of the post-secondary sector. Notably, the public sector, on average, spends twice this amount, and the private non-profit sector spends nearly four times the amount (Bennett, Lucchesi, & Vedder, 2010). Findings indicate that most for-profit institutions' tuition and fee rates are considerably higher than the average community college, subsequently forcing 90% of their students to take out student loans (Cellini & Chaudhary, 2011). Similarly, for-profit institutions enroll the highest amount of student borrowers (Cellini & Chaudhary, 2011). Nearly 57% of bachelor's students who graduated from a for-profit institution owe $30,000 or more on average (HELP Committee, 2012).

Admissions processes

A heavy area of scrutiny for these institutions is admissions culture and recruitment. One such example: within a 2011 Government Accountability Office report, through undercover tests, it was found that a handful of the tested for-profit colleges

encouraged fraudulent practices, and that all tested for-profit colleges made deceptive or questionable statements to their undercover applicants (Government Accountability Office, 2011b). In an effort to encourage face-to-face appointments with recruiters, for-profit institutions have even been found to deprive inquiring student information via telephone and through the website, offering to meet with the prospect instead (Iloh & Tierney, 2013). Most for-profit institutions employ a focus on the *student as a customer*, not because it necessarily benefits the student, but because a satisfied customer guarantees increased profits and maximized shareholder wealth (Iloh & Tierney, 2013). For-profit admissions professionals are trained to *close* prospective students on the spot, that is, to enroll the student customer as soon as possible, in an effort to eliminate *cool off* periods, wherein the student may seek advice elsewhere and change their minds (Iloh & Tierney, 2013). Effectively, most for-profit institutions operate with well-established admissions processes, wherein a student can: enter the admissions office; be recruited; be enrolled; complete FAFSA processes; speak with a financial aid counselor, matriculate into classes; have a start date, and be introduced to their academic counselor, all in one day (Iloh & Tierney, 2013).

Staff

With regards to faculty, most for-profit institutions tend to employ practitioner experts and adjuncts in hopes that these industry experts will create an enhanced network for students, subsequently leading to job opportunities (Lechuga, 2006). Furthermore, curriculum is not controlled by faculty, but moreover, is developed by industry experts and the college in an effort to maximize profits and meet labor job demands simultaneously (Lechuga, 2006). With regards to staff, previous findings revealed that

admissions counselors often shared a common experiential theme of sales pressure, given that most of these institutions are enrollment driven (Davidson, 2016). Several institutions even went as far as sending admissions staff to bi-annual retreats that were really disguised sales training seminars in an effort to strengthen their closing skills when selling to "customers" (i.e., students) (Davidson, 2016).

Why it matters

At this point, I would like to introduce a quote from Cottom's (2017) book, *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-profit Colleges in the New Economy*:

> I make an explicit claim in this book: for-profit colleges are distinct from traditional not-for-profit colleges in that their long-term viability depends upon acute, sustained socioeconomic inequalities. All of higher education benefits from inequality in some way, but only for-profit colleges exclusively, by definition, rely on persistent inequalities as a business model. (Cottom, 2017, p. 21)

Given that we have partially identified that the CSJV is, in fact, a geography of socioeconomic inequalities (see Chapter 1) via high poverty rates, low post-secondary education attainment, and low median household incomes, we can see that this geography is a viable location for for-profit institutions to succeed. Furthermore, as we have seen in the earlier part of this chapter, the fact that these institutions design their tuition rates to extract the maximum amount of federal aid loans available is gruesome, given that a majority of their students do not complete their programs. Even when these students complete their program, most employers are likely to not consider these institutions as *real schools*, even comparatively ranking them with diploma-only job candidates (Cottom, 2017). These concerns are amplified when we consider the finding that 16% of for profit students are participating in a welfare program as compared with 2.6% of traditional college students (Cottom, 2017).

An especially critical area of noteworthiness is the predatory nature of for-profit institutions and its actors. Though we have partially reviewed operational procedures above, we have yet to discuss the cognitive and psychoanalytical effects on the students themselves. First, while traditional colleges leverage the intrinsic value of college, for profit institutions leverage ephemeral (quick) moments when a prospective student's perception of changing economic or social fortune can prompt them into *enrolling today* (Cottom, 2017)! This concept is no different than the buyer's remorse abatement theory the average car salesman uses; that is: get them in the car, let them fall in love with the feel and euphoric new smell, and get them through the small print: *buy today*! These methods not only create long-term effects for these students, but victimize them through lack of integrity, misleading deception, and undertones of fraudulence.

Ephemeral manipulation is one thing, but then there is psychological manipulation. Within a 2014 Senate investigation into the for-profit college sector, the term "*pain funnel"* arose within a major for-profits operational training memo for advisors. The training concept of the *pain funnel* was to first qualify the student via interviews and campus tours, that is the collection of knowledge about the student's life. What was positioned as questions about goals, like "What led you here?" "Do you like your job?" "Do you take care of your parents?" "Do you have children?" "Are you married?" , was later pivoted to overcome student objections to same-day enrollment. The advisor would then be trained to say: "I thought you said you wanted to get a better job to take care of your parents, or, to take care of your kids, or to be an independent single mother". (Cottom, 2017, p. X). Other documented manipulative practices include "*code switching,"* which in essence is the practice of alternating between two or more

varieties of conversation. Code switching is most commonly used to describe how minorities switch from the coded language, mannerisms, and references of the cultural group to that of the dominant group (Cottom, 2017). An example of this was when I was assigned a young Hispanic male as an enrollment advisor at my for-profit college's tour. Amidst the tour I recall the adviser making references like "*mira allá*" (look over there) or "*darle ánimo*" (give it effort), even saying "*para nuestra gente*" (for our people) with regards to going to college.

Could the above findings be sheer coincidence? No, of course not. These institutions purposefully invest in understanding who their student is and how best to manipulate them. In an interview with a top for-profit marketing executive, Cottom (2017) discloses that this particular institution went as far as contracting a specialized Freudian psychoanalyst to build a composite of "who" their students were. The results were shocking, given that the composite of this institution's average student tended to be women who were in one way or another stuck in a moment of trauma in their lives. These actions place these institutions as trauma exploitation experts and methodical victimizers, neither of which should be allowed.

Neoliberalism and for-profits

Recall Saunders' (2007) stance that within neoliberal realms, education is increasingly dominated by individualistic goals and benefits wherein students become consumers of an educational product. Furthermore, Saunders holds that education is no longer seen as a social good with intrinsic value, but is instead seen as a commodity that a student purchases for his or her own good (Saunders, 2007). Giroux (2012) holds relatable notions regarding the neoliberal institution, that is, its focus on labor versus

intrinsic values. Slaughter and Rhoades (2009) contend that the neoliberal institution holds a focus on enabling students as economic actors, instead of social welfare champions. The very creation, planning, and running of for-profit institutions champion these neoliberalist agendas and align with the ideologies that enact them into operating. The concept of education for sale, as well as the underlying fear of the need for continued jobs skills acquisition that lead vulnerable individuals to these actors, is traceable to a neoliberal agenda. Cottom (2017) rightly points out that "critics of neoliberalism fairly point out that in the new economy, corporate responsibility continues to shift exposure to risk onto workers and families (p. 114). In other words, modern corporations are opting to end their responsibility of continuing education and career development and shifting the responsibility to the employee, which aligns with the paradigm of neoliberalism at large. As Cottom (2017) continues, "the decision to encourage or allow expansion to happen in the private sector instead of in the public sector was a political choice to uphold neoliberal ideas of individualism, markets, and profit taking" (p.17). The paradigm of the CSJV's college landscape aligns with Cottom's contention, which is the harsh fact that amongst 71 cities, eight counties, and a 250-mile stretch of California, we (the valley) have four public four-year universities and nearly one hundred for-profit institutions, not counting the institutions that are unreported (do not utilize federal loans).

This portion of the literature identifies a theme for the *modus operandi* within for-profit institutions, which is a business-centric model operation that seeks to maximize profits by seeking as many customers as possible and operating at a minimal expense to maximize growth for stakeholders. The implications of this for the Latinx student experience are critical, given that business-centric model of college versus an academic-

centric model of college,may deprive the student learner of an invested college institution. From a consequential realm, we see financial implications for Latinx students via debt as well as professional career adversities via employer for-profit bias. From an emotional and psychoanalytical perspective, we see the potential emotional and mental effects that the manipulative practices of for-profit institutions can have on students via methodical recruitment practices. Next, we explore the fact that these methodical practices are purposeful via for-profit institutional research and specialized consultant studies. Finally, we align the creation, existence, and operation of for-profit institutions with a neoliberal framework and see a troubling link to regime agendas. (???)

Eminent gaps exist with regard to understanding the effects of for-profit institutional influence on Latinx for-profit choice, and the effects of integrated inequitable geographies that hold few public post-secondary institutions nearby. Given that a majority of the aforementioned sections lack research around the understanding of the integration of inequitable geographies, we must then explore critical literature around the realm of opportunity by geography.

Opportunity by Geography

Among the most overlooked factors when considering opportunity is geography - *where* people are versus *who* they are. Critical research has held that geography and location are two of the most salient factors that shape opportunity within the United States (Chetty, Hendren, Kline, & Saez, 2014). Geographies in which people live have been shown to not only affect their social mobility[6], but have also been linked to health

[6] Social mobility is seen as the movement of individuals, families, or households within or between social or economic positions.

outcomes and educational attainment (Rothwell & Massey, 2015). Intergenerational mobility likewise varies substantially across geographical areas within the United States (Chetty et al., 2014). For example, the probability that a child reaches the top quintile of the national income distribution starting from a family in the bottom quintile is 4.4% in Charlotte, but 12.9% in San Jose (Chetty et al., 2014). Geographical characteristics correlated with increased upward mobility opportunity include: (1) less residential segregation, (2) less income inequality, (3) better primary schools, (4) greater social capital, and (5) greater family stability (Chetty et al., 2014). Scholars have argued that the distribution of public services, including doctors, k-12 schools, hospitals, and access to nutritious foods, can be seen as a visible outcome of a deeper process of spatial discrimination, wherein social policies and planning are enacted as a means of maintaining a social geography of class (Soja, 2010).

Geography of opportunity and post-secondary education

Similarly, geography plays a major role when examining the post-secondary opportunities afforded to students throughout different regions within the United Sates. Research examining the geographic contexts of college choice, similar to Latino college choice, has developed substantially in light of traditional models like Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) temporal sequence of process (Turley, 2009).

Geographic proximity, between home and college, have been found to play major factors of influence when considering college choice by students of color, students who work full time, students who care for dependents, and students who have close ties to their communities (Kim & Rury, 2011). For students wanting to stay close to home while in college, simply having a college within a reasonable proximity is perhaps the strongest

influencer shaping college opportunity (Turley, 2009). However, not all geographies face an equal chance of having a college within a reasonable proximity nearby (Hillman, 2015). These geographies with scarce college access nearby are also often concentrated within the nation's poorest and most racially minoritized communities (Hillman, 2015). These isolated communities, often called "education desserts" (Hillman, 2015, p. 987), tend to stratify and amplify the inequalities that underrepresented populations face with regards to postsecondary education. This inequality for underrepresented populations is especially true for Latinxs.

Geography of opportunity and post-secondary education for Latinxs

Previous studies examining local college availability by geographic zone, racial ethnicity, and socioeconomic characteristic show that nationally, zones with higher Latinx populations tend to have a higher number of two-year colleges but the smallest number of four-year colleges nearby (Hillman, 2015). These findings are further held when negated zones are examined; zones with the lowest Latinx populations tend to have the largest amounts of four-year colleges nearby (Hillman, 2015). Proportional inequalities were also found, given that zones with the highest number populations of Latinxs on average only had two public two-year colleges nearby and only one or no public four-year colleges nearby (Hillman, 2015). Holistically, white and Asian communities tend to hold the highest number of choices nearby with regards to college choice (Hillman, 2015).

The above literature identified a theme of inequality by geography, especially for Latinx communities. Given the correlations of low-collegial access within geographies

with high Latinx populations, we next examine the characteristics of the CSJV which holds some of the most concentrated areas of Latinx populations in the United States.

Geography of Opportunity and the CSJV

Race characteristics

California's CSJV is comprised of eight counties, including San Joaquin, Kings, Fresno, Kern, Merced, Stanislaus, Madera, and Tulare County. The Valley is comprised of the inner 250-mile stretch of California, extending its southern point in Bakersfield, California, to its most northern point near Stanislaus, California. The CSJV holds 71 incorporated cities within its counties with a combined populous of three million people (U.S. Census Bureaus, 2016). Latinxs account for a large portion of the CSJV's population, especially when examined by county: San Joaquin 41.20%; Kings 54.20%; Fresno 52.80%; Kern 52.80%; Merced 58.90%; Stanislaus 45.60 %; Madera 57.40 %; and Tulare 64.10% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016, County Quick fact sheet). Latinxs are overrepresented within the CSJV, when compared to immediate surrounding counties just outside the valley: Sacramento 23.0%, Amador 13.6%, Calaveras 11.6%, Tuolumne 12.2%, Mariposa 11.0%, Mono 27.7%, Inyo 21.4%, San Luis Obispo 22.3%, Santa Clara 25.9%, Alameda 22.5%, and Contra Costa 25.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016, County Quick fact sheet). These findings are concerning, given Hillman's (2015) contention regarding zones with higher Latinx populations holding higher numbers of two-year colleges but holding the fewest numbers of four-year colleges nearby.

Educational attainment characteristics

Another major area of concern is collegial educational attainment within this region. In fact, as of 2016, the eight counties within the CSJV hold an average *Bachelor's*

degree or higher attainment (for persons over 25) percentage of 15.4% (San Joaquin: 18.2%, Stanislaus: 16.5%, Merced: 13.7%, Madera: 13.1%, Fresno: 19.7%, Kings 12.8%, Tulare: 14.0%, and Kern: 15.7%) (U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts by County Table, 2016) (See Appendix C). Bachelor's degree attainment or higher is underrepresented within the CSJV, when compared to immediate surrounding counties just outside the valley: Sacramento 29.3%, Amador 21.5%, Calaveras 20.2%, Tuolumne 19.7%, Mariposa 22.6%, Mono 30.6%, Inyo 24.5%, San Luis Obispo 34.1%, Santa Clara 49.1%, Alameda 43.9%, and Contra Costa 40.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016, County Quick fact sheet). These statistics are concerning given Chetty et al.'s (2014) findings which contend that geographies with lower educational attainment levels face lower chances of upward mobility; these populations are less likely to move upward within social economic classes.

Poverty characteristics

A third and growing trend within the CSJV is the existence of poverty. As of 2016 the eight counties within the CSJV hold an average *Persons in poverty* percent of 19.9% (San Joaquin: 41.6%, Stanislaus: 14.5%, Merced: 20.3%, Madera: 20.4%, Fresno: 25.5%, Kings 17.4%, Tulare: 24.7%, and Kern: 22.4% (U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts by county table, 2016) (See Appendix C). People in poverty are overrepresented within the CSJV when compared to immediate surrounding counties just outside the valley: Sacramento 16.3%, Amador 11.3%, Calaveras 13.1%, Tuolumne 15.4%, Mariposa

17.9%, Mono 11.5%, Inyo 12.3%, San Luis Obispo 11.0%, Santa Clara 9.3%, Alameda 10.7%, and Contra Costa 8.7% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016, County Quick fact sheet). An exigent circumstance exists given that the largest county, Fresno, not only holds over a quarter of its population in poverty, but is actually the county with the largest populous of 979,915, nearly 53% of which are Latinx. These statistics are concerning given Hillman's (2015) findings which contend that geographies with education deserts, or a low number of college access nearby, tend to be disproportionately located within "the nation's poorest and most racially minoritized communities (p. 988)."

Proximity characteristics

Since proximity between home and college has been found to exert a major influence when considering college choice by students of color (Hillman, 2015; Turley, 2009), yet another concerning issue develops in regard to the CSJV: proximity to public four-year colleges. As a preface to the following section of figures, the below statistics include only the 71 incorporated cities within the eight counties of the CSJV, as declared by the United States Census Bureau (2016). Of the 71 cities located within the eight counties of the CSJV, nearly 77% (55) held a central commuting distance (i.e., from the center of the city) of over 50 miles to CSU Fresno, nearly 86% (61) held a central commuting distance of over 50 miles to CSU Bakersfield, nearly 69% (49) held a central commuting distance of over 50 miles to CSU Stanislaus, and nearly 75% (53) held a central commuting distance of over 50 miles to UC Merced (Google Maps, 2018) (See Appendix D).

On the contrary, though the Central Valley only has a total of four public four-year institutions, it holds seven community college districts (Kern, Merced, State Center,

West Hills, West Kern, Yosemite, Antelope) with a total of 21 different branch locations (California Community Colleges Chancellors Office, 2015). These findings for the CSJV match Hillman's (2015) results, which asserted that zones with higher Latinx populations tend to have a higher amount of two-year colleges but the fewest amounts of four-year colleges nearby (Hillman, 2015).

In summary, this portion of the literature identified a theme of inequality by geography for Latinxs within the CSJV. Given that the valley holds an overrepresentation of Latinxs, has an overrepresentation of poverty, has an underrepresentation of educational attainment, and has large distance proximities to four-year public institutions, the CSJV can be considered as an educational desert (Hillman, 2015).

Summary of the Literature

The aforementioned review of the literature surrounding Latinx college choice, the transition of Latinxs into for-profit institutions, the operation of for-profit institutions, opportunity by geographies, and geographies of opportunity within the CSJV have brought several emergent research gaps into fruition. First, we know that Latinx college choice revolves around key thematic influences, including parental influence (Nuñez & Kim, 2012; Perna,2006), immigration (Nienhusser, 2010; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010), school counselors (Kimura-Walsh, Yamamura, Griffin, & Allen, 2009), finances (Heller, 2005; McDonough & Calderone, 2006), and social capital (Perez, 2010; Perez and McDonough, 2008). Similarly, we know that little research around Latinx for-profit college choice exists, given that for-profit institutions until recent Title-IV mandating were not accountable for reporting, similar to non-profits and public institutions (Chung, 2009; Iloh, 2014). Additionally, we now know that not only do a majority of Latinxs

begin their post-secondary career at community colleges (Fry & Taylor, 2014), but also increasing amounts of Latinx students are transferring into for-profit institutions from California community colleges (California Community Colleges Chancellors Office, 2013). Likewise, studies reveal an overrepresentation of non-completion within California community colleges by Latinxs (Radford, Berkner, Wheeless, and Shepard, 2010). This overrepresentation of non-completion allows for the entrance of opportunistic actors, like for-profit institutions, to enact their preying methods of operation.

As previously discussed, for-profit institutions operate in a method that is business-focused, not academic focused, that manages lower expenditures instead of investing in student success, and that focuses on institutional profit instead of institution sustainability. These methods of operation are in contrast to not-for-profit and public universities, given that these institutions are meant to reinvest all revenue towards the sustainability of the institution and its benefactors (e.g. students, staff, faculty) (Bennett, Lucchesi, & Vedder, 2010; Cellini & Chaudhary, 2011; Iloh & Tierney, 2013; Lechuga, 2006). Therefore, further insight is needed with regard to understanding the effects of for-profit institutional influence on Latinx for-profit choice and the effects of integrated inequitable geographies that hold few public post-secondary institutions nearby. Bring in neoliberalism.

Similarly, we now see that inequality can often be shaped by geography, whether involving social goods and services, or education (Chetty, Hendren, Kline, & Saez, 2014). Likewise, we now know that upward mobility is often difficult to achieve within these inequitable geographies (Chetty et al., 2014; Rothwell & Massey, 2015). These inequitable geographies also are correlated with less accessibility to public four-year

institutions, subsequently creating college deserts (Hillman, 2015). Additionally, we see the impact within these college deserts, since proximity to college plays a major role when choosing to go to college (Hillman, 2015; Turley, 2009). Lastly, we witness the real fruition of an inequitable geography via the statistical realities within the CSJV, including education, poverty, and distance to education.

Furthermore, we observe the overrepresentation of Latinxs within the CSJV, an important correlation according to Hillman (2015) for the existence of fewer four-year institutions. Therefore, further insight is needed as to whether these inequities, coupled with large proximities to four-year colleges and limited variations of Latinx college choice, afford the ability for opportunistic actors to step in and provide a business need - an education for sell via for-profit institutions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

As previously stated, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to develop a better understanding around the effects of geographies of inopportunity on Latinx students' college choices within the CSJV as well as how recruitment practices at for-profit institutions intersect with the broader [in]opportunistic structures within this region. Along with the concept of geographies of inopportunity, this study integrates a neoliberal lens in an effort to identify how these experiences have shaped the college-choice process for CSJV Latinx students, specifically, into for-profit institutions.

Additionally, I aimed to capture and identify the intersections of geographies of inopportunity with other forces of inequity within this region that are further amplifying the adversities this population faces with regards to college choice. Lastly, I aimed to understand what for-profit institutions are offering, or promising (in person or via advertisement) Latinx students, in an effort to recruit them to their institutions as well as how these practices intersect with broader [in]opportunistic structures within the CSJV. By identifying and understanding the aforementioned attributes and choice-processes that lead CSJV Latinx students into for-profit institutions, I strive to challenge the policies and conditions that shape these choices in an effort to mitigate these inequities for Latinx students within the CSJV.

Through a multitude of qualitative methods exist, I used the phenomenological approach specifically. Phenomenological research attempts to describe "the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomena" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). It aims to discover the essence of an experience that several

individuals share, even if they did not share that experience under the same time and circumstances (Creswell, 2013). Latinx for-profit college choice within the CSJV represents just such a phenomenon. Even though Latinx students within this region do not necessarily pursue college on a similar temporal timeline (e.g. directly after high school, non-traditional) nor a similar location within the region (e.g. Bakersfield County, Merced County) they do share commonalities that shape their decision-making process, especially when considering the adversities Latinx students face sociologically (e.g. social capital, schools, financial) and geographically (e.g. distance). Therefore, a phenomenological approach is an appropriate fit for attempting to dissect and understand the nuances of the common experiences of these Latinx students within the CSJV in choosing for-profit colleges.

This chapter includes descriptions of the following components: (1) research questions of this study, (2) research design, (3) participant populations for this qualitative study, (4) data collection procedures, (5) data analysis procedures, (6) ethical considerations, (7) delimitations and limitations, and (8) background of the researcher of this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the inquiry of this study:

1) What are the factors that play into why Latinxs in the San Joaquin Valley choose to enroll in for-profit institutions?
2) How do inequities from different experiences and opportunities shape these decisions?

3) What do the *narratives* of Latinx alumni from for-profit institutions reveal about attributes that for-profit institutions offered or promised them that led them to their choice?

Research Design

A phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, phenomenologists focus on identifying what all participants share in common as they experience the given phenomenon. The underlying purpose behind phenomenology is to reduce the individual lived experiences of the participants into a transformed phenomenon of the universal essence (Van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenology can be traced back to the writings of German mathematician, Edmund Husserl (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since Husserl, several researchers have expanded on his views of phenomenology, including Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Van Manen, 1990). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), within phenomenology, philosophical assumptions rest on some common grounds: (1) the study of persons' lived experiences are conscious ones (Van Manen, 1990), and (2) the development of descriptions of these experiences are not explanations nor analyses (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, phenomenology's approach is to suspend all judgments about what may be real, that is the 'natural attitude,' until they are founded on a more certain basis. This suspension of judgments was described as an *epoche* by Husserl.

Given that the lived college choice experiences of CSJV Latinx students are dynamic, temporally and geographically, I attempted to utilize the underlying characteristics of phenomenology to capture commonalities amongst them. First, I used in-depth phenomenological interviews to capture the essence of why my participants chose to enroll into for-profit institutions. Additionally, I conducted in-depth phenomenological interviews to capture themes around how inequities within educational experiences, economy, and geography possibly shaped the decision-making process for these participants within the CSJV. Lastly, I analyzed these interviews in hopes of capturing themes around what attributes these participants' institutions of choice offered or promised them as well as how they were perceived to meet their own academic or life needs.

Participants

Researchers have contended over the approximate sampling size needed within a phenomenological study. (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990). However, most concur on having a pool of anywhere from three to fifteen individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My original aim was for eight to ten participants, and ultimately, I was able to obtain nine participants for this study.

Phenomenological approaches call for a purposeful sampling method, given that they aim to identify participants who are more likely to have lived similar experiences and hold similar shared knowledge (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, I employed a specific criterion approach, which required that these participants meet specific criteria related to the purpose and research questions of the inquiry:

1. Self-identify as a *Latinx*[7] individual
2. Have enrolled[8] into a for-profit[9] institution located within the one of the eight counties that comprise the CSJV[10] in California.
3. Have participated in at least one program class within the for-profit institution, past the college census date [11]for the academic term.
4. Have lived within one of the eight counties that comprise the CSJV in California at the time of for-profit institutional enrollment
5. Be willing to be interviewed by the researcher
6. Be willing to allow the researcher to record and transcribe the interviews
7. Be willing to participate in a study that may eventually be published.

In order to identify participants who met this criterion, I utilized a LinkedIn personal network group which housed a Latinx Community Leaders Association for the greater CSJV area, including alumni from for-profit institutions. I recruited participants via a LinkedIn post within the group via a personally authored message that outlined the purposes of this study as well as the qualification criteria. This message included my contact information (email address and telephone number) and requested that interested participants contact me directly. Once the initially interested participants made a contact

[7] Latinx is a gender-neutral term that is often used in lieu of the term Latino or Latina, typically referencing Latin American racial identity.
[8] Enrollment is defined as having completed the application for the college, been accepted formally, and registered for at least one program class (IPEDS, 2018).
[9] For-profit higher education in the United States (known as for-profit college or proprietary education in some instances) refers to higher education institutions operated by private, profit-seeking businesses.
[10] The valley is comprised of eight counties, including: San Joaquin; Kings; Fresno; Kern; Merced; Stanislaus; Madera; and Tulare (San Joaquin Valley Fact Sheet, 2016)
[11] The census date is an accreditation requirement and is the final day (set by the institution) on which the student may drop the class without receiving a financial or academic penalty (withdrawal mark on transcript, or non-refund).

of interest, I provided them with a detailed informational sheet about the study, data confidentiality information, as well as interview information.

Additionally, I provided the participants with an approved electronic consent form which I asked they have ready on site for the interview. My initial recruitment efforts provided seven candidates who agreed to become final participants. Utilizing a method suggested by Creswell (2013), I engaged a snowball effect, wherein I asked these participants if they knew anyone who met these criteria and would be interested in participating as well. This snowball effect produced two additional candidates who agreed to be part of the final participant interview pool, leading to a total of nine participants.

Data Collection

Creswell and Poth (2018) contend that data collection procedures are not simple processes which only involve data identification and collection, however, are dynamic processes that involve much more. Data collection should also integrate the following factors: the anticipation of any ethical issues when gaining permissions, conducting good qualitative sampling strategies, developing appropriate means for recording information, responding to issues as they arise in the field, and especially the secure storing of collected data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Preliminary data were collected via interviews with the selected candidate pool between August 2018 and October 2018 at their selected locations. A stipulation for the location was that it be quiet and private in nature to avoid distraction or audio recording interference. At the inception of the interview, I asked the participants if they would prefer to use a pseudonym, or if they would prefer I assign a pseudonym for them. Once

we were ready to begin the interview, I utilized a Sony - UX Series Digital Voice Recorder for audio recording. These interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes in duration.

Researchers state that qualitative studies should attempt to utilize at least two types of differentiating data sources, in an effort to integrate the sources of data and seek thematic synthesis (Creswell, 2010; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 2009; Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). Therefore, in addition to my collected data, I utilized member checking designed to enhance confidence in data interpretations by engaging participants in the data analysis. This process may include: seeking participant feedback, prolonged engagement, collaboration with participants, extending peer review, and corroborating evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis

After I collected all participant audio data, I utilized *GoTranscript*, a professional transcription service, to transcribe all collected interviews. Once all interviews were transcribed, I imported the materials into *dedoose.com*, a professional qualitative and mixed methods research application program in an effort to organize the data. My coding procedures, in alignment with traditional phenomenological procedures (Creswell & Poth, 2018), occurred in the following order:

- I first read through the interview transcripts and identified significant statements, also known as *horizonalization* (Creswell & Poth, 2018)
- Next, I developed clusters of meaning from the identified significant statements (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

- I then used the significant statements and clusters of meaning to write initial descriptions of what the participants experienced, also known as *textural descriptions* (Creswell & Poth, 2018)
- The significant statements and clusters of meaning were then used to write descriptions of these contexts or settings that influenced how these participants experienced these phenomena, also known as structural descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

Finally, I was able to organize and write a composite description that represents the essence of these phenomena, often called the *essential invariant structure* (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Validity

In order to protect the researcher's role with regard to qualitative account and validity, this study employed the following steps. First, in order to provide validity to the researcher's lens, the study corroborated evidence through the triangulation of multiple data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This validation process involved the corroborating of evidence from differentiating sources, in an effort to shed light on a theme or perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). First, as themes developed, I triangulated information captured from other participants in order to validate emergent findings. Secondly, in order to provide validity to the participant's lens, I employed member checking, wherein I provided initial data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the study participants so that they could judge the accuracy and credibility of the accounts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

Part of my role in planning and conducting an ethical study as a researcher was to address any anticipated or emergent ethical issues within my processes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, these ethical issues relate to three principles guiding ethical research: respect for persons (e.g. privacy and consent), concern for welfare (e.g. minimizing harm and augment reciprocity), and justice (e.g. equitable treatment and enhancing inclusivity) (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Latinxs who enrolled into for-profit institutions within the CSJV constitute a vulnerable population. Many of these participants were first-generation college students born to immigrant parents. In addition, some participants shared that they felt 'duped' or 'embarrassed' after having attended one of these institutions and sending others' notions that their degrees were 'not real.' Therefore, in an effort to avoid exploitation and maintain the humanity and value of each of the participants' experience, I handled this information with the utmost respect and confidentiality. As mentioned previously, I offered the possibility to select a pseudonym and exercised precision when explaining participants' informed consent prior to the interviews. In addition, all collected files were stored within a securely encrypted cloud security platform to which only I will have access to.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Creswell (2013) defines delimitations as the boundaries of a given study, including narrowed scope, timeline, location, and sample - all of which are controlled by the researcher conducting the study. The data collected for this study were gathered between August 2018 and October 2018. The study involved a relatively small sample of

nine participants who resided in one of the eight counties within the CSJV in California and were at one time or another enrolled in a for-profit institution. First, due to the limited number of participants within the study, the collected data were more than likely not able to capture all of the contributing factors that shape Latinx for-profit choice within this region. Replicative studies with Latinx populations drawn from geographic areas throughout the United States integrated with larger sample sizes would be necessary in order to produce more generalizable findings.

Background of the Researcher

Throughout my five-year career as a postsecondary institution practitioner, I have held positions within the realms of admissions; community outreach; recruitment; communication; international relations; strategic enrollment management; and institutional reporting and effectiveness. As a practitioner, though I am currently employed at a private not-for-profit university which I believe holds beneficial student and staff values, I have had professional experience in not-for-profit universities with many of the same attributes as for-profit universities (e.g. sales pressure, deadlines, targets, students as products).

Academically, I am an alumnus of a for-profit institution and at one time held 'shame' over my education from the institution; however, this is no longer the case. Moreover, as a first generation college Latinx student, I positioned my for-profit education as an asset, regardless of the vessel of learning, and decided to pursue a graduate education in hopes of utilizing my lived experiences as a catalyst to share with fellow Latinxs from the CSJV and elsewhere. It is through this aforementioned lens that I approach this research - not as a victim, but as a post-secondary practitioner, a Latinx

scholar, and advocate for the college bound population in the CSJV. Though some may claim that this stance presents ethical considerations via positions of authority, I argue that these experiences afford my ability to authentically engage the commonalities between the shared lived experiences of the participants and myself. Lastly, as a Latinx for-profit alumni from the CSJV, it is my duty to inform that I may hold potential biases with regards to for-profit institutions. Therefore, in an effort to protect my data from bias positionality, I regularly utilized peer feedback from fellow doctoral students familiar with my research, as well as engaging in continuous discourse with my chairperson.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Overview

This study explored the underlying effects of geographies of inopportunity on Latinx students' college choices within the Central San Joaquin Valley (CSJV), as well as how recruitment practices at for-profit institutions intersected with the broader [in]opportunistic structures within this region. Furthermore, the study examined how these experiences have shaped the college-choice process for CSJV Latinx students, specifically, into for-profit institutions. Furthermore, I examined the intersections of geographies of inopportunity with other forces of inequity within this region that further amplify the adversities this population faces, with regards to college choice. Lastly, the study examined what for-profit institutions are offering, or promising Latinx students, in an effort to recruit them to their institutions and how these practices intersect with broader [in]opportunistic structures within the CSJV.

Participants

The study included nine participants who all met the participant selection criteria cited in Chapter Three, including: self-identifying as Latinx, living within the Central San Joaquin Valley (one of eight counties) at their time of college enrollment, having enrolled in a for-profit institution, and having registered in at least one course past the institution census date. Next, I provide a brief summary of each of the nine participants.

Dee is a thirty-nine year old Latinx who self identifies as a female and currently resides in Madera California. Dee attended high school and a local community college prior to her enrollment at a local for-profit institution. She is currently employed as a school secretary, though her original academic major was in paralegalism.

Annamaria is a forty-five year old Latinx who self identifies as a female and currently resides in Fresno, California. Annamaria was forced to leave schooling at the young age of thirteen, due to becoming a young mother. Annamaria attempted to return to adult school and to a local community college, but was met with negative experiences which caused her to leave. Subsequently, Annamaria enrolled into a professional certification for-profit institution for cosmetology licensing. Annamaria completed the program, and has been licensed cosmetologist for just over a decade.

Marc is a twenty-nine year old Latinx who self-identifies as a male and currently resides in Los Angeles, California. Marc graduated from high school and in a bid to attempt to move away from home, having been denied to all local colleges, he enrolled into a for-profit art school in San Francisco, California. Though Marc had no interest in art, he figured he could find a place within the industry and make it work. Eventually, Marc could not afford to stay in the school and make supplementary payments for housing. With tens of thousands in debt, Marc left the program almost one year in and moved back home to the valley with his parents.

Moe is a thirty-five year old Latinx who self-identifies as a female and currently resides in Kingsburg, California. Moe graduated from high school with high grades, but was encouraged by her parents to enroll into a local community college, at least until she knew what she wanted to do as a major. By enrolling in a local community college, her parents argued, she'd be able to save lots of money. Subsequently, Moe became a mother amidst her transfer program at the community college, and left due to time constraints with working. Eventually, Moe was referred to a local for-profit program in paralegalism by her mother, who attended the same institution for an accounting certificate. Moe

completed the program in paralegalism, but was not able to retain a career in the field, and is currently a senior office manager for a professional agriculture corporation.

Vic is a thirty-one ear old Latinx who self-identifies as a male and currently resides within Clovis, California. Vic graduated from a local high school with what he describes as average grades, but still struggled academically. Vic would attempt to enroll into a local community college, but would later leave due to academic and counseling struggles. For several years, Vic went on to become a restaurant waiter, until a coworker referred him to an electrical engineering program at local for-profit institution. Nearly two years into the program, Vic maxed out his financial aid loan amounts, and given that he did not wish to have his parents co-sign for more subsidies, he decided to leave the program. Vic would eventually enter a career in law enforcement, and has been in this career for nearly seven years.

Derrick is a thirty-five year old Latinx who self identifies as a male and currently resides within Fresno, California. Derrick says he had an overall positive experience within high school, and believes he did well academically. Still, Derrick decided not to pursue college given its high costs and went on to find a local job. Eventually, Derrick attempted to take a few courses at the local community college, but felt he was wasting time given that the courses were taking too long. He then decided to inquire at a local for-profit university and was eventually persuaded to enroll into an undergraduate program in networking management. Though Derrick was able to eventually finish the program, he was unable to find a career in the field. Eventually, Derrick was able to find a career in an unrelated telecommunications field and has been there nearly five years.

Bella is a twenty-two year old Latinx who self identifies as a female and currently resides in San Francisco, California. Bella says she had an average high school career and received slightly above average grades. She was even conditionally accepted to a state school just outside the valley. However, due to her not understanding the conditional timelines, her admission was rescinded to the school. Given that Bella wanted to escape her parents, who wanted her to find a husband and get married for support, she decided to turn to her older brother who lived in the Bay Area. At her brother's recommendation, she enrolled into a large for-profit animation school within San Francisco, California. Though Bella was able to finish the program, she currently finds herself with nearly six figures in debt, and within an unrelated field as a restaurant manager.

Shannon is a thirty-eight year old Latinx who self identifies as a female and currently resides in Stockton, California. Shannon says she remembers struggling academically within high school, but that this was amplified when her parents divorced during her junior year. Shannon shares that the primary focus for her and her siblings was survival, so they all focused on working during and after high school. Eventually Shannon found herself within an entry level medical position which allowed for promotion, if she held the right credentials. Shannon first tried to pursue those credentials at a local community college, but shares she had negative experiences there and left. Shannon then tried a local for-profit that specialized in medical certifications, and says she was able to finish the program quickly but at a financial cost. Though financially costly, Shannon would return to the institution on several occasions as she promoted through her medical profession. She is now a certified Roistered Nurse.

Tina is a thirty-five year old Latinx who self identifies as a female and currently resides in San Diego, California. Tina shares though she struggled academically in high school she was able to graduate and enter the working force. Tina says she attempted on several occasions to take classes at the local community college, but became flustered when the classes she needed were not available. Tina says that she was motivated at having recently become a mother, and decided to inquire at a local for-profit university about a business administration A.S. degree. Though financially costly, Tina says she was able to finish the program and eventually find an entry-level position as an office professional, within a law firm. Tina was eventually able to promote her way up to a current office manager. Tina has been an office manager for nearly five years. Below, I provide tabled participant demographic information as a reference.

Demographics

Table 1.

Demographics

Pseudonym	City of residence at time of enrollment	Gender	Age at time of enrollment	Enrolled Program at the For-Profit institution
Dee	Madera	Female	24	Paralegal Cert.
Annamaria	Fresno	Female	33	Cosmetology Cert.
Marc	Fresno	Male	18	Production B.A.
Moe	Kingsburg	Female	23	Paralegal Cert.
Vic	Clovis	Male	19	Electronics B.S.
Derrick	Bakersfield	Male	20	Networking B.S.
Bella	Madera	Female	18	Animation B.A.

Shannon	Stockton	Female	28	Phlebotomy Cert.
Tina	Merced	Female	25	Paralegal Cert.

Themes

Once the transcripts of the participants' interview data were examined and viewed through the theoretical framework, four primary sets of findings emerged, organized thematically: (1) Parental focus on labor; (2) Limit of public-sphere secondary and post-secondary counseling support; (3) Competitive market of for-profit institutions; and (4) Disillusionment toward for-profit institutions. The below sections examine the essence of these themes, provide excerpts for context, and discuss the clusters of meaning that led to theme formation.

Parental focus on labor

The first theme reveals a phenomenologically-shared experience of parents' own concerns and thoughts about their futures being centered around employment and potential cost-benefit of higher education pursuits. Specifically, three key findings emerged within this area, captured within specific subthemes:

1. The participants' parents were concerned with the cost and value of college. These concerns were manifested as parental viewpoints around cost-benefit analyses of college as well as likeliness of the participants' success.
2. Their parents wanted the participants to work full-time after their high school graduation without attending college. These findings placed parental desires for capital accumulation as a higher priority than higher education at large.

3. Their parents wanted the participants' college attendance as a means of obtaining a career with financial security. Parental aspirations for their children to attend college were a means of guaranteed capital accumulation via lucrative industry majors (e.g. engineering, medicine).

Collectively, these findings highlight the ways a neoliberal paradigm is channeled through and interpreted by these parents in supporting their children as they explored options for their futures, centering the real and perceived needs for financial earnings. First, I look at the participants who experienced their parents' perspectives as being concerned with the cost and value of college.

Parental financial concern with college

Within this theme's first cluster of meaning, participants' parents expressed financial and practical concern over the participants' choices regarding attending college. Subsequently, these parents' financial positionalities deluded the collegial aspirations of the participants and enforced their [parents'] beliefs that finding a job and saving money (labor) was a better idea. This concern is captured in the following excerpt from one participant, Vic, whose parents continually reinforced the idea during his high school career that college was too expensive, and, therefore, non-feasible:

> Vic: Well, my parents never really did much about college. They didn't really believe in it. It was more of a generational thing.
>
> Joe: Generational?
>
> Vic: Yeah, well they, uh, were more like forced in the workforce cause back then you had to work. They didn't tell us it was a super important. But on top of that, was the money thing. Cause, they were always like 'it's too much money' and like…it's just not going to happen. I mean, my dad would just say that...that after high school it was time to grow up and get to work, you know.

This quote highlights the ways Vic's own parents' experiences with financial insecurity and financial planning, or rather the necessity to work, intersected with their expectations of Vic and perceived cost-benefit of college attendance. I also saw Vic's father express doubtful concern, even when Vic expressed the possibility of beginning post-secondary education at the local community college. This doubtful concern was shown when Vic presented his father with a more financially feasible option of community college, still, doubt manifested which subsequently revealed his father's position which was that Vic should still look for a job:

> Vic: Even with community college, it was a naw [no]. My dad, it's not that he was against it. He was just more doubtful. He was just like, "Well, if that's what you wanna do, then you do what you wanna do." He didn't say that it was a mistake. He didn't say that it was ... that I was gonna regret it. He never said anything negative about it.

Though Vic's father never actually voiced his disagreement towards his community college enrollment plan, his silence was seen by Vic as indifference. Vic then suggests that his father's indifference about his plans were mostly centered around his past motivation at large. Specifically, Vic's father's assumptions are based on the motivation Vic displayed during his high school career:

> He was just more indifferent about it. He was, he wasn't supportive about it, but I knew, he didn't really care too much for it. He thought, like I said earlier, I should just find a job I could do. With community [college], it wasn't even about the cost it was my motivation…what he thought my motivation was like. Because I had done so bad at [high school] and they saw how unmotivated I was they- they thought it was gonna be the same thing.

This further demonstrates the way these messages were communicated directly and indirectly, adding deeper nuance to the role of finances in the perceived cost-benefit rationale that shapes the way support for college was offered. Despite the lower cost, it was Vic's parents' perceived belief of how successful they thought Vic might be. This

might point to another notion embedded here—that college is meant just for certain types of students. In this case, Vic's past school achievement suggested to his parents that college, which already would be a financial burden, would be particularly burdensome for their son whom they perceived would not be very successful. Juxtaposed to this, another participant, Moe, had planned to apply to state colleges and UC schools during her junior high school year, but was deterred by her mother's financial advice:

> Moe: Uh, even though I was looking at more CSU schools. My grades were high enough for a CSU school, I felt. But she saw [mother] ... but she, in her eyes, she thought it might be better for me to start, stay home, go to a junior college, figure out what I wanted to do before spending more money.

Though Moe felt confident with applying for local CSU and UC schools, her mother voices financial concerns, in that Moe should retreat her plans and play it safe at a local community college. Additionally, her mother suggests that she should also find a job during the day, and attend community college at night:

> Joe: Interesting. So, she, she [mother] wanted, she wanted you to kind of stay home even though you felt you could get into a CSU?
>
> Moe: Yeah, I just don't think she thought it was a good idea to spend that much without knowing, you know? So, her idea…our idea was that it makes better sense to stay home and find a job, then also do city[12] at night, you know?

Here we see parental concern over college costs manifested as reluctance toward Moe's entering a four-year college right away without her 'knowing' what she wanted to do in life. These deep-rooted notions on the part of her parents revealed that they held fears of investing in Moe's education with the possibility of her not being able to navigate a four-year institution. Their investment, then, would become a loss. This instance, again, shows

[12] 'City:' Local California Community College

a parental concern over the worthwhile of college as a financial investment for their child.

The aforementioned excerpts posit a positionality from parental perspectives that show doubts regarding college due to the cost as well as on the necessity of getting a job instead. In reality, these messages may also show parents' entrenched notions that college really is not for 'their' children.

Specifically, these positions show an underlying doubt on the part of the parents as being reluctant to invest in their children's college education at the perceived risk of their 'failing.' These notions, undoubtedly, may hold notable factors of influence on the participants' college choice journeys. Utilizing the study's theoretical framework, the above participant data shows existential neoliberalism, within this geography, revealed as parental desires for capital accumulation through their focus on labor - getting a job instead of pursuing post-secondary education. These parental desires show a deep-rooted neoliberal influence that forces individuals to focus on new accumulation-centered opportunities for capital via a focus on existential labor spheres (Ong, 2017; Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003). Within the next subtheme, I similarly see a parental focus on getting a job; however, I also find intentional parental objections to college altogether.

Parental choice of labor instead of college

Within this theme's second cluster of meaning, I found that participants had parents who wanted them to work full-time after their high school graduation without attending college at all. Subsequently, these parents' perceptions about participants' futures and post high school graduation attempted to indoctrinate the participants' ideologies by reinforcing the need to forget about the possibility of college altogether and

to focus on getting a job to make money. These findings also highlight attributes of neoliberal ideology as channeled through parents around perceived needs for capital accumulation in an effort to achieve a successful future. First, I present an example of a participant whose parents' cultural perceptions place her as a young female who should not go 'off' to college and instead to stay home and work while helping to take care of the household financially and practically:

> Bella: Um, my parents were very conservative, I guess old school. They are from Oaxaca [Mexico]. So, no, I never even considered college as an option. What happened was that I panicked my senior year. I was like, I need to leave, I just had to go.

Bella shares of her parents cultural perceptions around her role as a young Latinx female within the family, that is, to find a job and help with the bills not to go to college. Bella then expands on the notions around her perceived role:

> Joe: Go to … college?
>
> Bella: Yeah that too but just, get out of their [home], because they were not going to let me do anything. They were just like 'you need to get a job and help with the bills,' and I guess they thought college was not there you know, like, not a good idea. They …this is embarrassing [laughs]
>
> Joe: Oh… I'm, we can skip?

At this point in the interview, Bella becomes emotional, given that she then discloses her father's viewpoints of what her future should entail, which was to find a husband for financial and familial security. Bella shares, this perceived financial security is not only for Bella, but for the entire family as well:

> Bella: No, it was my dad, he thought I should get a job and like, find a husband who could also financially support the whole family. I don't know, to them [parents] it was just a lot of like all about money and I'm not sure…security? It's

> pretty normal in my family, with like my cousins, all my tios[13] are the same. It's all about working hard and providing money for the whole family.

These findings demonstrate communicated messages that add understanding to the role of parents' perceptions around financial security and capital accumulation through the workforce. Though Bella was a seemingly successful academic student throughout high school, her parents' definitions of success emphasized financial security via a job, and subsequently through marriage instead of college. These perceptions are reinforced within her parents' added notions of marriage serving as a means of obtaining two guaranteed sources of income, via the partnership.

Similarly, I found an example of shared experiential circumstances with Shannon, also a Latinx female, whose parents held similar expectations of 'forgetting about college' and focusing on contributing to the family financially. Shannon's parents' perceptions, however, are solely focused on financial contribution to the family:

> Joe: Um, so what about your parents' perspectives about college? Did you feel like your parents were supportive of you going to college?
>
> Shannon: Um, no. No not at all.
>
> Joe: At all?
>
> Shannon: They just wanted us to go to work. Yeah. Even in high school, they were like 'pick up more hours, you need more hours.' Yeah so, it was never a question of well maybe I can or maybe I can't, you know, do the college thing. There was always pressure to have a job in that house, so.
>
> Joe: A pressure, from bills, or?
>
> Shannon: Ya, I guess since we were a big family, ya bills too. But things got worse towards the end of high school.

[13] Spanish for uncle

Shannon shares that amidst her high school career, which was already mostly focused on working for income, things became worse during her junior year given that her parents unexpectedly divorced. As Shannon discloses below, there was now more pressure than ever for all of the siblings to contribute, given that it was now just them and their mother:

> Joe: Because you were about to graduate, or another reason, sorry?
>
> Shannon: No, no, it was they, uh, my parents split up. They got a divorce. So, it was all hands-on-deck, for like, money you know.
>
> Joe: Oh
>
> Shannon: Yeah so, my ma was like, 'you're going to work more.' We need you. Um, but my family was not more…., uh, they weren't about school. They were just more go to work.

These messages demonstrate parental perspectives on attaining financial security through the workforce instead of college. Though Shannon originally shared her slight aspirations to attend college in her freshman year of high school, she encountered a large familial shift in her junior year when her parents divorced. Though Shannon's parents, even prior to the divorce, constantly enforced her need to financially contribute to the household, these messages were amplified after the divorce, given that the household was limited to one parent's income. Though college could eventually bring Shannon and her family different forms of support after her college graduation, at that time in her life she received parental messages that there 'was just no time for college right now,' and that working and making money was more important. These experiences seemingly affect Shannon at this time in her life as well as in her eventual entry in post-secondary education.

The aforementioned excerpts posit parental perspectives that show intentional parental objection to college altogether as well as an integrated parental position that focuses on getting a job instead to meet the real needs within the family for financial

support. These parental perspectives also show neoliberal influences that not only position post-secondary education as an entity of investment, instead of social welfare, but also posit a focus on the workforce as a means to self-betterment. Participants not only experienced parents that saw college as an unnecessary holistic and financial investment altogether, but showed enhanced focus on financial accumulation as a means of security in its stead (Ong, 2017). Seemingly, the financial hardships that these families experienced, causing the desire of additional income, are not only inequities in and of themselves, but also inadvertently create inequities around the participants' future college career journeys. Decidedly, these factors would play major roles within the participants' future college aspirations as well as their college choice. Within the next cluster of meaning, I find a relatable focus on labor from a different position, that is, parental aspirations of college as a means of obtaining a career with financial security.

Parental perceptions of college for career capital

Within this theme's third and final cluster of meaning, I found that participants experienced parents who only wanted college for the participants as a means of obtaining a career with financial security. First, I present an example from Derrek, who shares that his parents wanted him to choose a financially lucrative college major in hopes that he would not encounter the same financial adversities that they had experienced. In discussing his parents' support for him pursuing college, he shared the following.

> Derrek: Uh I think they were both positive about it. Uh my mom was more concerned about life, you know? I guess what that would look like financially. I guess that that I'd be able to get a good job.
>
> Joe: Did they ever mention, like, what kind of job, just curious?

> Derrek: Well…she's [mom] always like, 'you know you have to get a job since, since, you will need money in life.' She was all like 'if you want to suffer like us, don't go to college, you'll see.'
>
> Joe: How about your dad?
>
> Derrek: Yeah, I, he, he was all about it. But, he was specific, they both were.

Though Derrek's parents were somewhat supportive over college, he then shares that their aspirations towards his college pursuits were specific in that they wanted him to pursue a financially lucrative major. Derrek's parents believed that a financially lucrative major would lead to a financially lucrative career which would then afford Derrek an easy life:

> …they wanted me to be an engineer, or something with computer science. Something that would pay and make the college time worthwhile. I mean, they flipped when I told them I wanted to teach. I'm telling you I really wanted to teach. To this day. But, they were like 'hell no.' [laughs]

Derrek then shares that at one point he is detoured from pursuing his true major of choice, which is teaching. As Derrek highlights, teaching is not seen as a worthwhile career by his parents given that teachers tend to be underpaid and may struggle financially in life. Derrek then adds that his parents, though jokingly but not really, are actually depending on his financial success given that they have no retirement plan:

> No offense…well, since, you know teachers are not paid that well, especially here. So, they were like no. They didn't want me in the arts either, cause, you know, I was into marching band, they said no way. Do something that will get you money. And they always joked, kinda, but they were all 'we don't have retirement.' [laughs]

These messages demonstrate a parental focus on college as a means for a lucrative career. These messages are enhanced when the parents recommend specific majors that are

perceived to lead to more financially lucrative careers. Derrek, who was more interested in the arts and music, is actually rebuked for considering those fields, given that those types of careers do not 'pay well.' Furthermore, messages about parental future financial security also come into play, when Derrek's parents imply that they are depending on his post-college income as a means of retirement. Juxtaposing these findings is an example from Marc, whose parents' perspectives regarding college were similar to Derrek's; they saw the importance of college as a means to a career with subsequent financial security. Marc shared the following in discussing his parents' messaging around college:

> It's just because of the, like higher stand- I guess just the brighter outcome of having an education versus like not ... it's ... it- it's just kind of like falls back into like working with your back or working with your, your head, you know? … Getting, getting an education and being able to, uh, get a good job that has always been their message. And, I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that my dad worked so much, you know, driving across country. It was tough.

Similarly to Derrek's parents, Marc encounters subtle messages regarding collegial aspiration as a means to financial security. Additionally, Marc's parents also relay their possible future financial dependence on his career, given that they are "getting tired." Obtaining a good career was essential according to his father especially, Marc shares that his dad even suggests lucrative careers:

> Marc: So, they were always like, you know, 'we are getting tired, so you should really, really go to college and get a good career.' I was constantly hearing that, yeah, like a lot growing up.
>
> Joe: Did they ever mention what type of career, or?
>
> Marc: Yeah, yeah, I mean they said something where I would be comfortable. They, or my dad, especially I should say, was like be a banker or an engineer. I mean I they knew lawyer or doctor was a long shot and a long time, but yeah, they were saying things like that.

As previously mentioned above, Marc further clarifies his parents quid pro quo stance for their financial security, that is, since they took care of him, it was now his turn:

> Marc: Yeah, no, well the understanding, as far as I knew was like, hey 'we took care of you so we expect you to take care of us,' like that you know. I mean, they [parents] dropped hints that they expected us [siblings] to like take care of things, like provide you know? So, they always stressed the money part, that we should be in good industry, not like something that doesn't pay well.

These findings collectively demonstrate parental college aspiration for the participants as a means of obtaining a career with financial security. Though I saw that parents did support and hold a desire for the participants to go to college, I also saw those notions rested on the hope that they would chose a college career track with substantive financial security. Seemingly, these received parental messages and notions later caused the participants to view college not as a means of social welfare and higher learning, but as a means of financial sustainability via career acquisition and job training. Moreover, utilizing entrenched parental messages as a foundation, these participants collectively would later see career attainment as a primary motivation for their college choice.

Theme summary

Within this section's theme, "Parental focus on labor," are the following key findings and thematic clusters: (1) Participants experienced their parents' perspectives as being concerned with the cost and value of college, (2) Participants experienced parents who wanted them to work full-time after their high school graduation, without attending college, and (3) participants experienced parents who only wanted college as a means for the participants to obtain a career with financial security. Using this study's theoretical framework, parental desires revealed a deep-rooted neoliberalist influence that forced

individuals to focus on new accumulation-centered opportunities for capital via a focus on existential labor spheres (Ong, 2017; Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003).

Secondly, parental positionalities showed a neoliberal influence that not only views post-secondary education as an entity of investment instead of social welfare, but also focuses on the workforce as a means to self-betterment. Participants not only experienced parents who saw college as an unnecessary holistic and financial investment altogether, but showed enhanced focus on financial accumulation as a means of security in its stead. (Ong, 2017; Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003). Together, these findings demonstrate the ways these immediate spheres of influence on these students' choices (parents) reflect broader geographies of inopportunity regarding financial security. In each of these instances, participants' parents were primarily concerned about the financial viability of a degree, influenced by their own financial struggles and perceptions of opportunity that higher education could provide. I argue that these notions and messages would later cause the participants to view college as a means of financial security and career training instead of social welfare and higher learning. I further argue that these notions on financial security and career training were later leveraged by the manipulative marketing strategies of for-profit institutions. Subsequently, these pre-conceived notions, integrated with for-profit marketing strategies, led to a perceived opportunity that influenced these participants' enrollment decisions. These findings are further linked to the ways support was provided, or not, to participants in their formal schooling spaces, as discussed in the following thematic area of findings.

Limit of public-sphere secondary and post-secondary counseling support

Theme two reveals a phenomenologically shared experience of a limit of public-sphere secondary and post-secondary counseling support across a majority of the study's participants. Specifically, this theme has two specific clusters of meaning that reveal this overarching thematic experience:

1. Participants experienced a low level of support from high school counselors regarding post-secondary education. Gaps in support were described as limited as well as transactional or rushed student interactions between the participants and counselors.
2. Participants experienced a low level of post-secondary support from California community college counselors. Gaps in support were described as rushed or impersonal negative interactions between the participants and counselors.

These findings show a neoliberal influence of public-sphere cutbacks via inadequate sourcing and support of secondary and post-secondary counselors. These cutbacks, though disguised as counseling support shortfalls and negative counseling experiences, are in fact part of a larger systemic inequality within this geography which is poorly resourced and not adequately capable of supporting these populations. First, I explore the experiences of a low level of secondary support from the participants' high school counselors, specifically around post-secondary education.

Low level of secondary support from high school counselors

Within this theme's first cluster of meaning, participants experienced a particularly low, or limited, level of college counseling support and advising from their respective high school counselors. Subsequently, these advising and counseling

limitations on the part of the participants' high school counselors inadvertently created an inequity of post-secondary knowledge, which potentially created learning shortfalls around college choice education. First, I look at several examples from participants with high school counselors who were rarely available and only made time for advising when semester course planning was involved. Dee shares the following regarding her interactions and perceptions of her high school counselor:

> Dee: I can't really even remember her name [laughter]. Ugh, most of the times we met were just to pick classes for the next year, you know? I think, honestly, we maybe only met like five times.
>
> Joe: So, nothing around college?
>
> Dee: No, I'm telling you it was pretty rushed most of the time. I think she sent an email reminding us to go see her for schedules, but I think that was it.

These experiences show secondary counselors as transactional in nature and only offering support around class scheduling in the short term versus longer-term support. Additionally, these experiences demonstrate 'rushed' interactions which potentially mean the counselor was overburdened with student appointments or related tasks. Next, I present similar experiences from another participant, Moe, who shares parallel 'transactional' experiences with her high school counselor:

> I mean, they would help with like scheduling but with college… I think my counselor once had me pick up information on SAT dates, stuff like that, but that was pretty much it. Ya, I think the rest was about my schedule. Things moved fast when I met with her. I mean, she was nice, but ya, no college stuff, not really?

Moe's experiences parallel Dee's partially, given that both had interactions with counselors that were transactional in nature and were mostly concerned with school scheduling. Juxtaposed to these were experiences of counselors being in a rush, or 'moving fast,' which may again indicate high caseloads for these secondary counselors.

Though Moe does recall one counselor interaction having to do with college, she mentions that her appointment with her counselor was only to stop by her office and pick up a sheet with SAT testing dates; that was all. This exemplifies the gap in information provided by these institutional agents who were in positions to support students and challenge the broader forces impeding lack of geographical opportunities. The next example from Vic shares similar encounters, but even goes as far to say that he felt like he was bothering his counselor, since he was always 'busy':

> You know what's funny is I- I really didn't know the ... I didn't really didn't know the purpose of a counselor until I got older like past even college. I didn't really see the purpose of they're supposed to guide you in the direction that basically helps you stay on track towards your professional career or your education career. Um, so he [counselor] wasn't really helpful in that sense. He was more like, "Okay, this is what you need. This is what you need. This is what you need basically to help you graduate high school." It wasn't more about steering me in the college direction. I mean, it was a pain just to get in his seat.

Vic shares that on top of his experiences with counselor visits being transactional in nature only, there were additional barriers to simply getting face-to-face time with him in the first place. Vic shares that his high school's counseling office enacted a pre-appointment checklist as a means to detour students to other automated resources to answer their counseling questions. Vic highlights his underlying anxiety when he went to meet with his counselor, as he felt he may have been bothering him:

> I had to fill out this request, we all did, and had to say like, who we were and like why we wanted to see him. On top of that, he had like bullets on the request form that said "did you check this," or "did you look for your question here," and "no, I cannot write letters of rec," stuff like that. Then when I met with him for my class stuff, he was like, I don't know, bothered to see me.

This experience not only further demonstrates the transactional nature of the relationship with these secondary counselors, but also shows instances of potential barriers to obtaining counseling at large. Potential barriers are manifested via enhanced procedures

and ‘checklists’ which students had to complete prior to meeting with a counselor. These checklists often aimed to redirect students elsewhere in an effort to answer their questions, instead of speaking with a counselor. Furthermore, appointment request forms were marked with notations of what the counselor ‘could not do,’ so if the student was looking for help with one of those items, they should not even bother. These methods of operation on the part of the counselor parallel the operation of a ‘triage’ process - assigning degrees of urgency for prioritization (Emergency Medicine Journal, 2018). Given that triage processes are utilized in high traffic environments (e.g. emergency rooms), one could argue that these lived experiences mark a counseling office that was so desperate and overbooked with caseloads that it sought any and all means of redirecting students elsewhere as a form of case management. In either case, these led to gaps in their information received about college from key individuals who had the potential to shape it.

Notably, not all participants experienced counselors as transactional or with a sense of rushing. Still, counseling shortfalls may appear in other experiences. For example, next, we see excerpts from the interview with Derrick, who disturbingly experienced a counselor who encouraged him to consider the possibility of a vocational program at the local adult school or at the community college:

> Yeah, they're always gonna try to say, you know, where do you wanna go, what do you wanna do with your life? Although I do remember at um, maybe I'm jumping ahead, but, at one point I remember meeting with him [counselor] and I mean he caught me off guard…I was having a rough patch with grades and he was trying to find a math class for me that he thought I could try the next semester. And, I saw all these college flags in his office, and it made me ask about how hard it was to get in state, and man he looked at me like “yeah right, no.”

At this point one can see that Derrek was caught off-guard by the disposition of his counselor's viewpoint, which was that college for Derrek was unrealistic. Supplementing further doubts to Derrek's viewpoint about college were the counselor's added suggestions regarding trade and vocation programs:

> [H]e was also like "listen Derrek, I'm a realist, I'm gonna say you should consider one of the vocation programs at [city] adult, or at city [city college]." Then he went on about how I could make a decent living with HVAC or welding. I mean it bummed me out, I'm not gonna lie to you.

Derrick's experiences show a low level of secondary support from his high school counselor, as a lack of counsel on how to achieve his aspiration of getting into a four-year state school. Though Derrick's counselor seemingly claimed he was a 'realist,' this factor in Derrick's lived high school experience would eventually lead him to believe that he was, in fact, incapable of attending a four-year state school. This experience further demonstrates that this geography may hold inequities disguised as secondary counselors who are inadequately supported, or in this instance inadequately trained, to support underserved populations within high school.

These excerpts show an inequity of post-secondary knowledge by the participants' high school counselors, which potentially created learning shortfalls in the participants' college choice education. These learning inequities not only robbed the participants of collegial choice knowledge at large, but further stratified the inequities within this region. Furthermore, these inequities are not necessarily a causation of the individual counselors themselves, but moreover, unearth a larger systemic inequity within this geography. These public support deficits show a deep-rooted neoliberal system of inequity within this region as a withdrawal of governmental support from the provision of social welfare (Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003). This needed social welfare exists as a form of appropriate

counseling staff support and training in this geography of secondary schools. (I further discuss these findings in Chapter Five.) Within the next cluster of meaning for this theme, I see a similar focus on the participants' experiences of low level of support, but from their community college counselors as well.

Low level of post-secondary support from community college counselors

Within this theme's second cluster of meaning, the eight participants who attended community college experienced particularly limited college counseling support and advising from their respective community college counselors. These advising shortfalls on the part of the participants' community college counselors inadvertently created an inequity of college completion or four-year-transferability. Unintentionally, these experiential factors would eventually come into play when the participants were seeking to return to college, having had negative experiences at their community college.

Below, I look at several examples of participants' negative encounters with their respective community college counselors. First is an excerpt from Dee, a participant who highlighted her interaction with her community college counselor as impersonal and transactional, subsequently lacking the support she was seeking regarding her program pathway:

> Yeah, you know, when I, when I went to, when I graduated high school and I went into City College, the counselors did not help me at all. It was, like, as soon as you got in, there was like, da-da-da. "You need this, this, and that and this and don't come back until you finish those classes." And I was like, uh, what kind of counseling is this? You know, like, it was just like, not even encouragement or, like, let me, you know, let me get you on the right track. There was no kind of social interaction or anything. They're, they pretty much looked like they hated their jobs.

These experiences were troubling for Dee, not only given her past academic adversities in high school, but given that she felt reaching time with a counselor was never worth it. Dee also shares of the repeated long lines and time consumption whenever she made an appointment with a counselor:

> [It happened] at least twice, it was bad both times. Even with different people. And I mean, I waited in that line forever, both times, like over an hour with an appointment. Over an hour…You know, it was just like, if, even if I waited in that line to see a counselor, it was like a waste of time. I hate, and I hated that. I never wanted to go back to that office. I mean to this day.

These narratives add context to the perceived negative counseling experiences these participants encountered during high school. Though these experiences could potentially be labeled as encounters with 'bad' counselors, we must re-examine Dee's story in specificity. First, Dee shares the fact that the counselor was transactional in nature, seeming to be rude and rushed. However, Dee also mentions the consistent 'long-lines' she encountered prior to having both meetings. These long lines could posit a counseling department that is understaffed as well as under-resourced given these imminent signs and general trends in community college advising (Bastedo, 2011; Iloh, 2014). Juxtaposed to this, another participant, Annamaria, shared a similar experience with her community college counselor:

> I was afraid to meet with them [counselors]. I think it would probably be on my end that I didn't have confidence. That- that I kind of ... (laughs) I don't know…I was frustrating them? Making them mad?

Similar to Vic's experiences within high school, Annamaria is faced with the stigma of feeling she is frustrating her community college counselor, given that she is not understanding the process he is asking her to complete. At this point, Annamaria is

afraid to move forward with asking for help and is feeling lost. When asked how the impression was expressed by her counselor, Annamaria explained:

> just by their face expression they looked annoyed with my questions about classes. Like, they were just telling me to read the book and see what I needed, which I did, but I wasn't understanding…At the time, I was going for child development classes, but I think I was really lost. I- I think it was just too big and broad, you know? Um, I think that I- I just wasn't ready. I think it was like a- a big city, I kind of got lost. They really didn't help.

Annamaria's experiences show both her deep-rooted fears around academia at large, as well as the instance of an inequity disguised as a counselor who provided a low level of support. I explicitly argue inequity, given that this counselor may have been under resourced as well. Another participant, Vic, shares his similar experienced frustrations with his community college counselor, relatedly, around program requirements. Vic focuses on his recollections of his counselor continually referring him to the college catalog instead of advising him:

> Oh yeah, I mean…I just felt like I was bothering him [counselor] just because, because I had no idea what I needed or what the heck he was talking about with all the 'this requirement' and 'that requirement' and electives stuff. He kept trying to show me online really quick, but I was lost and he looked pissed.

Though Vic's experiences begin to align with Annamaria's around feeling that his community college counselor's frustrations with him were growing. Still, Vic also makes a keen observation that considers, perhaps, the counselor is simply overworked and under-sourced:

> I don't know man, I mean, I guess maybe he had too many kids to deal with that day. I honestly don't blame him. I had to sit in that office for a while and there were plenty of people in front of me. I don't know maybe it was my fault, I honestly just didn't understand the requirements for what I needed to register for.

Vic's experience, partially aligned with the previous experiences, mentions that his counselor made several attempts to 'show him' how to obtain the answers to his questions, both with the catalog and using the online resources. However, his counselor became upset when he realized Vic was not 'getting it.' This perceived lack of support may suggest shortfalls with regards to counselor training, specifically around dealing with underserved populations of students who hold stigmas around academia, such as Vic and Annamaria. Another participant, Shannon, similarly shares a relatable encounter within another portion of the interview that focuses on her experience with her admissions representative at her for-profit institution. Unfortunately, her experience at her previously attended community college was quite different:

> It wasn't like when I went to City. I felt uncomfortable going there [city college] to ask about the same program. I just, it didn't, I didn't feel comfortable asking those people [counselors] questions or anything. Like they were too busy. So, I said forget it…I don't know, I just, I just got bad impression of it, you know, like the counselor that was there, she wasn't like very welcoming. It was just kind of like she was really busy. She didn't take the time to like help me. So, I just lied and said I understood everything and left, just to get out of there. I said forget you.

In this case, Shannon purposefully parallels the differentiation between her interactions with her for-profit representative, which were positive to her as suggested here and reflected in other parts of the interview, and her interactions with her community college counselor, which were negative and left her not feeling supported and feeling like a bother

These parallels highlight a central finding which shows the differentiating modes of operations within for-profit institutions when compared to community colleges. For one reason or the other, Shannon felt the for-profit representative provided better 'customer service,' when compared to the counselor. Still, Shannon highlights a common

variable across all of the experiences; they were perceived as being 'busy' at the expense of the time needed to support individual students. Shannon's experience is not unique across the participants' community college careers. In fact, of the nine participants, six shared experiences of negative or rushed interactions with their community college counselor prior to their subsequent enrollment into a for-profit institution. These experiences created a pathway into for-profit institutions for the participants, given that these institutions encompass marketing strategies disguised as 'customer service' and 'ease of enrollment' which may have then appealed to these participants. These interactions with for-profit representatives are expanded upon further in the following themes.

The above experiences show an inequity of a low level of post-secondary advisement support from California Community College counselors. These shortfalls in advisement support subsequently created stratified inequities around community college degree completion and four-year transfer capability. These support shortfalls play major roles when examining these participants' paths to for-profit institutions. Furthermore, these experiences are not directly the fault of the individual counselors themselves, but result from inequity caused by a larger systemic issue that lacks financial and pragmatic support for this particular population of college support staff. These community college counselor support shortfalls show a deep-rooted neoliberal system of inequity within this region as a withdrawal of governmental support from the provision of social welfare (public college counseling) (Giroux, 2014). Decidedly, these college support staff are provided inadequate resources to properly support this geography of inequality. (I discuss

these findings more in Chapter Five.) Next, I summarize and discuss this theme's findings and contentions.

Theme summary

Within this section's theme of a limit of public-sphere secondary and post-secondary counseling support, I reviewed two primary subthemes. First, I found that participants experienced low secondary support from high school counselors regarding post-secondary education. This low level of secondary support resulted from participants' shared experiences of encountering counselors who were rushed and transactional in nature. Second, a majority of these counselors spent little to no time educating the participants on college aspirations and choices. Though these support shortfalls on the part of the high school counselors are apparent, they disguise a larger neoliberal cutback of public-sphere counseling support for this underserved population and geography at large. Seemingly, these public sectors require added staff resources and additional training regarding the counseling of underserved students; however, this lack of support clearly manifests within the above experiential data.

Next, I found that participants experienced low post-secondary support from California community college counselors. Participants experienced a low level of secondary support from their counselors via interactions with counselors that participants described as rushed, transactional, and negative altogether. These interactions, according to the participants, were always prefaced with long waits in long lines to see these counselors. These 'rushed interactions,' and 'long lines,' though disguised as negative interactions and counseling shortfalls, are a part of larger neoliberal cutback of public-sphere counseling support for this underserved body of students and geography at large.

Juxtaposed to my argument regarding high school counselors, this public sector is in dire need of added staff resources as well as added training on the collegiate counseling of underserved students.

Similarly, these public-sphere cutbacks come to fruition, clearly, within the lived experiences of the participants' narratives above. Inadvertently, these counseling shortfalls created pathways of inequity into for-profit institutions for these participants. Pathways of inequity are manifested either by lack of college choice education at large in high school or lack of college support with regards to completion or transfer in community colleges. While this analysis allows me to center the structural challenges that shape the ways these counselors engage in their roles, it is not intended to excuse their continuous minimization of students' concerns, weak connection with them, and lack of understanding of their needs as students. However, greater investment in their roles by the institution could have provided student's access to better prepared and better resourced counselors to mitigate the broader impacts of inequity on their experiences. I will discuss these findings, as well as their implications, further in Chapter Five of this research. Next I focus on the third theme of a competitive market of for-profit institutions.

A competitive market of for-profit institutions

Theme three reveals a phenomenologically shared experience of a competitive market of for-profit institutions across a majority of the study's participants. These competitive markets presented luring methods of marketing to these participants disguised as individualistic opportunities for post-secondary education. This theme housed one centralized 'cluster of meaning' that posited this overarching thematic

experience that participants experienced influence from for-profit institutions' luring competitive market strategies.

Holistically, this centralized theme shows a deep-rooted neoliberal economy ideology within this geography of for-profit institutions. These institutions' operations, though disguised as products meeting the participants' educational needs, are in reality products of neoliberal marketing that aim to capture capital accumulation via an underlying neoliberal foundation that competitive markets are more effective and efficient. I now examine this critical subtheme and discuss excerpts from participants' interviews that support this point.

Influence from for-profit institutions' luring competitive market strategies

The term 'market strategies,' in this section not only refers to actual marketing strategies, but also to existential organizational methods of operation and structure (Giroux, 2014). In addition to this premise, for-profit institutions are intentionally structured as capital-seeking organizational structures who operate as hunters of clients in an effort to seek effective competitive markets, at a profitable cost to the consumer (Iloh & Tierney, 2013). Moreover, 'luring' refers to the postured opportunity presented by the existential for-profit institution, as a product for sale that meets the consumer's need (Iloh, 2014) (Cottom, 2017). Below, I present examples from the participants of for-profit market strategy luring and show how these lure strategies were presented, directly or as perceptions, to the participants as opportunities. First, Dee discusses her temporal experiences of needing a change and wanting to return to school in order to find a career. Dee discusses the first recollection of her institution of enrollment, as well as her view of the perceived opportunities that led her there:

> Ya one day it just clicked you know. I think I had had it with, like, just wasting time. I mean I wanted to make money and find a job, a better job. But I know that doesn't just happen, you know? I mean it takes school. You need to do school. But I, I had a tough time before, so I was like what can I do? That's when Heald came into my head…at that time, it was in the newspaper. I, I don't remember but I do remember that it [newspaper] said something like 'get in get out,' or like 'finish in 18 months and get into a career that you love,' something like that.

This initial marketing strategy immediately captured Dee's attention, given that she was interested in pursuing alternative avenues, avenues outside of the state community college system, where she had held negative experiences. Dee felt this advertisement was a wakeup call to her:

> I always wanted to know more about law. And I saw one of the programs offered was the paralegal certificate. I always wanted to do stuff about it, you know, to learn it. Um, but when I seen Heald College had that program, because I have ... we have this family friend who, she's an attorney and I was able to work with her a couple of times before I even went into that program. So, that opened my eyes. I was, like, oh, this is pretty interesting. I like it. You know, this is my field. I, you know? So, I went, when I seen that Heald had that program, I was like, you know what, I'm gonna try it and that's what ... I went in.

Dee 'went in,' given that she found herself at a point in life where she was tired of wasting time at a job, she perceived, as not going anywhere. Dee felt that in order to achieve her goal of making money and finding a better job, she needed a college education. Given her previous negative experiences at her local city college, she knew she would need an alternate avenue of pursuit. In this instance, a for-profit marketing strategy came to fruition via a newspaper advertisement, which literally calls out to : 'get in get out;' telling Dee that they can meet her at her desired goal of receiving a college education, and receiving it fast. This marketing strategy worked on Dee, as she immediately made an appointment with an advisor. Next, are interview excepts from Annamaria, who mentions similar circumstances around wanting a career and her desire

to stop ‘wasting time.’ However, Annamaria’s stigmas around fear of education, appear to be immediately neutralized when she first entered the institution’s doors:

> Yeah, I mean at the time, I had just had my third child. So, um, I was ready to try and get a good career, you know? Um, I think it was originally that I just wanted to open a business of some sort. Then out of nowhere, it was like, maybe a hair salon? I had kind of like a distorted, uh, what it ... it's li- ... not like a goal, but, um, I don't know, dream? And, um, I just had no ... I didn't really initially have the desire to do hair, but I took a tour and I actually liked the culture.

This expert of data shows Annamaria’s initial intentions, which were that she really wasn’t sure of what she wanted to do, career wise. Still we see her immediately captivated by the initial atmosphere of the institution, what she calls “the culture:”

> I’d say the school had the culture of being a hair stylist kind of, uh, like an artist. Um, not- not your typical industry. Growing up, my mom always took me to boring salons. But, this place [the school] wasn’t like a boring salon, it was more, um, edgy and, um, and fun. From the first time I walked in…I was so nervous since, you know, I had such a bad experience with school. I don’t know I mean I had a big stigma I guess? With school? I was afraid [laughs] of teachers and counselors and it just wasn’t like that here [school].

Adding to Annamaria’s enamorment was her feeling of ease around the teaching environment of the school. This school was not like the other schools where she had encountered negative experiences, this place was different, she recounts:

> I mean, I was immediately relaxed once I walked in. The counselors were like dressed really fashion forward and the place had loud house music, and you could see the classrooms were like a party central with learning to do hair. I mean, it put me at ease since I was scared, I’m telling you, I was scared. Then I saw [laughs] then I saw the toys and candy on her [admissions rep] desk.

Annamaria’s academic background consisted of negative experiences with not only teaching environments, but staff as well. Annamaria’s stigmas with staff are also immediately neutralized by the presence of toys within this environment, but also general dispositions. She expressed the following:

> she [admissions rep] told me it was since the college found that most hair stylists were fidgety and liked to have things to fidget with. Since, I guess, it was hard for them [stylists] to stand still?

In this instance, Annamaria, similarly to Dee, had negative experiences at her city college, but also wanted to return to college in order to obtain a career and or business. Annamaria's prior stigmas around post-secondary education and staff support—fostered by her experiences within the community college—are immediately neutralized by this cosmetology school's marketing strategy of one-to-one enhanced admissions support, as well as a perceived existence of 'stylist culture.' As these narratives show, Annamaria was immediately captured by these strategies and longed to 'become a part of' the culture of hairstylist found within this school. Though Dee and Annamaria were led to these strategies through similar temporal desires to obtain a career, this was not the only method with which these participants met these strategies.

Next, I present difficult experiences from Bella who was actually admitted to a state school in the valley. Due to not understanding her provisional admissions requirement around maintaining 7th semester [14] GPA, she was subsequently notified after high school graduation that her admission had been revoked. Bella had planned to use her saved money to move out of town and attend her state school in an effort to "escape" her hometown and parents' strict cultural upbringings. Seeing no other option, and desperate to leave her parents household where she has been forbidden to pursue college

[14] The 7th semester requirement encompasses the fall semester of a California high school student's fall (second to last) semester. Most major California Ssate universities enact provisional admissions requirements within the 7th semester, which usually, requires the provision of additional transcripts to the college's admissions office to support the maintaining or raising of G.P.A. or other requirements, prior to official admission (CSU, 2018).

since she is a young female, Bella shares her thinking in finding her footing with regards to 'running away' from the valley:

> I mean, there I was just crying and crying in their [state college's] parking lot. I just freaked out and was like, what am I supposed to do now? So, I called [older brother name]… For advice. He had actually moved away too, right after he graduated high school. He moved up to the bay area. He went to a private college up there so I just called him. I literally had no one else to call.

Having no other avenue to "escape" her hometown along with her parent's stronghold, Bella enacted what research literature around Latinx college choice calls familial capital, that is, she turned to a family member for advice about what to do now. In this case, Bella turned to her brother and described her conversation with him:

> I told him what had happened. I'm not gonna lie, he was really mad. He was like 'that's the only way you were going to get out of there [home], you knew that.' So, that didn't help. But then he was like, 'ok, get on the Amtrak and I'll pick you up in Richmond. I'll call mom and tell her I want you to visit I know how to talk to her.'…It was his way of saying, ok this is bad, but let's sit together and figure it out. So, we did. I mean we had lunch and he was like, 'listen, the only option now is to talk them [parents] into letting you go to city [city college in her hometown] or go to a private college out of town.' The I told him, 'how about up here [San Francisco]?' And he was like 'exactly,' then I can back you up.'

Here we see a difficult experience around Bella's college journey, as well as her brother's advice for addressing her college plans. We see that even her brother was upset at her loss of the conditional admission to the state university, still, he understands her wanting to leave home and decides to help her emotionally, logistically, and even financially. In describing her search at that point in the admissions cycle, Bella explains her choice process:

> Yeah, basically anyone who was still enrolling at that time [summer]. And I mean he was right, it was only the big private schools. Mainly, the art schools, so I ended looking into the biggest one that had lots of housing. I loved art and drawing, a lot. So, I applied in person. It took all day, and my brother went, but at the end of the day, I was in [enrolled] and he [brother] had even payed for my

> years housing payment in advance. It was like 13 G's[15] so I really couldn't, I was like, like, what just happened? [laughs] It all happened so fast. But, I got to leave, leave fast [hometown and home].

Here I see that Bella's desperation, in attempting to leave her parent's strict household, led her to frantically search for other avenues of 'running away.' Though Bella does aspire to go to college, her true overarching goal was wanting a way out of the valley, fast. Bella is met with a marketing strategy of temporally efficient enrollment processes. Given her desperation following challenges with her initial post-secondary enrollment plans, she succumbs to a large for-profit institution that promised to accept and enroll her immediately as well as provide her with student housing. Seemingly, the marketing strategies of this institution's business operations were impossible for Bella to decline, given her temporal urgency. Below are Vic's examples which reveal less about urgency and more about career change aspirations.

Vic's college choice journey, which subsequently centered around the desire for a new career, was challenging but also afforded him a manageable means of completion, given that he was currently navigating two jobs as a restaurant waiter:

> Yeah so doing the all-day thing, as a waiter, I mean you know it gets taxing. I mean I was still young and everything but still it had gotten old after five years. So, I was like, I need to get into a career and stop lollygagging, but, that means going back to college. I was like 'I hate city' I had a terrible time there, and on top of that, to help out around the house, I had to also find a program that would let me work during the day, full time. That's when my buddy mentioned DeVry.

At this point in Vic's journey there are several paths that cross. First Vic has felt the taxing reality of working two full time jobs. Secondly, Vic realizes that going back to school may be required for the commencement of a career, but he is by no means willing

[15] G's: Term referring to monetary equivalent of one thousand dollars.

to return to City College, given his experiences. Vic is then referred to a possible solution, by his colleague and friend, who recommended DeVry:

> Oh yeah, he was still going there at the time. Um, well, with that referral from my buddy, he was the one who sold me on it because it was just so fascinating to me. It- it fascinated me, he [friend] told me, on how detailed and how in depth the program was. I mean, how they, they got you all the way down to microcontrollers, uh, wireless communications, um, and just speaking computer code. Also, how they broke it down all the way to ones and zeros. It was fascinating.

Next, Vic expresses how he is reminded of his stigma around navigating college based on his past experiences, but as the below will show, those fears are soon put to ease. He expressed the following as part of his choice process:

> the night schedule thing was important so I could work. My friend told me like 'yeah they have night classes,' and then I was freaking out about the admissions paperwork. I mean, I had a bad time with paperwork at city [city college], so I started to second guess, then my buddy was all like 'nah, it's super easy, it won't even take you an hour to get into your classes, watch.' So, that being said, I mean, he was really right, it was fast to sit and talk with someone, and the processes he [admissions rep] showed me were fast, really fast and pain free. I was like I'm down for this.

Similar to the other participants, Vic's narratives reinforce his previous negative contentions regarding his local city college; however, one also sees that his primary goal is to remain employed full time while attempting to go to college. At the referral of his friend and coworker, Vic is immediately captured by the institution's marketing strategy of flexible methods of course completion - variable methods of completing his program either with night or online classes. Likewise, we also see examples of one-to-one enhanced admissions support and temporally efficient enrollment processes as strategies, both of which immediately appealed to Vic, considering his past negative experiences within higher education.

Lastly, we visit Shannon's experiential encounters around being led to her college choice. Shannon expresses her desire to complete a quick certification that will allow her to accept a promotion at her work. However, Shannon shares similar experiences as the other participants around refusing to complete her education at her local community colleges, mainly, due to bad experiences:

> Um, well my job, I wanted to work in the emergency room and they had phlebotomy, so that was one of the reasons why I took it, too. My boss told me I had an opportunity to get into that position, but, I needed the certification first. I mean, I had done the necessary units before at city [city college] to get this job, but there was no way in [explicit term] I was going back to that place. I hated it there [city college].

Thus, her process of seeking a suitable institution to continue her education was informed by negative experiences in one institution space. In asking about her college search process, Shannon replied with the following:

> Um, this school I found by asking a friend. Yeah, they were like 'its super-fast, only like 18 months, and the admissions is easy, it's pretty much guaranteed.' It's just fast you know? So, I knew I needed to do the certificate, and that I was not going back to city, but, so, I just chose this place [college] since everyone was like 'it's fast.' So, I headed in to meet with the admissions person.

Shannon's refusal to return to her local city college as well as her desire to quickly accumulate her necessary credit certification to receive a job promotion left her in a vulnerable space that led her to her institutions strategy of temporally efficient enrollment as well as temporally efficient program completion—fast enrollment and a fast certification. These strategies effectively met Shannon at her need and lured her to what was disguised as a fast program option and efficient process.

The above experiences show situational inequities that place the participants within vulnerable spaces of their lived experiences. I see departing aspirational instances

of: career-entrance desire, escape from subjectivity of rule, entrepreneurial desire, career desire with education temporal flexibility, and career promotion desire. However, I simultaneously see shared vulnerabilities, including fear and stigmas of public community colleges and temporal urgencies fostered by the geography of inopportunity shaping educational experiences in the region. I then see the postured opportunities presented by the existential for-profit institutions as products that met the participants needs, via differentiating marketing methods including: one-to-one enhanced admissions support, temporally efficient enrollment, flexible methods of course completion, as well as an initial sense of organizational culture fit. What these efforts provide are alternatives to what students had been exposed to elsewhere in their educational pursuits -attention, timeliness, clarity of process, flexibility, and immersive experience.

These marketing lure methods show a deep-rooted neoliberal system of inequity in this region as a strategy for the provision of new accumulation-centered opportunities for capital as well as the championing privatization of social goods on the premise that competitive markets are more effective and efficient (Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003). Like a tumor within an immune-deficient body, these institutions play and prosper within the malignant spaces of inequity in this geography of inequality. I discuss these critical findings more in Chapter Five. Next, I summarize this theme's section and prepare to venture to the following thematic finding.

Theme summary

Within this section's theme of a competitive market of for-profit institutions, I reviewed the overarching subtheme that showed participants experienced influence from for-profit institutions' luring competitive market strategies. I additionally expounded the

theme utilizing the theoretical framework of this research and held that the theme encompassed inequities that showed deep-rooted neoliberalist influence as a strategy for the provision of new accumulation-centered opportunities for capital, as well as the championing privatization of social goods on the premise that competitive markets, housed as for-profit institutions, are more effective and efficient (Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003; Giroux, 2014). (keep for Chapter V)

These participants, like many others in this region, were temporally in vulnerable states of their lives, specifically around their aspirations. Simultaneously, these participants, like many others in this region, held their own stigmas around post-secondary education. In the above examples, common stigmas were manifested around bad experiences at community colleges as well as education at large. Truly examining these aspirations from the position of these participants' vulnerabilities, I see the true posture of the existential for-profit institution. This true posture identifies the for-profit institution as an actor that disguises itself as opportunity and as a product that meets the student customers need. These integrated realities together form an atmosphere of competitive markets in this region. Knowing that these participants, and many like them, hold stigmas around public post-secondary education and education at large, these institutions seize their opportunity to gain capital from their vulnerabilities, regardless of the consequences. I discuss these findings as well as their implications further in Chapter Five. Next, I focus on the fourth and final thematic findings of disillusionment with for-profit institutions.

Disillusionment with for-profit institutions

The fourth and final theme reveals a phenomenologically shared experience of disillusionment with for-profit institutions for a majority of the study's participants. This theme housed one centralized cluster of meaning that posited this overarching thematic experience, which found that participants experienced a sense of financial investment remorse following their for-profit institution enrollment as a result of accumulated debt and career attainment deficits.

Holistically, these findings posit for-profit institutions as neoliberal actors who, while enforcing the conceptualization of 'social image,' and increased self-worth boot-strap mentalities, are in fact perpetrating disillusionments to these underserved students as large. This disillusionment is shown in the fruition of mass debt accumulation as well as the participants' current careers. I now examine this critical subtheme below and discuss excerpts from the participants' interviews.

Financial remorse, as accumulated debts and career deficits

The experiences of participants held underlying tones of financial remorse as a result of accumulated debt through the utilization of financial student loans and career attainment shortfalls. According to a 2017 *U.S. News and World Report*, the five universities that produced the greatest number of dropouts with debt in 2016 were all for-profit institutions, including University of Phoenix (avg. debt: $7,843), ITT Technical Institute (avg. debt: $9,500), Ashford University (avg. debt: $4,750), Kaplan University (avg. debt: $6,837), and DeVry University ($13,843). Collectively, participants in this study attended four out of five of these institutions. The previous data match the current financial indebtedness state of these participants. As the findings will show, these participants currently hold noticeably higher amounts of student loan debt when

compared with not-for-profit and public university students (HELP, 2012). Research also shows that for-profit students have higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than their peers who attended non-profit and public institutions nearly six years after enrollment (*Harvard Law Review*, 2015). Though all nine of the participants were in fact gainfully employed at the time of their interviews, only three were employed within the field of study they pursued within their respective institutions. Given this inequity around indebtedness and career attainment, these findings are crucial considering the overrepresentation of for profit universities and the underrepresentation of public four-year universities in the Central San Joaquin Valley. I argue these realities subjugate this geography with high debts and low wages, further stratifying the current poverty that exists within this geography of inopportunity (USCB, 2016). Below, I examine such instances of inequalities according to the participants' narratives. First, I examine excerpts from Dee who discusses her financial concerns after graduating from her respective institution as well as her career not necessarily ending up where she originally intended:

> Joe: Was there anything, just any advice in general, anything you wish you knew before enrolling?
>
> Dee: How much it [college] cost… (laughs). That's the only thing. You know, I don't know ... they make school so expensive, you know. It, it was a lot more than I thought. At the time, ya I was like that's a lot by semester, but I think that I was so excited to start in two weeks, that, that I just ignored it?

At this point Dee shares that she is somewhat alerted to the cost of the program, but is actually so excited to quickly begin that she simply sets the cost aside. Next, we see how Dee compares the enrollment process to purchasing a vehicle:

> Joe: Did they, ever go over the whole price? Like say, this is the total cost?

> Dee: N..No I mean they just bust out a little placard that says this is what you pay per unit, this is how many units you take per semester and this is how many units your program has. (laughs) It actually reminded me of when I bought my car, you know?... (laughs) like how they tiptoe around the total cost after its said and done, and show you this number and that number. I mean, that's how it kind of was. At the end of the day, I'm happy at my job now, but it's totally opposite of what this program was.

Dee's narrative shows a critical concern around the amount of debt she accumulated while completing her program within her for-profit institution. Furthermore, Dee highlights that she was unable to obtain a career within her field as a paralegal. Given her current amount of high debt accumulation and the current state of her career journey, Dee's instance shows a primary example of financial remorse as a result of accumulated debts, as well as a justified career attainment shortfall. This career attainment shortfall places Dee as a secretary assistant within an elementary school, her current position, instead of her imagined career as a professional paralegal. Though Dee was able to complete her program of enrollment, this is not always the case as we will see with our next participant.

Below, I present interview data from Marc whose initial motivation was to leave the valley after high school graduation like his friends. We recall that Marc was denied from most of the public schools he applied to, and in desperation, he began searching online for other college options. After finding a probable college option, Marc asked his parents to take him on a tour of a major for-profit art institution located in San Francisco, to which they agreed. Marc enrolled that same day with both of his parents agreeing to co-borrow the maximum amount of loans in order to cover additional housing costs. Marc was eventually unable to afford the cost of education and living experiences one

year into his program. At one time, Marc even lived with six other roommates in a tiny apartment to attempt to save money. Having run out of options, Marc eventually returned to the valley to work full-time and move in with his parents. Marc discusses his reflections on the financial implications of his experiences:

> Yeah, when we went down, I was ready to go [enroll]. I was in a rush. Because that was ... that was when they were kinda like directing me and my parents to sign. So, I guess ... I'd ... I- I probably wasn't like the best at managing like how much all of this was costing. I probably wasn't doing anything at all in terms of that. So then when we finally got to signing, I think that's kind of when they presented us with like the- the remainder of the tuition that we owe, and like met ... how we can like sign school loans to pay that.

Similar to Dee's experiences, we see Marc's sense of urgency somewhat affect his questioning around the cumulative costs of the program. We also see that even at the point of signing the loan agreements, the entire experience is a quick blur. In discussing unanticipated costs and how college representatives engaged with him about it, Marc shared the following:

> Joe: When, you know, they started talking about financial costs, did they ... did you fully understand? Like you and your parents, did you all understand, like how much it was gonna cost or?
>
> Marc: Uh, definitely not. I think my dad didn't even realize that when he was signing the papers.
>
> Joe: Okay. Did- did the representative double-check and ask like, "Do you understand what the cost is?"
>
> Marc: Maybe he did. I- I- I really don't know. If he did, he brushed over it pretty quickly. I think my dad, he just, just saw how eager I was. But, it was a lot. I mean, we are both paying to this day? (sigh) A few years later.

Here we see a difficult experience within Marc's recount, which is that his sense of urgency and excitement triggered his father so support his urgency. Unfortunately, things did not necessarily turn out how Marc expected:

> Yeah, I didn't even end up using what I learned. It, it wasn't even transferable… The major that I picked, uh, motion picture and television, I felt like it was something I could do. Maybe not necessarily what I thought would be like the most successful, but it was something that, like I knew I could do. Something to make it through the school because I didn't know what else I wanted to do.

Though this instance shows Marc's temporal urgency given his desire to leave the valley, I also see the posture of this institution as being able to help obtain that goal at a cost. I even see that the promissory dream of being 'let into a college' like his friends and getting to leave the valley almost blinds Marc, as well as his father, regarding financial implications. Given that to this day Marc continues to repay the loans for his temporary enrollment and is not employed in his college program field of motion picture and television, this shows another instance of disillusionment. This disillusionment manifest itself as accumulated debts as well as career attainment shortfalls. Marc's experience shows the injustice of having been subjugated to a high amount of student loan debt which will take decades to pay, along with no college degree, while accumulating low wages within his current career. Unfortunately, Marc's story shows an inequitable experience within this geography of inopportunity. Similarly, Vic was also forced to leave his institution over financial constraints; however, this time the constraint was manifested as maximized student loan acquisition. Vic shares how his educational experience was 'cut-short' due to maxing out available student loans to him at the time and his regrets about the long-term financial implications and career results:

> I don't regret at all going to that university at all. I loved it. I just ... the financial hole that they put me in, that it put me in was my biggest regret because it still lives with me. I've lived with it for a long time and the unfortunate thing was is I ... because I needed more education to advance in it, and I needed more credentials and a higher education to finish it, I couldn't financially get myself to it, um, that I had to drop out. So basically, I'm stuck with a, an expensive bill with a low-level credential. And I'm not even in a career that is involved with that credential.

As Vic shares, at this point he finds himself unable to finish the program he began and is unable to continue until he finds another means of funding. In addition to the financial issue, at this point in his program, Vic now knows that most of the careers he would have wanted were located in Northern California, a place he was not willing to relocate to:

> [T]he better jobs are more involved in up north and the San Francisco Bay area, but cost of living was a lot. I didn't get any financial aid for any of that and not to mention I was just ... I didn't wanna move up there. It was my preference of where I wanted to live. So that's why I didn't advance, uh, if basically if I told myself, if I knew where I was gonna be at today with that education I probably wouldn't have done it. But, I don't regret it. I mean, that was ... the only thing I regretted was the financial cost.

Here is another example of financial remorse, given that Vic, though admittedly satisfied with his experience within his program, has maximized the allotted loan amounts and is unable to attain the degree he started. Vic found himself not only in a large amount of financial debt, but in a position where he had to leave his program only haven gotten half way through. Likewise, Vic is unable to obtain a career in his original degree field and eventually finds himself as a full-time waiter again. This disillusionment results from having promised Vic a career that he would enjoy and subsequently would have changed his life; but in reality, he now finds himself with mass accumulated debt and right back where he started career wise. Vic too has encountered an inequality within this geography

of inopportunity given his state of high student loan indebtedness, no degree, and a career within an unrelated field.

Though Vic was unable to finish his program, our next participant is able to do so with the assistance of her brother's financial support. However, her end result is similar to that of Vic's lived experience. Bella shares that she graduated with her bachelor's degree, though she was unable to find a career in her field of cartoon animation. Bella discusses her reflections on the career and financial implications she experienced:

> Bella: I think, the only thing I worry about now is the loan part. I ended up owing a lot, and, even though my brother helped a lot, I'm still in the six figures area...I don't have the job I was going for, but I have an ok job at a clothing store. But, (laughs) I'm pretty sure it will take a while to get those balances down.
>
> Joe: Ae you still applying to your field? Animation, or?
>
> Bella: I tried, no. Not anymore, not really. I tried for about a year, and then when I met my partner, he was like, come work here with me. And I mean, that made me happy since I really didn't want to leave the city (San Francisco). Ya, I was not going back to the valley, and like I said it's working right now, so this is it. Also, too, I have friends that did get into animation stuff, with startups, so once they are in higher positions, hopefully they can help me out. You just never know around here.

Here I can see Bella's aspirations in two parts. First, her primary goal was to leave the grasp of her parent's stronghold, but simultaneously she was eager to pursue her passion of cartoon animation as a college major. Bella's institution offered her a promise, not only as a means of instant enrollment, but also as a means of an eventual career in animation. Bella's remorse is primarily around financial coss, specifically since she has accumulated over six figures worth of debt and finds herself not as an animation artist but as a retail store employee. Much like the previous examples, Bella found herself employed in an unrelated career post-college attendance. However, instances of obtaining a career in a non-related field after college are not uncommon amongst other types of

colleges (e.g. public, non-profit) (HELP, 2012). What is uncommon, when compared to public and non-profit colleges, is the high amount of loan debt accumulated in for-profit institutions (U.S. News and World Report, 2017). Juxtaposed to Bella's experience is Derrick, who arguably regrets not having pursued a public four-year college, given his experience:

> Derrek: Um well I mean that, I think that cost was the main thing over time. What caught, what really shocked me was just the fact that it, the, and the I guess comparing that to like [local state school], like the actual cost per unit was a whole lot more than it was over at [local state school]. And so, the way they [institution] kind of like pushed it was that, well that's because you're getting, you're getting a condensed time frames. You're paying for the speed.
>
> Joe: The speed? Time completion?
>
> Derrek: Exactly. And you're also getting people that are, that are doing those jobs teaching you, you know? So that's kinda how they marketed it, is how it felt like it was um to justify the cost of the units. So, I mean as far as, you know, actual cost of school loans, I probably would've paid less going public.

At this point Derrek discloses his rationale for the cost of the program, which was the speed and networking. Derrek admits that though he knew the program was expensive, he truly underestimated the cost. Still, at the time he shares he hoped for the best regarding the future:

> Derrek: So yeah, that's the part that was kinda shocking and was like, oh my God this semester's gonna cost this much? And not knowing how I'm gonna pay that off, like oh yeah, they're, they'll um, they'll lend, they'll lend me the money, you know, the government will lend me the, the money for the, uh for the tuition, but how am I gonna pay it back at the end? It was kinda like, oh I guess I'll figure it out, hopefully I get a, you know, really good job. And as far as like job search, I think uh by the time I was finishing school, I, I did find a job working for a local IT company, but it was like an internship kind of a thing.
>
> Joe: Did that internship lead to a job, or?
>
> Derrick: Ugh, no unfortunately, I'm not even in that field at all now. But at the time, it was what I decided to do, so I just have to live with that. You know, it was my choice and I had to do what I had to do.

Here I see Derrick's initial posture as one that originally accepted the fact that he was 'paying more' for this type of education. This type of education was justified as being a sound investment given the time-to-completion of the program, as well as the networking of and teaching by local industry professionals. Subsequently, Derrick, too, finds himself remorseful of the amount of debt he's accumulated and is also left struggling with the fact that he did not end up in a related field.

These experiences show a substantial and fraudulent disillusionment, enacted by the participants' institutions of enrollment, specifically around financial investment and career attainment. Utilizing the 'marketing lure methods' discussed in the previous theme, a competitive market of for-profit institutions as a scaffolding, these institutions purposefully sold the participants an 'illusion' of both a financial worthwhile investment in education with efficient results as well as the promise of a related career as a result of that financial investment. As the interview data showed, these illusions were not fulfilled and left a majority of the participants in a place of financial indebtedness as well as employed in a field not related to their original program track. These unfulfilled illusions subsequently lead to disillusionment, enacted by these for-profit institutions onto the participants' lived experiences. As such, the above experiences show these institutions as neoliberal regimes who are an ensemble of actors continually promoting individual self-interest and who ascribe to a conceptualized 'social image' for sale (Lipman, 2011). This social image for sale aligns with the neoliberal form of human capital development as a means to 'add value' to an individual's worth, subsequently allowing the individual to 'pull up their bootstraps' and to take control of their future (Lipman, 2011; Ong, 2007). These instances particularly align with for-profit institutions specifically, given their

distinct focus on 'student as consumer' as well as their explicit marketing campaigns around 'self-improvement,' career relevance, and time to completion (Lechuga, 2015). Juxtaposed to these characteristics, most non-profit and public institutions focus on the holistic education of the student. These characteristics are justified in past research which found that on average, for-profit institutions invest the least amount per student ($9,758) when compared to the rest of the post-secondary sector. Notably, the public sector on average spends twice this amount and the private non-profit sector spends nearly four times the amount (Bennett, Lucchesi, & Vedder, 2010). In reality, these underserved students are subjugated to financial indebtedness and maintain their financial mobility, thus securing their place in their perceived labor sphere (Lipman, 2011; Giroux, 2014; Giroux, 2012). I discuss these findings more in Chapter Five of this research. Next, I summarize this theme's section and prepare to close this chapter's findings.

Theme summary

Within this section's theme of disillusionment with for-profit institutions, I reviewed the overarching subtheme that found participants experienced a sense of financial remorse after their for-profit institution enrollment. The participants' sense of financial investment remorse was a direct result of accumulated debt and career attainment shortfalls, given that a majority of them ended up in unrelated career fields as originally anticipated. I aligned these findings with the scholarly literature which reveal that for-profit institutions hold the highest amount of student loan indebtedness and create inequitable shortfalls by leading to low gainful employment outcomes for their students, similar to what was experienced by this study's participants (U.S. News and World Report, 2016; Iloh, 2014; Cottom, 2017). The theme unmasked for-profit institutions as

neoliberal actors who promote self-interest and ascribe to a conceptualized 'social image' for sale (Lipman, 2011).

Furthermore, this social image for sale, aligns with the neoliberal form of human capital development, as a means to 'add value' (bootstrap) to an individual's worth (Lipman, 2011; Ong, 2007). In reality, these financial subjugations perpetuate indebtedness and aim to secure these individuals (students) to their restrictive labor sphere. These neoliberal influences are especially critical given that this geography of inopportunity holds numerous inequities which may create accelerated pathways to the doors of these institutions. I discuss these findings and their implications further in Chapter Five. Next, I review the findings of this chapter as I prepare to delve into Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations.

Chapter Summary

Recitals

Within this chapter, first, I reviewed the underlying purpose of this study to explore the underlying effects of geographies of inopportunity on Latinx students' college choices within the Central San Joaquin Valley (CSJV), as well as how recruitment practices at for-profit institutions intersected with the broader [in]opportunistic structures within this region. Next, I discussed the final participant population, wherein I identified the nine final participants who met the required selection criteria.

Primary themes and clusters of meaning (subthemes)

After transcribing and analyzing the participants interview data, through several rounds of coding and subtheme reduction, I identified four central themes of this study's

findings: parental focus on labor, limit of public-sphere secondary and post-secondary counseling support, competitive market of for-profit institutions, and disillusionment with for-profit institutions. In an effort to contextualize the four above-referenced themes, I described and discussed the primary 'clusters of meaning,' also referred to as 'subthemes,' that comprised the development of the four overarching themes: (see my earlier edits on wording)

1. Participants experienced parents that were concerned with the cost and worthwhile of the participant attending college.
2. Participants experienced parents that wanted them to work full-time after their high school graduation, without attending college.
3. Participants experienced parents that only wanted college, for the participants, as a means of obtaining a career with financial security.
4. Participants experienced low secondary support from High School counselors regarding post-secondary education.
5. Participants experienced low post-secondary support from California Community College counselors.
6. Participants experienced influence from For-profit Institutions' luring competitive market strategies.
7. Participants experienced, post their for-profit institution enrollment, a sense of financial investment remorse, as a result of accumulated debt and career attainment deficits.

Collectively, these overarching themes and subthemes show deep neoliberal influences and systemic effects on this geography through a multitude of forms. Subsequently, these findings presented not only factors that potentially led these participants to their for-profit institution of enrollment, but, also highlighted inequities that shaped those factors from the very start. Additionally, these findings show deep manipulative marketing strategies and disillusionment, which subsequently created further inequalities and stratifications for these under-served students.

Conclusion

The aforementioned findings partially involve the influences of specific individuals who were a part of the participants' lived experiences, specifically, parents and counselors. Though this chapter identifies these individuals as actors within the participants' shared phenomenological experiences, this study by no means places fault on them. It would be easy to point blame; however one must also inquire into the larger systemic causation at hand. Moreover, the point of this study is to accurately point to the true systemic inequities that cause aforementioned deficits. These findings additionally involve the influence of for-profit institutions' competitive marketing strategies, which subsequently carried heavy luring attributes for these participants. These luring market strategies not only led the participants through the front doors of these institutions, but subsequently caused them to experience disillusionment within their hands. This disillusionment primarily is focused around a sense of financial investment remorse as well as career attainment shortfalls, given that a majority of the participants obtained careers in unrelated fields. As such, in Chapter Five, I aim to discuss in further detail the

conclusions of the above findings as well as address the primary research questions of the study. Furthermore, I also discuss the need for future research as well as recommendations for practice for academia at large.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Study

This study sought to examine the effects of geographies of inopportunity on Latinx students' college choices within the CSJV, as well as how recruitment practices at for-profit institutions intersected with the broader [in]opportunistic structures within this region. Furthermore, the study sought to understand how these experiences shaped the college-choice process for CSJV Latinx students, specifically into for-profit institutions. Furthermore, I examined the intersections of geographies of inopportunity with other forces of inequity within this region that further amplify the adversities this population faces, with regards to college choice. Lastly, the study sought what for-profit institutions are offering, or promising, Latinx students in an effort to recruit them to their institutions, as well as how these practices intersect with broader [in]opportunistic structures within the CSJV.

The findings of this research demonstrated several key areas: an overarching parental focus on labor; a limit of public-sphere secondary and post-secondary counseling support; a competitive market of for-profit institutions within the geography; and disillusionment with for-profit institutions. These findings show an array of inequities within previous bodies of work, and, are clearly visible when viewed through the lenses of this study. The study also contributes additional key findings to this area of research as discussed below.

Summary of findings

In Chapter IV, I answered the study's primary research questions. First, with regard to Research Question #1, I identified the primary factors that played into Latinxs'

choice of for-profit institutions within the geography of the CSJV: (1) accessibility via ease of admission, (2) labor specific tracks of interest, and (3) attendance flexibility with accelerated timelines of completion. I aligned these findings around previous studies stating that for-profit institutions operated within 'student-as-consumer' models, as well as literature that identified that these institutions tend to carry a focus on career-specific tracks (Government Accountability Office, 2011; Iloh & Tierney, 2013; Gilpin, Saunders, & Stoddard, 2015). Though the findings of this study align with past research, these contributions carry pertinent value to this specific geography of current and future students as well as the post-secondary practitioners that support them.

Next, with regard to Research Question #2, I identified inequities in the participants' experiences which shaped their decision to enroll into a for-profit institution, such as: a parental focus on labor, a limit on public secondary and post-secondary counseling support, and the influence of the opportunistic marketing strategies of for-profit institutions. I aligned these findings with past studies which found that parental support of college aspiration plays a seminal role in the college choice processes of Latinxs (Perna, 2006; Santos & Saenz, 2013). I also discovered that limited literature has looked at the parental focus on labor, specifically around working full-time instead of college or choosing lucrative college majors. Seemingly, further research is required within this realm of discovery as I discuss within the recommendations section of this chapter. These discoveries mark pertinent beginnings around this area of research which I hope to expand on within the near future. Stick to answers to RQs here.

With regard to RQ3, based on the participants' narratives, I sought to identify attributes that for-profit institutions offered or promised participants that led them to their

for-profit enrollment choice. Among all the participants, I found several institutions promised primary attributes, including specialized career-specific learning, accelerated timelines of completion, career attainment, and a worthwhile financial investment in education. I aligned these findings around previous works which found that for-profit institutions are geared as career-specific institutions, whom develop their programs based on local economy job and labor demands (Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2012). Furthermore, I also aligned that these program developments are geared by for-profits as a means of attracting underserved populations towards perceived better careers within these minorities' local economies, not as a means of holistic college education or social welfare (Gilpin, Saunders, & Stoddard, 2015). Additionally, I paralleled previous findings which found that for-profit institutions intentionally accelerated programs as a means meeting minimal accreditation requirements, while simultaneously minimizing student investment, in an effort to increase subsequent shareholder revenues (Government Accountability Office, 2011). Though these results also parallel previous literature, these findings contribute pertinent research to this geography of students as well as the practitioners that support them.

I also answered the primary research questions in accordance with the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study. First, I saw the influence of neoliberalism in parental desires for capital accumulation through a focus on labor and accumulation-centered opportunities for capital (Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003). These parental desires were manifested within parents' requests for the participants to find full-time work after high school graduation, without going to college. Furthermore, accumulation-centered opportunities for capital also was evident in parental desires for the participants to attend

college as a means of financial success. Specifically, parents were found to insist that participants choose lucrative majors within college such as pre-med, pre-law, and engineering, versus the participants' actual majors of interest such as music, art, and teaching. Next, I saw neoliberalism evident in the withdrawal of governmental support, specifically around secondary and post-secondary counseling, subsequently affecting the provision of social welfare (Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003; Giroux, 2014). These withdrawals were disguised as underserving counselors within secondary and post-secondary realms; however, I argue that these instances are a result of a larger neoliberal system of inequality. I further contended that neoliberalism is the causation of public and civic responsibility cutbacks within this geography, specifically around the adequate support of educational counseling agents which are currently unable to meet the educational support needs of this underserved geography.

Finally, I saw neoliberalism manifested in instances of for-profit luring methods, which enhanced the provision of new accumulation-centered opportunities for capital as well as the championing privatization of social goods, on the premise that competitive markets are more effective and efficient (Giroux, 2014). These instances revealed themselves in for-profit institutions' meeting the participants at their point of vulnerability and fear, due to previous stigma around negative academic experiences and seeking to promise them vessels with which to address those fears, such as one-to-one enhanced admissions support, temporally efficient enrollment, flexible methods of course completion, and an initial sense of organizational culture fit.

Responses to the Research Questions

The following research questions guided the inquiry of this study:

1) What factors play into why Latinxs in the San Joaquin Valley choose to enroll in for-profit institutions?
2) How do inequities from different experiences and opportunities shape these decisions?
3) What do the *narratives* of Latinx alumni from for-profit institutions reveal about attributes that for-profit institutions offered or promised them that led them to their choice to attend?

The following sections present the response to the guiding research questions and connects them to the literature and overarching framework for this study.

Research Question 1: What factors play into why Latinxs in the San Joaquin Valley choose to enroll in for-profit institutions?

At large, three primary factors played into the for-profit choices by Latinxs within the geography of the CSJV. These factors, though truly existential competitive markets of for-profit institutions, were disguised to the participants as: (1) accessibility via ease of admission, (2) labor specific tracks of interest, and (3) attendance flexibility with accelerated timelines of completion. A majority of the participants reported encounters of fast customer service and expedited admissions processes, amongst their factors of choice with regard to their for-profit institutions. These factors match previous works, which found that for-profit institutions employ a student as customer model where students exist as commodities to be serviced in an effort to guarantee and maximize profits to organizational shareholders and maintain corporate sustainability (Iloh & Tierney, 2013). Effectively, most for-profit institutions operate with well-established and expedited admissions processes where a student can enter the admissions office, be enrolled,

complete FAFSA processes, speak with a financial aid counselor, matriculate into classes, have a soon approaching start date, and be introduced to their academic counselor all in one day (Government Accountability Office, 2011; Iloh & Tierney, 2013). A similar process that covers all of the aforementioned could take weeks at a community college or months at four-year institutions.

What the findings of this study contribute to this body of knowledge is greater depth in understanding how these customer-service models within for-profits actually seek to meet a specific need that is unmet or negatively met by opportunity within their contexts. These experiences are juxtaposed against lack of support for college going within students' geographical context and negative experiences with college attendance when they sought college enrollment at other institutions.

Similarly, participants shared labor-specific tracks of interest as important choice factors with regard to their for-profit institutions. These factors, too, match similar findings which found that for-profit institutions develop their primary program offerings in response to labor needs of specified trades and professions within their local communities (Gilpin, Saunders, & Stoddard, 2015). These labor-need models match the conceptualized thinking of the participants parents around labor and higher education given that both focus on labor as a means of capital accumulation. Seemingly, these modes of thought may have affected the participants thinking around college choice as a means of capital. Though other types of colleges may hold similar focuses on program development around specific community trades and professions, such as community colleges, they typically do so with the intentions of providing social welfare and higher learning for the student, not for means of profit (Mannapperuma, 2015). Furthermore,

for-profit institutions in-debt students with high amounts of tuition for the provision of these same types of programs. These findings are troubling given that the geography of the CSJV, in particular, is not only home to a number of large for-profit institution campuses, but home to a number of smaller locally owned institutions as well.

These findings are also concerning given that when compared to public California community college availability (n=7), as well as public four-year institution availability (n=4), there are far more for-profit institutions within the CSJV than any other institution type (n=40) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018) (See Appendix A). Of the 40 NCES *registered* for-profit institutions located within the CSJV, nearly 38% (n=15) are registered as Medical/Clinical Assisting schools and nearly 35% (n=14) are registered as Cosmetology schools (See Appendix A). This reality is even more concerning when one considers the fact that these NCES registration indicators are misleading, since these institutions are only registered as institutions that qualify for the use of federal financial aid. In fact, the CSJV is populated with a plethora of small mom-and-pop vocational schools that offer private third-party loans, often at higher interest rates than that of federal funding (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). These vocational-intensive for-profit institutions deprive Latinxs of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and liberal arts specializations, as embodied by public and non-profit institutions, subsequently affecting their career trajectories and life options (Cottom, 2017; Iloh, 2014; Mannapperuma, 2015).

Lastly, participants showed instances of attendance flexibility with accelerated timelines of completion as important factors of choice with regard to their for-profit institutions. These factors, too, align with previous findings of for-profit institutions'

focus on students as consumers as well as an organizational adaptation to meet consumer demand (Cottom, 2017; Iloh & Tierney, 2013). These factors match previous contentions which found that for-profit institutions are formed via a business model versus a student-service model (Bennett, Lucchesi, & Vedder, 2010). Specifically, business models aim to leverage continuous adaptabilities to meeting consumers demands via a multitude of methods. As such, in an effort to attract more students as consumers, for-profit institutions offer adaptable methods of course completion including night classes and online modules, in an effort to attract underserved populations with logistical restrictions. Relatedly, a majority of the participants disclosed that the ability to attend class either at night, over the weekend, or even online played pivotal factors with their ability attend college, given that a majority worked full time. Participants also shared the ability to complete their program on an accelerated timeline as an important factor of choice with regard to their for-profit institutions. These factors match previous findings which show that for-profit institutions curriculums are designed by industry experts who aim to design short effective and profitable programs which minimally meet accreditation standards, but maximize product service turnaround time (Cellini & Chaudhary, 2011, Cottom 2017; Iloh, 2014). This product turnaround, though actually beneficial to the institution and its actors, is disguised as a fast get-in get-out model to the student (HELP Committee, 2012).

However, in the context of these students' experiences, what these findings demonstrate is that this industry promise was a direct response to neoliberally-informed but class-driven necessities for immediate employment, prioritization on short-term financial and opportunity costs, and the ways these factors intersected within the needs

and college decisions of these students. Predatorily, these institutions were found to utilize the underlying desire of upward mobility by this geography's underserved populations as a catalyst for seizing financial capital. These acts not only subjugate these populations of the underserved to high amounts of indebtedness, but further stratify this region of poverty and underrepresented collegial education. These choice factors, however, are the manifestation of differentiating experiences of inequity, which I will explore within the second question of inquiry, below.

Research Question 2: How do inequities from different experiences and opportunities shape these decisions?

Though a majority of inequities from different experiences and opportunities shaped the participants' decisions about for-profit college choice, at large, three specific instances were shared across the majority of participants: a parental focus on labor, a limit on public secondary and post-secondary counseling support, and the influence of for-profit institutions' opportunistic marketing strategies. First, a majority of the participants showed experiential inequities of parental focuses on labor, either by their parents wanting them to work full time instead of going to college, or seeing college as a means of career and financial security. Furthermore, parents who sought college as a means of career and financial security were adamant that their children choose a major with lucrative financial results such as law, medicine, and engineering, but opposed their actual majors of interests such as teaching, arts, and music. These inequities partly match previous findings, which held that parental support, with regards to college aspiration,

play seminal roles within Latinx's college choice processes (Perna, 2006; Santos & Saenz, 2013). In fact, parents' expectations and support of their children during the college application stage has been identified as a major indicator for college enrollment for first-generation Latinx students (Ceja, 2006). However, limited literature is available on this study's findings of parental focuses on labor (working full time, major choice), therefore, further research is required within this realm of discovery. I will discuss this need further within the recommendations section of this chapter. Furthermore, though previous findings contended that for Latinas in particular, parents were often found to be the most important source of influence during the predisposition phase and were who they most spoke to during the planning process (Lechuga, 2014; Iloh, 2012), this was unfortunately not the case for one of the Latina participants. In fact, this participant was forbidden to attend college and was expected to work full time after high school and care for her parents, eventually in hopes that she should find a husband to secure the family's financial security. Seemingly, this Latina participant was forced to escape her parent's stronghold via enrollment into an out-of-town for-profit institution that offered student housing as well. However, a major influence regarding her decision was her older brother, who actually lived in the same city as the institution, and had similarly escaped from their parents grasps.

This instance aligns with previous findings which held that Latinxs tend to utilize models of 'chain migration' when navigating college choice (Perez, 2010). Chain migration for Latinxs are shaped by their community social networks, including older siblings, friends and peers who tend to serve as mentors for younger Latinx students as they attempt to navigate the college-selection process (Perez, 2010). Familiarity and pre-

existing college networks are also major contributors to Latinx college choice, given that most Latinx students show more interest in a college if they know someone currently at the institution (Perez, 2010). These findings can create spaces for inequities toward Latinx students, given that they are limiting their college selection to pools of institutions where they currently hold social capital circles. This inequity is especially amplified for this Latina participant in particular given the massive amounts of debt she would eventually accumulate at her institution of enrollment.

Next, a majority of the participants experienced inequities in the limit on public secondary and post-secondary counseling support. I argue that these inequities, disguised as high school and community college counselors who lacked to provide support for the participants, are in reality a larger systemic inequality that aims to withdrawal governmental support, subsequently affecting the provision of social welfare (Giroux, 2014).

First, these findings align with preexisting research that found Latinxs were more likely to enroll into a for-profit institution if they experienced minimal engagement regarding college choice from their high school counselor (Chung, 2012; Moore & Shulock, 2010). Seemingly, a majority of the participants held little to no engagement with their high school counselor around college choice. Those participants which recalled transactions with their high school counselor mostly remember their interactions having to do with school scheduling, not college. These instances are concerning given that, of the participants disclosed high schools of attendance, there exists low percentages of Hispanic or Latinx graduates who have obtained UC/CSU required coursework (California Department of Education, 2018). Similarly, I also found that of the

participants disclosed high schools of attendance, there exist high counselor-to-student ratios, ranging from 193:1 to 541:1 (See Table 2)

Table 2.

Academic Year High School Enrollment/Graduates/Counselors/Ratios

High School	Total Enrollment	Hispanic or Latino Enrollment	Number of Graduates identifying as Hispanic or Latino	Graduates identifying as Hispanic or Latino with UC/CSU Required Courses	Number of Counselors at the High School	Ratio
Madera High School	2,098	83.4%	192	168 (43.8 %)	8	262:1
Madera South High School	3,047	90.7%	474	208 (43.9 %)	11	277:1
Edison High School	2,555	61.5%	311	211 (67.8 %)	6	425:1
Roosevelt High School	2,141	80.6%	327	140 (42.8 %)	5	428:1
Clovis West High	2,096	40.9%	178	76 (42.7 %)	5	419:1
Kingsburg High School	1,083	59.9%	134	46 (34.3 %)	2	541:1
Cesar Chavez High	2,127	49.6%	241	89 (36.9 %)	11	193:1

Next, I saw experiences of limited post-secondary counseling support from the participants' community college counselors. Though a majority of the participants began their post-secondary career within a community college, most would subsequently leave

due to negative academic and support experiences. These findings partially align with previous literature that found Latinx transfer populations from California community colleges were overrepresented within for-profit institutions when compared to all other ethnicities (California Community College Data Mart, 2015). These instances are also concerning, given that of the participants disclosed community colleges of attendance, there exists high percentages of Hispanic or Latinx continuing students who are recorded as having not received *Credit Counseling* or *Advising Services*. For example, within the Fall 2016 semester, of the 12,717 Hispanic enrollees at Fresno City College (55.47%), only 6,579 were recorded as having received *Credit Counseling / Advisement Services* for the term, while 11,597 were recorded as *not having received Credit Counseling / Advisement Services*. Though the records marked as having *not received credit counseling/advisement services* include active not enrolled students, as well as exempt students[16], the figure presents an astoundingly high number given the overall Hispanic population of the college. Similar high figures exist for the other participant's community colleges of attendance, as well (See Table 3).

Table 3.

California Community Colleges-Fall 2016 Term

Community College	Total Enrollment	Hispanic Enrollment	Number of *Hispanic* Students Who *Received* Credit Counseling /	Number of *Hispanic* Students Who *Did Not Receive* Credit Counselin	Number of *Hispanic* Students Who *Received* initial credit	Number of *Hispanic* Students Who *Did Not Receive* initial

[16] Having met the college criteria of being exempt from *Credit Counseling / Advisement Services (e.g. having obtained a prior associates degree, counselor approval, etc.) (California Community College Data Mart, 2018).*

			Adviseme nt Services[17]	g / Adviseme nt Services	orientatio n services[18]	credit orientatio n services
Fresno City College	22,924	12,717 (55.47 %)	6,579	11,597	3,724	14,452
Reedley College	9,873	7,092 (71.83 %)	5,217	5,071	2,117	8,171
Clovis Communit y College	6,663	2,644 (39.68 %)	2,054	1,541	482	3,113
San Joaquin Delta	17,433	7,913 (45.39 %)	1,175	4,696	702	5,169

Currently, the *California Community Colleges DataMart* does not provide title-specific statistics for faculty and staff (e.g. counselors), but moreover, offer aggregate classification staffing counts by district (e.g. classified college administrators, classified faculty, etc.). Therefore, comparing specific counselor staffing counts, by specific college, can prove difficult. However, when I examined State of California Pension Database System, *Transparent California*, I found that *State Center Community College*

[17] This element indicates whether the student received credit counseling/advisement services, other than the development of a Student Education Plan, during the reporting term. (California Community Colleges Management Information System Data Element Dictionary, 2018).

[18] This element indicates whether the student received initial credit orientation services as a part of the student success process at the college (California Community Colleges Management Information System Data Element Dictionary, 2018).

District, the district that houses three of the four participants' community colleges of attendance has exactly 161 employees with the phrase 'Counselor' listed within their payroll-reported title within the year 2016. The districts total enrollment number for the Fall 2016 term, amidst its three campuses (Fresno, Reedley, Clovis), amounted to 39,640 students, which may estimate the counselor to student ratio, within the district, at near 246:1. Similarly, San Joaquin Delta District, which houses one participant's community college of attendance, shows exactly 32 employees had the phrase 'Counselor' listed within their payroll-reported title, in the year 2016. The districts total enrollment number for the Fall 2016 term, within its one campus (San Joaquin Delta), amounted to 17,433 students, which may estimate the counselor to student ratio within the district at near 544:1. However, this ratio is ambiguous given that counselors may be assigned to specific student populations and may not be able to assist other departments as needed. Still, the number provides important context to the existing student-to-counselor support ratio.

I should note that these participants in particular did not match the transfer criteria as set by the California community college system, which is the equivalent of met CSU/UC transfer coursework credits, that is, these participants at large were not eligible for four-year transfer. Still, on a critical note, little literature is available regarding specific college counselor effects on college completion and transfer choice on students (Gandara, Alvarado, Driscoll, & Orfield, 2012; Iloh, 2014). Therefore, further research is required within this area of discovery. In particular, research is needed around the withdrawal/dropout (not transfer) of Latinx students from California Community Colleges as well as the subsequent enrollment into for-profit institutions. Additionally,

research is needed to understand the effects community college counselors have, if any, on the completion or transfer of community college students. I will discuss the need for this research, further, within the recommendations section of this chapter.

Lastly, a majority of the participants experienced inequities of influence from for-profit institutions' opportunistic marketing strategies. As noted in Chapter Four, I saw phenomenologically shared experiences of differentiating aspirations among the participants at the time of their choice. These aspirations, at large, could be categorized as: career desire, escape from subjectivity of rule, entrepreneurial desire, education with flexibility, and career promotion. At their time of aspiration, these participants were influenced by the marketing strategies of these for-profit institutions in a variety of ways, that is, viewing an answer to their individual want, including: one-to-one enhanced admissions support, temporally efficient enrollment, and flexible methods of course completion. These findings align with preexisting research that finds for-profit institutions operate as business models that place the student as the consumer (Iloh, 2014), that is, students as an opportunity for capital revenue. In an effort to adapt to consumer demands, for-profit institutions must maintain flexibility and independence given that red tape consists of timely measures, subsequently costing the institution revenue (Cottom, 2017). As such, these institutions have been found to minimize resource dependency via the utilization of adaptable resources, including: adjunct faculty as industry professionals, leased building infrastructures, and the utilization of extended branch campuses (Bennett, Lucchesi, & Vedder, 2010). Where public institutions and large non-profit universities are often held to committee vetting, regulatory approval, tenure, and student bodies, for-profit institutions hold an ease of freedom when

implementing changes such as expanded night classes, larger class sizes, or online offerings (Cellini, 2009).

These experiential inequities offer critical insight into the predatory nature of for-profit institutions. These institutions have been found to utilize situational inequities around parental focuses on labor, limited public-sphere education support, and manipulative marketing strategies as catalysts towards enrollment into their institutions. Using these situational inequitable experiences as leverage, these institutions are able to disguise their perpetrations as alternative methods of college and good customer service. These disguised perpetrations are often disguised as promises, by these institutions and their actors. Next, I aim to identify these promises as related to the third research question.

Research Question 3: What do the narratives of Latinx alumni from for-profit institutions reveal about attributes that for-profit institutions offered or promised them that led them to their choice?

I want to reiterate that this question sought to find specific attributes that these institutions directly offered or promised the participants at the time of their enrollment choice. These attributes, which were offered or promised directly, should not be confused with factors that played into the participants' choice nor the competitive marketing strategies of these institutions that lured the participants through their front doors. Moreover, these promises and offerings were directly offered to the participants on the behalf of the institution representative. At large, according to the findings, four major overarching attributes were offered or promised to the participants by their for-profit

institutions of enrollment: specialized career-specific learning, accelerated timelines of completion, career attainment, and a worthwhile financial investment in education.

The first attribute of specialized career-specific learning was a promise by admissions representatives to the participants as a guaranteed pathway towards specialized career learning. According to the representatives, the participants were to receive career learning that was not only relevant within the local job market but would also offer additional opportunities within their field of interest, given the industry professionals that would be teaching them. Subsequently, these institutions are not only able to utilize adjuncts as adaptable resources but are also able to utilize them as a guaranteed industry networking resource when selling enrollment to student consumers (Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2012). Though local community colleges may utilize similar methods of networking opportunity, their motivation is not geared by revenue' moreover their motivation lies within student empowerment and social welfare. Juxtaposed to this, these for-profit program developments are geared to attract underserved populations toward perceived better-careers within these minorities' local economies, not as a means of holistic college education or social welfare (Gilpin, Saunders, & Stoddard, 2015).

The next attribute of accelerated timelines to completion was a promise that admissions representatives offered to the participants as a means to enter the institution, complete their program, and begin their career quickly. These representatives not only sold their institutions as a means to financial freedom via a career, but simultaneously contended they were a means to fast financial freedom via a career. This attribute is especially concerning given that a majority of for-profit students are categorized as underserved populations (Cottom, 2017). In fact, previous findings show that 16% of for-

profit students are participating in a welfare program, when compared with 2.6% of college students in not-for-profit institutions (Cottom, 2017). These accelerated programs also align with previous findings which hold that for-profit institutions intentionally accelerated programs as a means meeting minimal accreditation requirements while simultaneously minimizing student investment in an effort to increase subsequent shareholder revenues (Government Accountability Office, 2011). Notably, these intentional cutbacks are often misperceived by these underserved students as a good thing, that is, they can get through school faster and start making money sooner. A key differentiation between for-profit institutions and other types of institutions (e.g. public, non-profit), is that, on average, they invest the least amount per student ($9,758) as compared to the rest of the post-secondary sector. Notably, the public sector, on average, spends twice this amount per student, and the private non-profit sector spends nearly four times the amount (Bennett, Lucchesi, & Vedder, 2010).

The third attribute of career attainment was positioned by admissions representatives as a promise of a career post the participants program completion. At large, a majority of the participants discussed, at one point or another, the reassurance received from their admissions representative regarding career attainment support from their institution. Almost all of the institution representatives mentioned a career support mechanism, ranging from career counselors, career coaches, or career departments. These findings match previous literature that contend for-profit institutions place importance on career counseling, not as a means of supporting the student, but since career attainment (post-graduation) is a major accreditation metric measured, doing so when undergoing regional accreditation auditing (Cottom, 2017; Davidson, 2016; HELP Committee, 2012).

Losing accreditation, given its ties to federal financial aid revenue, can be devastating to the shareholders of for-profit institutions as we have witnessed with Heald College and Corinthians Colleges at large as their institutions shut down as a result of lost accreditation (*Chronicle of Higher Ed.*, 2012). This false perception of career support, too, is often misperceived by students as a positive investment in their future on the part of their for-profit institutions, which again is not necessarily the case.

My fourth and final attribute of a worthwhile financial investment in education was that admissions representatives offered participants a justification for substantial financial investment in their institutions, given their considerable tuition costs. At large, a majority of the participants discussed how their admissions representative reassured them to allay concerns around high tuition costs. Moreover, as a majority of the participants shared, their representatives often held scripted rebuttals when addressing any and all tuition cost concerns. Rebuttals shared an overarching theme of a worthwhile financial investment in education; however, they were often relayed as worthwhile education investment for themselves, a worthwhile education investment for their children, a worthwhile education investment for their family, and a worthwhile education investment for their family's legacy. Would love to see the actual words.

These findings match previous literature, which holds that admissions professionals within for-profit institutions are often trained as sales professionals which undergo intense scenario training (as this author did) and are often shadowed by experienced supervisors in an effort to give feedback and improve their closing skill (Cottom, 2017). While traditional colleges leverage the intrinsic value of college, for-profit institutions leverage ephemeral moments when a prospective student's perception

of changing economic or social fortune can prompt them into *enrolling today* (Cottom, 2017). This concept is no different than the buyer's remorse abatement theory the average car salesman uses: get them in the car, let them fall in love with the feel and euphoric new smell, and get them through the small print—*buy today*! These methods not only create long-term effects for these students, but victimize them through lack of integrity, misleading deception, and undertones of fraudulence (Cottom, 2017).

In a 2014 Senate investigation into the for-profit college sector, the term "*pain funnel"* arose within a major for-profits operational training memo for advisors. The training concept of the *pain funnel* was to first qualify the student via interviews and campus tours, that is the collection of knowledge about the student's life. Their questions about goals, like: 'What led you here? Do you like your job? Do you take care of your parents? Do you have children? Are you married' were later pivoted to overcome student objections to same-day enrollment. The advisor would then be trained to say: 'I thought you said you wanted to get a better job to take care of your parents, or, to take care of your kids, or to be an independent single mother,' etc. (Cottom, 2017). Other documented manipulative practices include *code switching*, which in essence is the practice of alternating between two or more varieties of conversation. Code switching is most commonly used to describe how minorities switch from the coded language, mannerisms, and references of the cultural group to that of the dominant group (Cottom, 2017). An example of this was when I (this author) was assigned a young Hispanic male as an enrollment advisor at my for-profit college's tour. Amidst the tour I recall the adviser making references like "mira allá" (look over there) or "darle ánimo" (give it effort), even saying "para nuestra gente" (for our people) with regards to going to college.

These insights add valuable knowledge to the predatory methods with which these institutional actors are perpetrating false senses of security, amidst the college choice processes of these underserved students. Not only do these practices cause long-lasting financial effects on these populations, but also they may enact psychological effects, given their predatory nature. These existential realities prove the existence of neoliberalist influences within this region, who aim to further subjugate these underserved geographies. As such, I now examine these findings in accordance with the theoretical framework of this study below.

Discussion of Findings According to Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Utilizing the theoretical framework of this research, I hold the following theoretical arguments for these findings. First, held through the lens of neoliberalism, these findings show parental desires for capital accumulation through a focus on labor and accumulation-centered opportunities for capital (Ong, 2017). These parental desires, as previously discussed, were manifested within parents' requests for the participants to find full-time work after high school graduation without going to college. Viewing these findings through the conceptual framework, we see neoliberal regime implanted ideologies, within these underserved populations, as a promise of freedom through self-mastery and capital (Ong, 2017). Taylor (2003) ascribes the conceptualization of the neoliberal lens as an imaginary "social image," wherein we as ordinary societal actors "imagine" our world, meaning the common understandings (myths or stories), that we share and subsequently believe for the overall legitimization of the particular social order (pg. 213). Within the above-mentioned instances of a focus on labor and accumulation-centered opportunities for capital, these ideologies match neoliberal boot-strap

mentalities, wherein these regimes promote the championing of success through labored self-mastery and capital accumulation (Lipman, 2011).

I also saw the fruition of neoliberalism, shown as parental desires for post-secondary education not as a means of higher learning or social welfare but as an accumulation-centered opportunity for capital, via a focus on financially lucrative college majors (Lipman, 2011). These instances, as previously discussed, were manifested within parents' desires for the participants to attend college as a means of financial success. Furthermore, parents were found to insist that participants choose lucrative majors within college such as pre-med, pre-law, and engineering, versus the participants actual majors if interest such as music, art, and teaching. Viewing these findings through the conceptual framework, one sees neoliberal-inspired ideologies about post-secondary education at large within these underserved populations as a promise of education as a form of human capital development and investment. Lipman (2011) argues: "the neoliberal agenda is to bring education, along with other public sectors, in line with the goals of capital accumulation and managerial governance and administration" (p. 15). According to the neoliberal regime, education is a form of human capital development, and as such, it is a private good that an individual can choose to invest towards one's child or oneself in an effort to "add value" and increase an individual's worth within the labor sphere, not for personal growth or social good (p. 15).

Next, these findings found forms of neoliberalism shown as a withdrawal of governmental support, specifically around secondary and post-secondary counseling, subsequently affecting the provision of social welfare (Giroux, 2014). I saw these withdrawals disguised as underserving counselors within secondary and post-secondary

realms, however, I argue that these instances are a result of a larger neoliberal system issue. I argue the existence of this systemic inequity within this geography especially when one considers that there are nearly four times (15) as many State Prisons in the eight counties that make up the CSJV, then there are public four-year institutions (4) (Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation, 2018; California State University, 2018). Regarding the neoliberalist cutback of the public educational sphere, this research wishes to cite a portion of Henry A. Giroux's (2013) article: *Public Intellectuals Against the Neoliberal University*:

> Missing from neoliberal market societies are those public spheres – from public and higher education to the mainstream media and digital screen culture – where people can develop what might be called the civic imagination. For example, in the last few decades, we have seen market mentalities attempt to strip education of its public values, critical content and civic responsibilities as part of its broader goal of creating new subjects wedded to consumerism, risk-free relationships and the disappearance of the social state in the name of individual, expanded choice. Tied largely to instrumental ideologies and measurable paradigms, many institutions of higher education are now committed almost exclusively to economic goals, such as preparing students for the workforce – all done as part of an appeal to rationality, one that eschews matters of inequality, power and the ethical grammars of suffering. Many universities have not only strayed from their democratic mission, they also seem immune to the plight of students who

> face a harsh new world of high unemployment, the prospect of downward mobility and debilitating debt.
>
> What needs to be understood is that higher education may be one of the few public spheres left where knowledge, values, and learning offer a glimpse of the promise of education for nurturing public values, critical hope, and what my late friend Paulo Freire called, "the practice of freedom." It may be the case that everyday life is increasingly organized around market principles; but confusing a market-determined society with democracy hollows out the legacy of higher education, whose deepest roots are philosophical, not commercial. This is a particularly important insight in a society where the free circulation of ideas is not only being replaced by mass-mediated ideas but where critical ideas are increasingly viewed or dismissed as either liberal, radical, or even seditious. (p.10)

I, therefore argue that neoliberalism at large is the causation of public and civic responsibility cutback within this geography, specifically around the adequate support of educational counseling agents who are currently unable to meet the educational support needs of this underserved geography.

These findings also show neoliberalism as instances of for-profit luring methods, which enhance the provision of new accumulation-centered opportunities for capital (Lipman, 2011) as well as the championing privatization of social goods on the premise that competitive markets are more effective and efficient (Lipman, 2011; Taylor, 2003; Giroux, 2014). As the findings showed, these luring methods met the participants at their point of vulnerability and fear, due to previous stigmas around negative academic

experiences, and sought to promise them vessels with which to address those fears. Viewing these findings through the conceptual framework, one sees neoliberal attributes of education as a marketable product for sale, meeting consumers' product demands in an effort to guarantee capital to neoliberal accumulation-centered entities. Lippman (2011) relatedly posits that neoliberalism "champions the privatization of social goods and withdrawal of government from provision of social welfare on the premise that competitive markets are more effective and efficient (p. 7)" These competitive markets, as mentioned above, have come to fruition as met consumer needs to an existing consumer demand. That is, these vessels of addressed fears, though disguised as flexibility and good customer service, are in fact neoliberalist ideologies for capital accumulation as a corporate model of operation.

Lastly, these findings also show neoliberalism as an ensemble of for-profit actors who promote individual self-interest and who ascribe to a conceptualized social image for sale (Lipman, 2011) as a means of human capital development, in order to add value to an individual's worth (Lipman, 2011; Ong, 2007). As the findings showed, these for-profit actors, also known as admissions representatives, often positioned their institutions as vessels for increased self-worth. Often, these actors posited their institutional programs as a means for entering the real work field or as a means of adding value to the participant's resume. Ong (2007) coined the term "self-mastery" with specific regard to neoliberalism, wherein the actors of the regime promise freedom through self-governance and "requires people to be free and self-managing in different spheres of everyday life—health, education, bureaucracy, the professions, etc." (p. 4). Instances if these self-mastery attributes are seemingly seen in the participants' interactions with these

admissions professionals. Saunders (2007) directly integrates a viable framework around these findings as well in contending that from neoliberal lenses, education is increasingly dominated by individualistic goals and benefits wherein students become consumers of an educational product. Furthermore, education is no longer seen as a social good with intrinsic value but instead as a commodity that a student purchases for his or her own good (Saunders, 2007). This very capital that is purchased by the student is believed to increase their human capital, thus enabling them to pursue a better job, salary, and life

These findings are further contended when we view them through the study's conceptual framework of political geography. As previously mentioned, political geography can be defined as the social and economic differences between places, without necessarily ascribing these to physical differences (Agnew & Muscara, 2012). Socially and economically, one could ascribe the CSJV's state of poverty and degree attainment underrepresentation (USCB, 2018) as a geographical social and economic catalyst that reinforces this population's ideological influence around labor and capital. Seemingly, this lack of social welfare creates a geography that is susceptible to the influences of a neoliberal ideologies around laissez-faire economics and free market capitalism shown as a focus on labor. Furthermore, given that areas with high poverty rates and underrepresented college education tend to have under-resourced post-secondary public institutions (Iloh, 2014; Turley, 2016), this inequality then also manifests as limited support from both secondary and post-secondary institutions, as the participants experienced. What then comes to fruition from a geography of this scarce social welfare is the creation of privatized capitalist institutions shown as private for-

profit universities. The issue of the overrepresentation of for-profit institutions in the CSJV is eminent, and growing (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). These types of institutions cause academic and financial barriers on Latinx populations, as well as their prospectus for career opportunities (Iloh, 2014) as has been seen by the participant's data. As the findings discussed, these institutional actors are marketing strategists that predatorily aim to use the inequities experienced by unserved populations as a catalyst to lure them to their enrollment pool. Given the CSJV's geographical under-representation of Public post-secondary institutions (CSU, 2015; IPEDS, 2018; NCES, 2018), high distance proximity to currently existing public post-secondary institutions (See Appendix: D), and geographical over-representation of for-profit institutions (NCES, 2018): the CSJV may be considered not only a geographical educational dessert (Hillman, 2015), but a geography of collegial inequality as well.

These findings, as viewed through these theoretical and conceptual lenses, hold valuable insights given that these translations allow us to view the true perpetrating influences behind these stratifying inequities on students within this region. Having seen the true influences behind these students' lived experiences of inequities, this research is then able to inform relevant policy makers, education professionals, and students themselves. Below, I examine such recommendations not only for further research but also for practice and policy.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research

Above, I discussed the findings of a parental focus on labor as partially aligning with previous findings, that is, that parental support around college aspiration played seminal roles in the college choice processes of Latinx (Perna, 2006; Santos & Saenz, 2013). However, I also identified that this literature is not directly parallel to the discovered parental focuses on labor within the findings. I also declared that little to no literature exists around parental focuses on labor; therefore, further research is needed within this realm. Given this study's findings, research should aim to collect possible remedies for overcoming such parental inequities by examining experiences of students who are currently enrolled in four-year public institutions, or private non-profit institutions, and who held similar parental experiences around focuses on labor. More critically, these studies should aim to understand what vessels or methods these students utilized to overcome these boundaries, as a means to influence high school student support policies.

Other key findings from this work highlighted the inequities related to the systemic lack of support for the participants on the behalf of their secondary high school counselors. Though partial literature exists around college trajectory as it relates to differentiating secondary school zones, particularly in large metropolitan areas (Lechuga 2014; Stewart, Stewart, & Simons, 2007; Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004), similar examinations should be made around this geography of the CSJV specifically. As an example, unanimously, all of the participants mentioned either: (a) no mention of college by their high school counselor; or (b) brief mentions about college related information. The brief mentions, according to the participants, range anywhere from reminding them about college fair days, to reminding them about SAT/ACT on campus test dates.

Therefore, research should examine not only the quantity of student-to-counselor interactions, but should also seek to measure the quality and content of these interactions as well as how they disrupt or promote neoliberal ideologies within these underserved geographies. These findings in turn could then be used as catalysts to minimize the college choice inequities as mentioned in this dissertation.

Earlier I contended that inequities existed around support for the participants within their respective community college careers on the part of their counselors. Though I contended that these inequalities are actually tied to larger neoliberal system public cutbacks, further research should examine these realities, specifically within this geography of the CSJV. Therefore, research should examine community college student populations at large with regards to their specific experiences around student-to-counselor interactions. More critically, students who have qualified as withdrawn or inactive should especially be examined, given that their reasoning's for leaving provide valuable policy feedback.

Non-profit does not necessarily mean non-profit

In the literature review, I partially discussed for-profit taxation and corporate structuring. Specifically, I discussed that a post-secondary for-profit institution is defined as a privately funded taxpaying institutional entity that generates profit by providing post-secondary degrees and or credentials and reports to stockholders (Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2012). This differs from private, non-profit institutions that similarly do not receive tax-payer funding from their states, but are not tax-paying entities and report to a board, typically comprised of trustees (Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2012). However, I argue that

tax structures do not necessarily mean non-profit institutions do not behave like for-profit institutions.

I make this argument based upon my personal experience working in the admissions department of a supposed non-profit institution and witnessing the gruesome advising sales techniques first hand. I was all too often a witness to the enforcement of student mining and recruitment practices while utilizing the fictitious front of a not-for-profit institution education experience. I earnestly beg for future research within this area, given its overwhelming disservice to hundreds of thousands of students everywhere. Research should aim to collect qualitative data from current or former personnel of non-profit institutions and identify methods of recruitment as well as management expectations around quotas.

Recommendations for practice

In this dissertation, I claim that these participants were not solely affected by their parents' ability to support their college aspiration, but also were affected by the inequities of a system that provided no systematic intervention to support them in lieu of their parent's perceptions and abilities. Below, I present two visual representations of these shortfalls. Figure 1, shows the reality of the participants, one that did not provide systematic intervention, subsequently leading them to their destination. The second, Figure 2, shows an alternate perceived reality, one that provides systematic intervention and allows the participants to seek support (e.g. financial, counseling, mentoring) within their college journey.

Figure 1. Reality of Participants

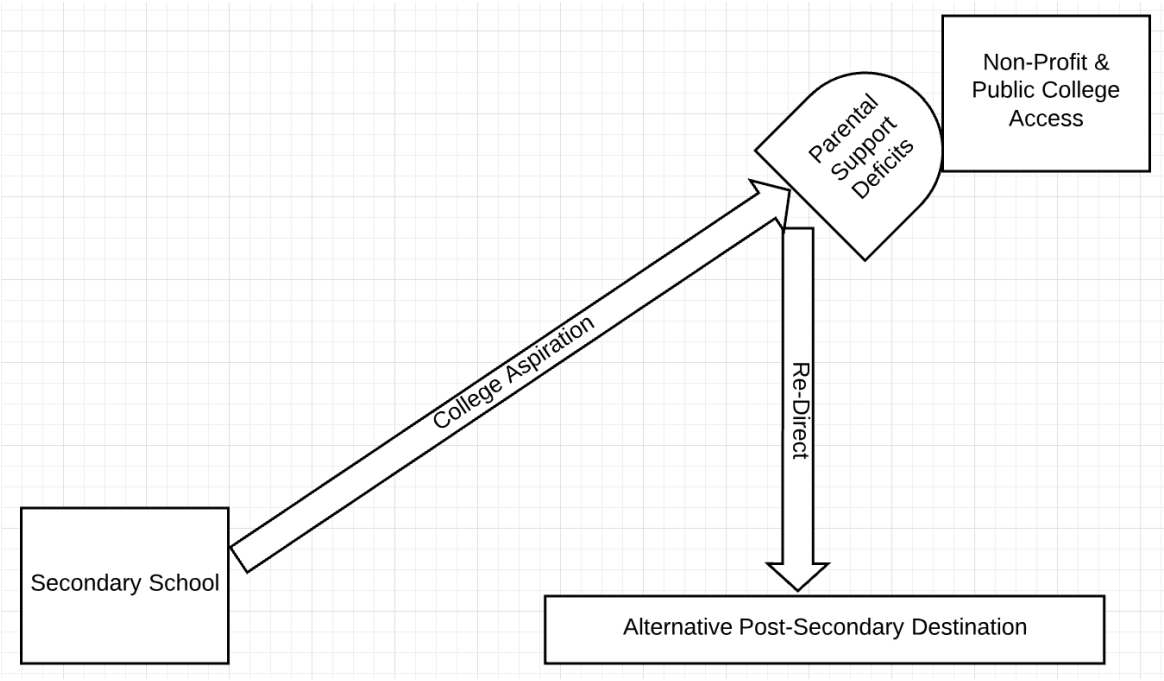
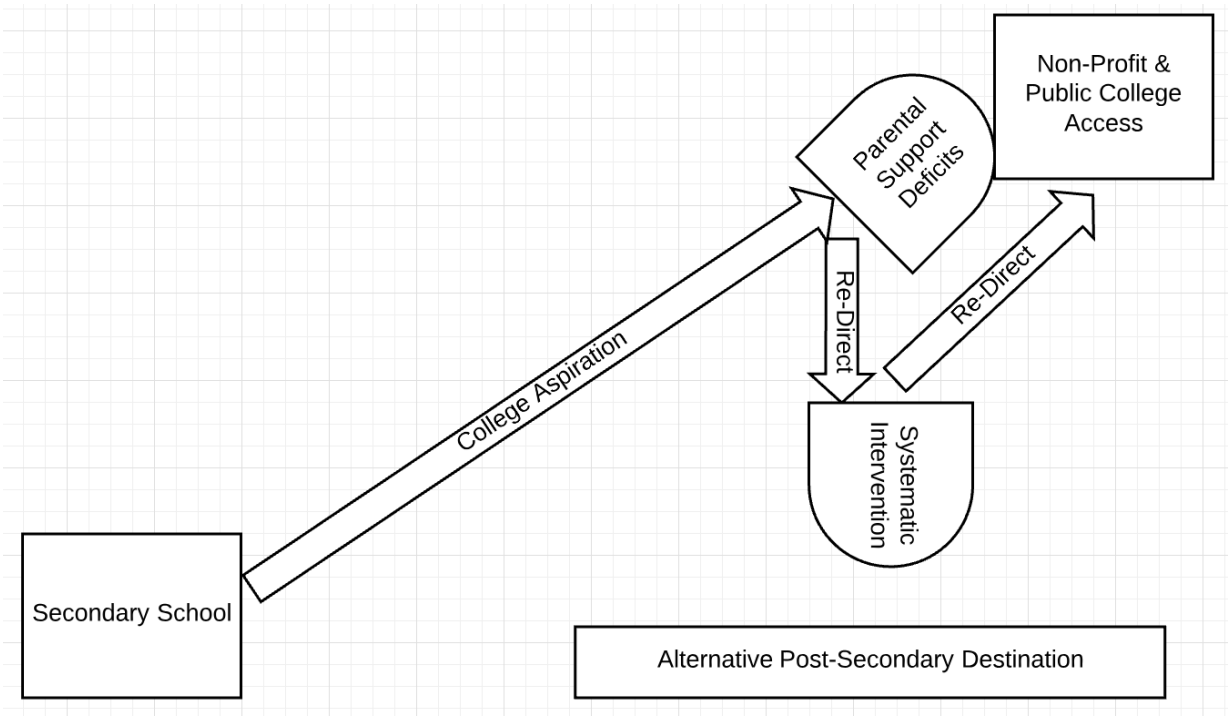


Figure 2. Perceived Reality of Participants



As it stands, policy development is needed, specifically within secondary schools and around parental interventions. These policies should be offered by the specific institutions counseling support staff and should be implemented as outreach to all current students. Intervention should offer support to addressing and supporting students through differentiating parental areas of concern, around college, including: financial objections to college; logistical objections to college; and labor objections to college. Similarly, schools should also consider the use of community liaisons or fellow school peers' parents in an effort to meet objecting parents at their cultural perceptions in an effort to educate and support students with parents of differentiating cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Initially, such policy development would require the understanding of a secondary school's specific population of service, prior to the development of an action plan or the creation of community, or peer parent advocates.

I also argued here that secondary counselor support shortfalls were a major systemic inequity faced by the participants. Though I cautioned that this inequity is not the direct fault of the high school counselors, staff, or the districts themselves, but the fault of a larger systemic support issue, still, further interventions should be implemented within educational policy. This systematic shortfall is the result of an educational system that refuses to provide these high-school counselors, and other pertinent secondary school staff, with adequate financial and hierarchal resources, as needed to support this underrepresented geography. Below, I present two visual representation regarding this systematic reality. The first, Figure 3, represents the current reality of limited support structures within this geography's secondary school system, as well as the gap in supporting student's aspirations into equitable non-profit and public four-year college institutions. The second, Figure 4, represents a systematic intervention that offers added support and resources to the support bridge leading students into equitable non-profit and public four-year college institutions, subsequently closing the gap of inequity.

Figure 3. Current reality of limited support structures

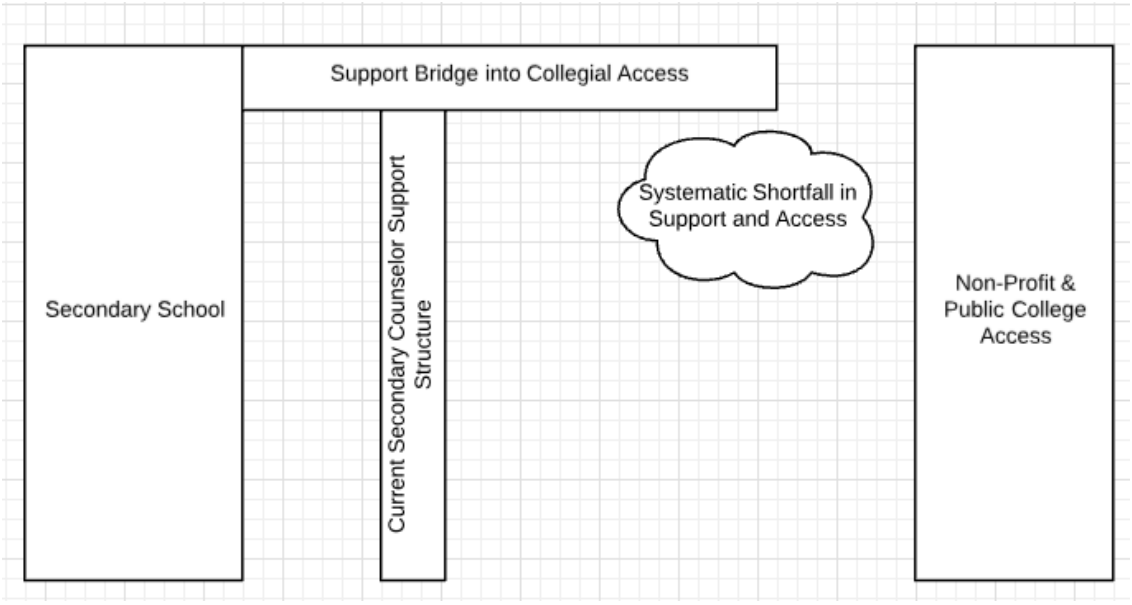
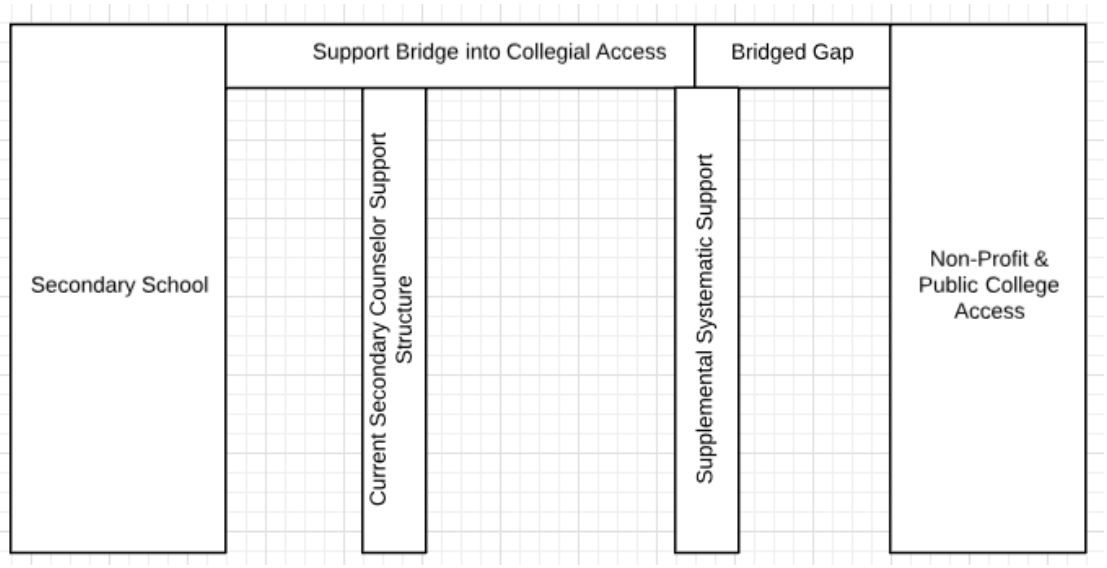


Figure 4- System intervention with added support and resources to bridge the gap of inequity



Based on the review of the literature, we know that Latinx populations are seemingly dependent on social capital networks, given that in most cases their parents have no college legacy experience to contribute. Furthermore, Latinx students following chain enrollment attributes are also more likely to pursue a specific institution if they hold current social networks there, such as staff, professors, or peers. In the instances when Latinx students turn to school support, that is, school counselors, they are often overburdened with heavy caseloads, given that Latinx students are often located within large poor, under-resourced school settings (Iloh, 2014; Perez, 2010). Therefore, an intervention which utilizes financially feasible support systems, such as fellow high school or local college level peers as supplemental resources for underserved students, is needed. These supplemental support interventions should aim to have students gain peer support via peer mentors, who are either in upper grade levels within the same high school and hold experience with the college-search process, or are attending a local four-year institution and can provide insight on the college application process as well.

I argued that community college counselor support inequities, too, were a factor that led some of the participants of this study into an alternative education route. However, I also argued that this too, is not the direct fault of the community college counselors, staff, or the college districts themselves, but again, the fault of a larger systemic support issue. Below, I show two visual representations regarding this systematic reality. The first, Figure 5, represents the current reality of limited support structures within this geography's community college system, as well as the gap in supporting student's transfer aspirations into equitable non-profit and public four-year college institutions. The second, Figure 6, represents a systematic intervention that offers added support and resources to the counselors, college, and staff alike, subsequently allowing them to support the student and their transfer aspirations, thus closing the gap of inequity.

Figure 5. Current reality of limited support structures within community college system

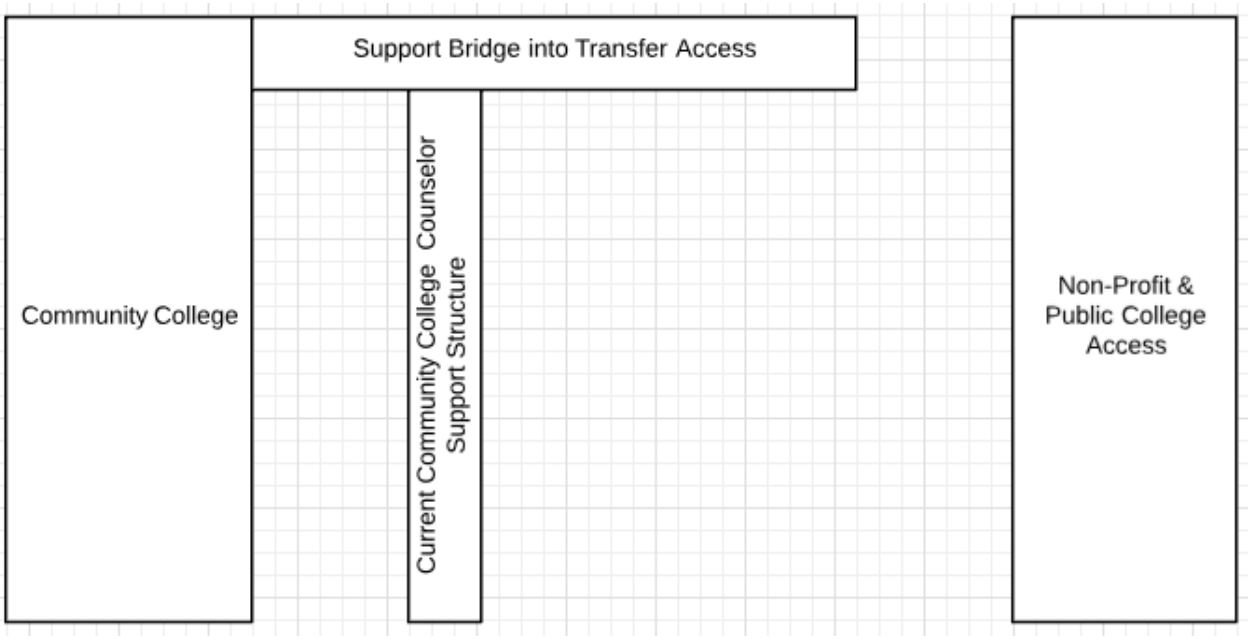
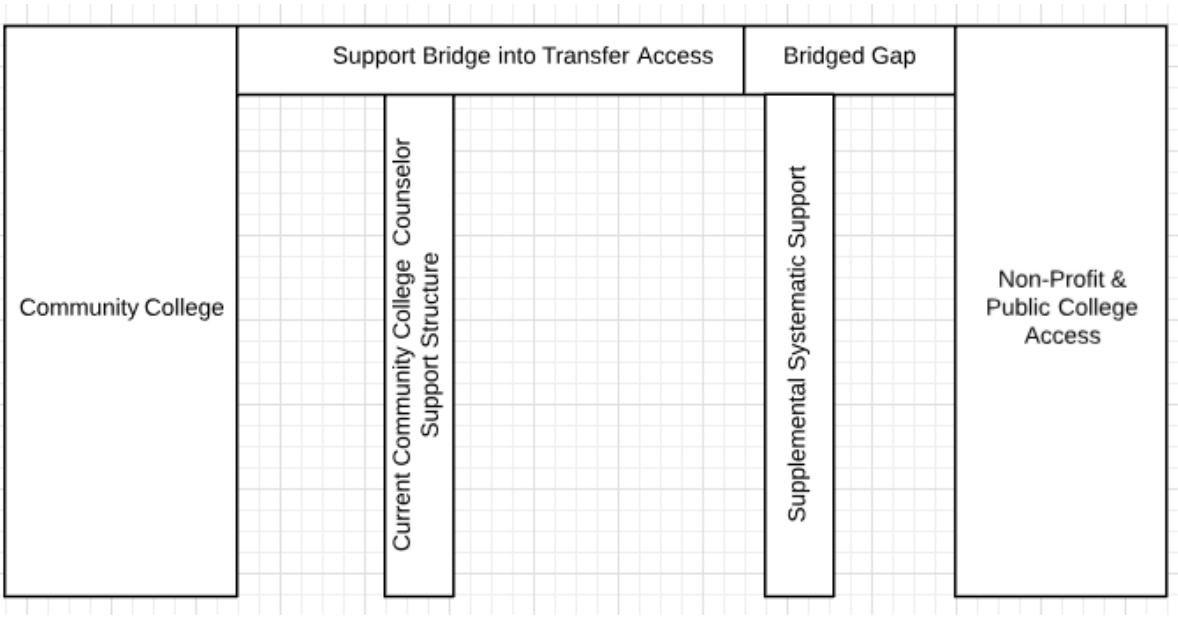


Figure 6. Systematic intervention with added support and resources to the counselors, college, and staff allowing student support, closing the gap of inequity



I understand that systemic budgetary restrictions, which are a part of a larger geographic inequality issue, may restrict the addition of resources for these community colleges. Therefore, an intervention which utilizes voluntary peer networks from within the community college is needed in an effort to provide supplemental support systems to these populations of struggling students. Whether struggling is categorized within academic grade terms, or whether the student is facing adversities in finding counseling support, these interventions are desperately needed within these institutions and geography. More experienced students, who may have overcome adversities themselves, would serve as a priceless asset to these underserved students within this geography.

Conclusion and Final Thoughts

As the author of this research, I can attest that this study was not what I expected, given that I did not foresee the tears, tough conversations, and difficult recollections that these participants shared with me. At one point, I realized the toughest part of this work was not necessarily the hundreds of hours spent reading, writing, and analyzing, but in fact hearing the inequities and adversities my participants had faced at the hands of these institutions.

I am torn. I am torn in two parts. First, I am torn given that I myself am an alumnus of a for-profit institution, and I do not in any way shape or form regret the experience. Why? I do not regret the experience given that it allowed me to first handedly witness not only the inequities within the institution, but afterwards from the world at large. I recall being told by a staff member of this very university (prior to my hiring here) at an educational conference that my degrees were not real. Furthermore, he told me I should go back to school and try again at a real school. I have to attest that this was one of the most difficult days of my life, and I felt like giving up. In fact, I nearly broke down on the spot, but decided to hold it for the long MUNI Bus ride home. I was angry and promised that I would show him one day. That day is here and I now work with this individual at this very university. Though he does not remember me, I remember him and what he said. I will not mention realms of power or rank as they relate to this situation, or where he ranks, or where I rank, but I will say I am redeemed.

Why does this matter? It matters because there are thousands of me, with their own stories, their own hurts, and I want to lift them up, or at least try. Similarly, I want to stop these systemic oppressions at their fruition, through professional practicum, research, and education. At this point, I could add an inspirational quote, a shocking

statistic, or other means of closing, but I do not have any of that. What I do have is the will to *grab a surco,* as my mom used to say. Grabbing a *surco,* for the migrant laborer, meant the start of the day at the behest of the foreman and served as a mark to get to work. I am not a talker, by any means, but am a worker from age six. So, if you will excuse me, it's time to use these findings, to create other findings, and get to work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

NCES list of registered for-profit institutions

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) collects, analyzes, and makes available data related to education in the United States (NCES, 2018). The NCES reported the following institutions registered with a for-profit status, within the CSJV. The CSJV is centralized to a specific list of 71 incorporated cities. These cities were utilized within this search effort.

Name	**Largest Program**
Adrian's College of Beauty Turlock	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Advanced Career Institute	Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor
Advanced College-Stockton	Surgical Technology/Technologist
Alliant International University-Fresno	n/a
Brightwood College-Bakersfield	Medical/Clinical Assistant
Brightwood College-Fresno	Medical/Clinical Assistant
California Aeronautical University	n/a
California Beauty School	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
California Health Sciences University	n/a
Carrington College-Stockton	Medical/Clinical Assistant
Computer Tutor Business and Technical Ins.	Medical Administrative/Executive Assistant
DeHart Technical School	Heating, Air Conditioning

Estes Institute of Cosmetology Arts and	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Institute of Technology	Practical Nursing, Vocational Nursing
Lyle's College of Beauty	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Lyle's College of Beauty	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Milan Institute of Cosmetology-Visalia	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Milan Institute-Bakersfield	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Milan Institute-Bakersfield West	Electrician
Milan Institute-Clovis	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Milan Institute-Merced	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Milan Institute-Visalia	Medical/Clinical Assistant
MTI Business College Inc.	Medical/Clinical Assistant
North Adrian's College of Beauty Inc.	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Paul Mitchell the School-Fresno	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Paul Mitchell the School-Modesto	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
San Joaquin Valley College - Delano	Medical/Clinical Assistant
San Joaquin Valley College - Hanford	Medical/Clinical Assistant
San Joaquin Valley College - Madera	Medical/Clinical Assistant
San Joaquin Valley College-Bakersfield	Medical/Clinical Assistant
San Joaquin Valley College-Fresno	Medical/Clinical Assistant
San Joaquin Valley College-Fresno Aviation	Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft
San Joaquin Valley College-Online	Medical/Clinical Assistant

San Joaquin Valley College-Visalia	Medical/Clinical Assistant
Sierra College of Beauty	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
Toni & Guy Hairdressing Academy-Modesto	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
UEI College-Bakersfield	Medical/Clinical Assistant
UEI College-Fresno	Medical/Clinical Assistant
United Education Institute-UEI College	Medical/Clinical Assistant
Xavier College School of Nursing	Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training

Appendix B:

U.S.C.B. Census Hispanic Populations

The following table utilizes data from the United States Census Bureau's Hispanic Population Percent's by California County.

County	**Estimated Population**	**Hispanic population percent**
Alameda County	1,638,215	22.5
Alpine County	1,110	10.4
Amador County	37,001	13.6
Butte County	225,411	16
Calaveras County	44,828	11.6
Colusa County	21,482	11.6
Contra Costa County	1,126,745	25.4
Del Norte County	27,254	19.7
El Dorado County	184,452	12.8

Fresno County	974,861	52.8
Glenn County	28,017	41.7
Humboldt County	135,727	11.3
Imperial County	180,191	83.8
Inyo County	18,260	21.4
Kern County	882,176	52.8
Kings County	150,965	54.2
Lake County	64,591	20
Lassen County	31,345	18.6
Los Angeles County	10,170,292	48.5
Madera County	154,998	57.4

Marin County	261,221	16
Mariposa County	17,531	11
Mendocino County	87,649	25
Merced County	268,455	58.9
Modoc County	8,965	15.2
Mono County	13,909	27.7
Monterey County	433,898	58.3
Napa County	142,456	33.9
Nevada County	98,877	9.5
Orange County	3,169,776	34.3
Placer County	348,432	13.8

Plumas County	18,409	9
Riverside County	2,361,026	48.4
Sacramento County	1,501,335	23
San Benito County	58,792	59.2
San Bernardino County	2,128,133	52.8
San Diego County	3,299,521	33.5
San Francisco	864,816	15.2
San Joaquin County	726,106	41.2
San Luis Obispo County	281,401	22.3
San Mateo County	765,135	24.8
Santa Barbara County	444,769	45.1

Santa Clara County	1,918,044	25.9
Santa Cruz County	274,146	33.5
Shasta County	179,533	9.8
Sierra County	2,967	11
Siskiyou County	43,554	12.3
Solano County	436,092	26.2
Sonoma County	502,146	26.6
Stanislaus County	538,388	45.6
Sutter County	96,463	30.5
Tehama County	63,308	24.7
Trinity County	13,069	7.3

Tulare County	459,863	64.1
Tuolumne County	53,709	12.2
Ventura County	850,536	42.5
Yolo County	213,016	31.5
Yuba County	74,492	27.8

Appendix C:

U.S.C.B. Census Characteristics by County

The following table utilizes data from the United States Census Bureau's *quick facts* by County reporting tool. In specificity, the table identifies specific information by CSJV county, including: persons under 18, Hispanic or Latino (USCB Term) percent, bachelor's degree attainment percent, median household income, and persons in poverty percent.

San Joaquin County	
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	27.40%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	41.20%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	18.20%
Median household income (in 2016 dollars), 2012-2016	$55,045.00
Persons in poverty, percent	14.60%
Stanislaus County	
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	27.20%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	45.60%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	16.50%
Median household income (in 2016 dollars), 2012-2016	$51,591.00

Persons in poverty, percent	14.50%
Merced County	
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	29.90%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	58.90%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	13.70%
Median household income (in 2016 dollars), 2012-2016	$44,397.00
Persons in poverty, percent	20.30%
Madera County	
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	27.50%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	57.40%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	13.10%
Median household income (in 2016 dollars), 2012-2016	$45,742.00
Persons in poverty, percent	20.40%
Fresno County	
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	28.60%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	52.80%

Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	19.70%
Median household income (in 2016 dollars), 2012-2016	$45,963.00
Persons in poverty, percent	25.50%
Kings County	
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	27.30%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	54.20%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	12.80%
Median household income (in 2016 dollars), 2012-2016	$47,241.00
Persons in poverty, percent	17.40%
Tulare County	
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	31.20%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	64.10%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	14.00%
Median household income (in 2016 dollars), 2012-2016	$42,789.00
Persons in poverty, percent	24.70%

Kern County	
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	29.20%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	52.80%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	15.70%
Median household income (in 2016 dollars), 2012-2016	$49,788.00
Persons in poverty, percent	22.40%

Appendix D:

Distances to Public Four-year Universities

The below table was created by the author, Joe Vasquez, by utilizing Google Maps (2018) and calculating the commuting distance (miles) from the center point of all 71 incorporated cities within the Central San Joaquin County, to each of the four public four-year institutions, within the valley, including: CSU Fresno, CSU Bakersfield, CSU Stanislaus, and UC Merced.

	Distance to CSU Fresno	**Distance to CSU Bakersfield**	**Distance to CSU Stanislaus**	**Distance to UC Merced**
Fresno	Under 15 miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Bakersfield	Over 50 miles	Under 15 miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Clovis	Under 15 miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Modesto	Over 50 miles	Over 50 Miles	Under 15 miles	40-50 Miles
Stockton	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Visalia	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Atwater	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Under 15 miles
Ceres	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Under 15 miles	30-40 Miles
Corcoran	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Delano	Over 50 Miles	30-40 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Dinuba	30-40 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Hanford	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Lemoore	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Lodi	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Los Banos	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	40-50 Miles	40-50 Miles
Madera	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	30-40 Miles
Manteca	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles

Merced	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Under 15 miles
Oakdale	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	40-50 Miles
Patterson	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	40-50 Miles
Porterville	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Reedley	30-40 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Sanger	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Selma	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Shafter	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Tracy	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Tulare	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Turlock	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Under 15 miles	15-30 Miles
Wasco	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Arvin	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Avenal	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Badger	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Caruthers	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Chowchilla	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	40-50 Miles	15-30 Miles
Coalinga	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles

Dos Palos	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	30-40 Miles
Earlimart	Over 50 Miles	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
East Porterville	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Exeter	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Farmersville	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Firebaugh	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Grayson	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Gustine	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	30-40 Miles
Hilmar	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Under 15 miles	15-30 Miles
Hughson	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Under 15 miles	30-40 Miles
Ivanhoe	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Kerman	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Kettleman City	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Kingsburg	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Lamont	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Lathrop	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	30-40 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Laton	30-40 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Lemon Cove	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles

Lindsay	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Livingston	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Under 15 miles	15-30 Miles
Lost Hills	Over 50 Miles	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
McFarland	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Mendota	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Newman	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	40-50 Miles
Orange Cove	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Parlier	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Pixley	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Seville	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Stevinson	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	15-30 Miles
Strathmore	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Taft	Over 50 Miles	30-40 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Three Rivers	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Waterford	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Under 15 miles	30-40 Miles
Westley	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	15-30 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Woodlake	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles
Yettem	40-50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles	Over 50 Miles